

“Confident Endurance”

Psalm 129

March 9, 2025

Psalm 129:1-8

- [1] “Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth”—
let Israel now say—
- [2] “Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth,
yet they have not prevailed against me.
- [3] The plowers plowed upon my back;
they made long their furrows.”
- [4] The LORD is righteous;
he has cut the cords of the wicked.
- [5] May all who hate Zion
be put to shame and turned backward!
- [6] Let them be like the grass on the housetops,
which withers before it grows up,
- [7] with which the reaper does not fill his hand
nor the binder of sheaves his arms,
- [8] nor do those who pass by say,
“The blessing of the LORD be upon you!
We bless you in the name of the LORD!”

“In your darkest moments, you will need your best theology.” (CJ Mahaney)

In light of those dark moments, this psalm helps us understand how we can confidently endure by considering...

- The Lord’s attributes
- His prevailing work in history and His faithfulness to us
- The blessing found in following Him
- considering the ways of the world are as lofty as chaff in the wind

Psalm 129:4 – The LORD is righteous.

We are not only to declare this; we are cling to it—to live in light of this truth.

- [1] “Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth”—
let Israel now say—
- [2] “Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth,
yet they have not prevailed against me.

This is a call back to their days in Egypt. The bondage in Egypt and the exodus would be fresh on their minds during “the ascent” to Jerusalem because two of the three pilgrim feasts commemorated the event.

Couldn't always make sense of the pain they went through, but they could have confidence in how the Lord prevails.

Psalm 1:1-6

- [1] Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
[2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
[3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.
[4] The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
[5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
[6] for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

When we abide in the Lord, we flourish like a tree planted by streams of water—bearing fruit and sustaining; those who do not abide in the Lord are like chaff the winds drives away—lacking anything substantial.

Hebrews 12:1-2: "... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."
We gain a better understanding of this psalm by understanding the gospel of Jesus.

Isaiah, in prophesying about the Messiah, said, "I gave my back to those who strike" (Isaiah 50:6), and goes on later, "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6).

This psalm does point to Jesus and the affliction he bore, but let us not forget the affliction God's people bore then and bear today.

Do you think the Christian life is fragile, only able to flourish when things seem to be going just right, or do you see the Christian life as something that survives and thrives even in the midst adversity?

Fragile faith vs. tough faith.

Life is hard *AND* God is good.

Life Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you through the Scripture during our Sunday gathering?
- How would you describe the overall tone of this psalm?
- If this original audience was to look back at their history, what consistent patterns would they see? How are these reflected in this psalm?
- This psalm highlights what Israel has survived rather than what they have achieved. Why is this important?
- CJ Mahaney writes, "In your darkest moments, you will need your best theology." Do you agree? Why can it be hard to remember the faithfulness of God and how he has prevailed in difficult times?
- Why is it so important for us to remember God's righteousness? How does this help us endure in faith?
- How are we to process the psalmist's prayer for the wicked to be judged? How does the gospel impact our understanding of this?
- How does this psalm point us to Jesus?
- Read 2 Cor. 4:8-9. How can Paul make such statements and stand firm in his faith? What are some differences between a tough faith vs. a fragile faith?
- As you meet with your Life Group or with other believers, what is an idea or two from this passage that you can help one another apply to your lives this week?