



Psalms of Asaph: 74/83

Last week Darryl did a great job in introducing us to who Asaph was, the history, heritage and heart of these psalms. One line that will continue to ring true for a theme in these Psalms and also for our lives today is, “*until I entered into the Sanctuary of the Lord.*” (Ps. 73:17).

We have more questions about what is going on now more than ever. Where did this pandemic come from? Why are they reacting the way they are? How severe is this sickness? Will my kids go back to school in September? How does this affect my work? How do we continue to minister to each other and stay connected while submitting to the government recommendations? All these questions are valid, but they can all create a wrestling inside or stir in us certain emotions.

One thing the Psalms never lack, is honest, real authentic emotion towards a situation and towards the Lord. Often beginning in despair and anguish but ending in praise! The fact remains tho, a way in which we enter in is being honest with ourselves and vulnerable before the Lord. “God, this is how I’m feeling, I don’t understand, I’m afraid, angry, hopeless!” The Lord knows that we have these things going on within us, and I believe He invites that level of honesty and transparency, to expose that depth of hurt or pain SO THAT HE can meet us in that place in which those emotions reside and where His restoration is birthed.

Prayer and fasting are an integral part of our lives. I relate them to the process of consecration and sanctification. The process of setting yourself apart for a specific purpose. When we fast in abstaining from food that the body craves, we desire to align our whole lives towards a purpose- to bring a quietness over the flesh and a focus towards the Lord. This is done to align our perspective, to allow our spirit to inhale, to take control and absorb the nutrients of His presence. It’s a letting go with expectation, it’s a form of weakness that obtains strength. It’s the core way and most practical means to a *realigning of reality*.

“Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O Lord, and that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name. Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast! Do not forget the life of Your poor forever. Have respect to the covenant; For the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty. Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise Your name.”

Psalms 74:18-21

A very true form of worship is utter prostration before Him. “Woe is me, for I am *undone*”. We can enter into that Sanctuary as often as we want. The Lord in His genius design and love for us has established our whole beings to steward His Holy Spirit. When we take it upon ourselves to *work out our own salvation* as Paul says in Phillipians we find relief, answers, a perspective shift that ONLY HE CAN PROVIDE.

This is not easy, nor does it come cheaply. Thankfully we are not islands but are connected with one another, bonded by the Holy Spirit to help spur one another on.

Gather a few people this week and support each other in this opportunity of setting time aside to fast and pray. You can have requests, burdens or simply a heart of expectation. We need to work the muscles that will walk us into that place of seeing, hearing and understanding. Prayer and fasting are explicitly linked with that process.

“That they may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth.”

A bold prayer from a man and nation that intimately walked with God. Let these prayers become familiar for us the Church. The time might be darkening but His salvation and grace are still being poured over all creation. This is a time for you to experience peace that surpasses all understanding because its not based upon our circumstances and situation but a peace that is based upon our conviction of WHO HE IS.

DISCUSSION

Entering into a time of praying and fasting also needs to be done in conjunction with the Holy sPirit. Take some time to seek Him and ask some simple questions to frame what a time like this could look like.

- Have you ever entered into a time of intentional praying and fasting? How did you feel coming out of it?
- How long Lord should I fast for?
- How do I intentionally set up my day to revolve around this practice and discipline?
- Are there any fears or hesitations that arise around this topic? If so, pour them out to the Lord and ask Him to confirm what a time of praying and fast would look like for you in this season.
- Seek the Lord and ask Him if there is anyone you could partner with to walk in this out. No government restrictions can rob us from the freedom of praying and fasting with others.

POSTURING

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:16

Confession: (admit, acknowledge, reveal, make known)

- In light of our conversation, is there anything that the Lord is asking you to confess and be made known?

“Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!” Ps 106:1

Thanksgiving: (a prayer expressing gratitude)

- Thank Him for all that He has promised and for His faithfulness upon your life.

EMPOWER

“God will strengthen you with His own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come, but you will be patient. And you will joyfully give thanks to the Father who has made you able to have a share in all that He has prepared for His people in the kingdom of light.” Colossians 1:11,12

- Pray for each other for strength, strategy, wisdom etc.
- Listen in prayer for words of encouragement and edification.
- Spur each other on!

