

242 for 2015

Songs of the 70's

—Psalms 70-79—

Lesson: 8
Text: Psalm 77
Handout/Prep: November 11
242/Discussion: November 16-20
Proclamation: November 22

Refresh

Since your last meeting, seek to refresh not simply your memory (of outlines and illustrations, etc.), but also your past week, your present weaknesses, your will, your wonderings.

- 1) Review key themes. What did you hear last Sunday? Was it gospel? Could you tell this story to someone else? Will you tell it?
- 2) Address — or add — any questions you still wish to hear covered or clarified from the reading, the discussion, or from the sermon.
- 3) Explain any new insights (about God, church body, neighbor, self, service, etc.) you encountered or experienced. How does this Word inform your understanding of the Lord who is telling the story? How does it inform your place in His story?
- 4) Consider anew how the Word of God read and proclaimed last week offers refreshment to you:

Read

Psalm 77; Genesis 47:29-30; Exodus 14-15:21; Matthew 27:45-54; Hebrews 5:7-10

Reflect

In this section, expect to find a mixture of questions and considerations relating to the text/reading. Reflect both within (thought, prayer, study, etc.) and without (writing, discussion, action, etc.).

- 1) Based on its tone and lyric, if you were to give Psalm 77 a song *title*, what would it be?
- 2) While Psalm 77 does not include Asaph's original score, what might you expect the pace and dynamic range of the music to sound like (ex. Loud, soft, serious, then soothing? Frenzied, forte, with a finale? Crying, contemplation, then confident? Other)? Describe.
- 3) As verses 1 and 2 reveal, the psalmist faces some sort of trouble/distress. Does the song offer a particular *occasion* for the distress? Does it offer a particular *outlet* for the distress? Explain.
- 4) How would you classify the pain(s) expressed in verses 2-6 (ex. physical, emotional, etc.)? Have you ever felt this way? If so, how did you deal with the pain? How should you deal with the pain? How *do* you deal with the pain(s)? Elaborate.
- 5) What is your assessment of the cascade of questions laid-out in verses 7-9? Are they reasonable? Real-life? Rhetorical? Relatable? Has your spirit ever pondered and poured-out such inquiry? Testify.
- 6) About these questions raised in verses 7-9, Mark Futato comments: "Here the Holy Spirit instructs us that such questions are not off-limits in prayer; rather, God invites us to engage in such brutal questioning before his face in prayer." Assess and discuss.
- 7) How does verse 10 relate to verses 1-9? How does verse 10 relate to verses 11-20? Explain.
- 8) How might the use of *pronouns* provide expression and/or enlighten the singer of Psalm 77?
- 9) Verses 11-20 describe a deliberate act of remembrance. Specifically, what is the focus of the reflection? Provide details from the text of the song to support your answer.
- 10) What do you look back upon when you face wearisome troubles and questions? Testify.
- 11) What *effect* does the recollection process produce within the singer(s) of Psalm 77? Personalize.
- 12) Reflect upon C.H. Spurgeon's personal remarks flowing from his study of Psalm 77: "Some of us know what it is, both physically and spiritually, to be compelled to use these words; no respite has been afforded us by the silence of the night, our bed has been a rack to us, our body has been in torment, and our spirit in anguish... 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!"
- 13) Assess the following commentary from author Mark Futato: "Believing in a God who is not evidently at work in a time of deep trouble just adds insult to injury until we are virtually overwhelmed with longing for God to act on our behalf."
- 14) As a singer of Psalm 77, what is it calling you to *do*? What is it calling you to *know*? To *feel*? Is one of these aspects accented more prominently? Explain.
- 15) How is this song about you? Do the lyrics of Psalm 77 provide words for your circumstance today? Do they give expression to your wants? Your worship? Your world? Why/why not?
- 16) How is this song about Jesus? Did He experience Psalm 77? Did He sing Psalm 77? Explain.

Relate

How does this Word relate to your relationships with God, fellow saints in the church, your neighbor, yourself (i.e. He, We, Thee, Me)? Consider the value of considering each relationship *in this order*. Moreover, seek to understand how the “fruit of the Spirit” (i.e. “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;” cf. Galatians 5:22-23) informs your answers/applications in each relationship.

1) *He*

How does this Word reveal God?

- His character? [attributes, works, wonders, control, etc.]
- His covenant? [plan, story, promises, blessings and curses...]
- His commands? [will, ways, call to repent, believe, obey...]
- His Christ? [pointing to, need for, fulfillment by, glory of...]

2) *We*

How does this Word speak to God’s people as a whole?

- As a global body [Displaying unity? Love?]
- As a gathered body [Assembling for worship? Regularly? Eagerly?]
- As a growing body [Making disciples? Equipping saints?]
- As a gifted body [Exercising gifts? One-anothering?]
- As a GURC body [Local applications? Edifying? Specific? Shared?]

3) *Thee*

How does this Word inform the way I love my neighbor?

- With my words? [kindness, truth-telling, gospel/evangelism...]
- With my works? [doing justly, loving mercy, meeting needs...]
- With my welcome? [hospitality, listening ear, availability...]

4) *Me*

How might the Spirit use this Word to move me — from the inside-out?

- My consecration [set-apartness, unto holiness...]
- My commitment [love of God in heart/soul/mind; walking humbly...]
- My conviction [of particular sin, of need for restoration...]
- My conscience [internal calls to specific actions, needs, people]
- My cornucopia [personal applications of fruit-full-ness; cf. Gal. 5]
- My calling [use of gift(s) granted/equipped with, for service]
- My conflict [with people, with inner struggles, with my flesh...]
- My congregation [see applications above, “We”]
- My comfort [see applications below, “Rest”]
- My conversation [with spouse? children? unbelievers? believers?]
- My communication [in particular: assess ability/desire to tell the gospel from *this text*. Why not try now in your own words?]

Resolve

As revealed from this text, and as guided by the Holy Spirit, note at least one insight or specific action that would prove fruitful (see again Galatians 5:22-23) in your walk as you make your way to Zion. For example, does this week's study or proclamation of good news call you to:

Remember?	_____
Repent?	_____
Resist?	_____
Reconsider?	_____
Relay?	_____
Relish?	_____
Rejoice?	_____
Other?	_____

Rest

In view of all the above, rejoice that the inner posture of a child of God is/ought to be one of rest — a deep-seated joy that exudes gratitude and ongoing trust in the One who proves Himself forever faithful — to His people, to His plan, to Himself! This reality serves to refocus and encourage weary, walking saints. Today, can you name one way, or one area of your life where you would like to rest in Christ more? How does this present Word speak to your need for rest? With His gospel refreshing you, seek the Lord's comfort as you pilgrim upward in His service.