



Psalm 77

DO GOD'S PROMISES FAIL?

Let us learn from this [psalm], that, although sometimes the remembrance of the works of God may bring us less comfort than we would desire, and our circumstances would require, we must nevertheless strive, that the weariness produced by grief may not break our courage. This is deserving of our most careful attention. In the time of sorrow, we are always desirous of finding some remedy to mitigate its bitterness; but the only way by which this can be done is to cast our cares upon God. ...Many, when they derive no advantage from this course, imagine that they cannot do better than forget him. Thus they loathe his word, by the hearing of which their sorrow is rather embittered than mitigated, and what is worse, they desire that God, who thus aggravates and inflames their grief, would withdraw to a distance. Others, to bury the remembrance of him, devote themselves wholly to worldly business. It was far otherwise with the psalmist. Although he did not immediately experience the benefit which he could have desired, yet he still continued to set God before his view, wisely supporting his faith by the reflection, that as God changes neither his love nor his nature, he cannot but show himself at length merciful to his servants. Let us also learn to open our eyes to behold the works of God; the excellence of which is of little account in our estimation, by reason of the dimness of our eyes, and our inadequate perception of them; but which, if examined attentively, will ravish us with admiration. —John Calvin (1509-64)

FAITH'S STRUGGLE — Can I Depend upon God? (77:1-9)

- _____ Prayers

He cries out to God.

He stretches out his hands.

But things seem to get _____.

- _____ Nights

He is so disturbed that he can't sleep.

He is so distressed that his mind won't stop.

But he can't seem to find any _____.

- _____ Questions

Has God cast me off?

Has God ceased to care about me?

Has God stopped loving me?

Have God's promises failed me?

Has God forgotten to show me grace?

Is God so mad at me that His mercies are gone?

Selah

This psalm records the spiritual struggle of someone who had to endure a prolonged period of suffering and sorrow.

—Allen P. Ross

He mused and mused but only sank the deeper. His inward disquietudes did not fall asleep as soon as they were expressed, but rather they returned upon him, and leaped over him like raging billows of an angry sea. Alas, my God, the writer of this exposition well knows what thy servant Asaph meant, for his soul is familiar with the way of grief. Deep glens and lonely caves of soul depressions, my spirit knows full well your awful glooms!

—Charles H. Spurgeon

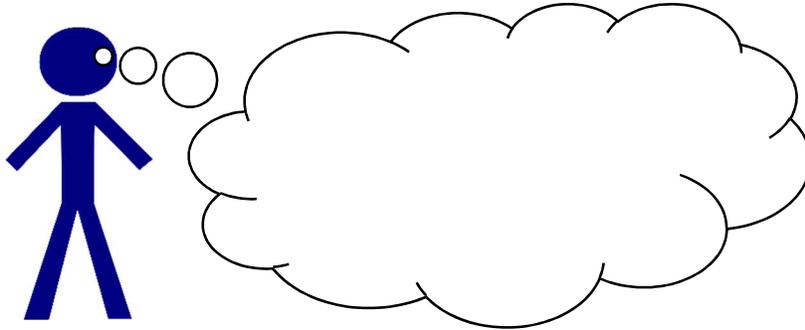
Troubled. Heb., *hama*, "to growl, roar, cry aloud, mourn, murmur, rage, make noise, be troubled."

There is a kind of instinctive judgment within us that life should be fair and somehow God should be 'doing his job better' of ruling this world.

—Philip Yancey

FAITH'S SOLUTION — Yes, I Can Depend upon God! (77:10-20)

"This is my problem! I think that the Most High God has changed in His character. And that kind of thought or feeling is simply not true!"



- I will _____ God's amazing wonders.
- I will _____ on what God has done.
- I will _____ about God's works in my life.
- I will _____ God for His great, incomprehensible, awesome, faithful, but sometimes hidden, redemption!

God's way is in holiness (unique, set apart).

God's greatness is beyond any other god.

God is a God who is constantly doing wonders.

God has redeemed His people by His great power and love.

But God's ways, path, and footsteps are often unseen until He reveals them. In the meantime, we can trust Him to lead us.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- In what ways can you identify with the psalmist in his struggle? Have you ever had those kind of questions in your mind?
- What promises of God encourage your heart the most? Why?
- How have you seen God work in your life? What has He done for you that you can praise Him for? Tell someone what He has done!

There are moments in the life of all believers when God and his ways become unintelligible to them. They get lost in profound meditation, and nothing is left them but a desponding sigh.

—Augustus Tholock (1799-1877)

As the Jews say, wheresoever this word Selah is, it doth admonish and stir up the reader or hearer to mark what was said before it; for it is a word always put after very notable sentences.

—John Hooper (1495-1555)

Wonders. Heb, *pele*, "something wonderful, extraordinary; a hard to understand thing; a miracle."

77:13. *I am rather inclined to refer it to heaven, conceiving the meaning to be, that the ways of God rise high above the world, so that if we are truly desirous to know them, we must ascend above all heavens. Although the works of God are in part manifest to us, yet all our knowledge of them comes far short of their immeasurable height.*

—John Calvin

Redeem. Heb., *ga'al*, "to act as a kinsman-redeemer."

The passage that was opened for the children of Israel by the Lord was His "way" for them, a secret and unknown path by which He was able to lead them safely from seemingly inescapable perils.

—H. C. Leupold

Your purposes You will accomplish, but the means are often concealed, yea, they need no concealing, they are in themselves too vast and mysterious for human understanding. Glory be to You, O Yahweh!

—Charles H. Spurgeon