



# St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Pursuing God in Isolation

Session Four: Isolated from God

Psalm 13:1-6

## MAIN POINT

Even in the moments that we feel isolated from God, we can be sure that He is continually present and will never abandon us.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Have you ever been forgotten by someone who was supposed to pick you up? How did you feel? What went through your mind?**

**Now think about your relationship with God. Have you ever felt like God had forgotten about you? Describe the circumstances.**

Today we are looking at Psalm 13. The CSB titles this Psalm, "A Plea for Deliverance." This Psalm overflows with real emotions including overwhelming feelings of fear, anxiety, depression, and abandonment. This passage reveals David's struggle with the Lord and his emotions. But he didn't stay there. David found the only way to bring peace to his spirit. When you feel isolated from God, we can be confident that He is present and will never abandon you.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 13:1-6.

**What was David's lament, or complaint, at the start of this psalm?**

**Verses 1-2 are an honest complaint from David, who felt like God had abandoned him. What difference does it make for you to know we serve a God who uses our complaining as a way to draw us to Himself?**

David began his prayer with a series of five rhetorical questions, all voicing despair at God's slowness to act on his behalf. We don't know the specific situation David was referring to. He could have been referring to his conflict with Saul or a personal illness. But whatever the situation, David evidently felt like God did not care about or was not paying attention to his sorrow.

**Think about a time when you have felt like David at the start of this psalm. What impact did that experience have on your relationship with God? What were some of the questions you wrestled with in that time?**

**How did David's tone change in verse 3? What specific thing did David ask of God?**

David began his prayer by interrogating God with his rhetorical questions of "How long?" In verse 3, however, his tone shifted, and he presented God with a more pointed request. Instead of questioning God, he asked God to look on him and answer him. He asked God to protect his life from his enemies. He even referred to God as "my God," calling to mind his personal, covenantal relationship with God.

**Read verses 5-6 again. How do they compare with verses 1-2? Describe the progression David went through during the course of this brief prayer.**

**What do you learn about the purpose of prayer from this psalm?**

By the end of this brief prayer, David had moved from a pit of despair to confidence in God and a spirit of worship. At the start of the prayer, all David could see was his present hardship. By the end, however, he was reflecting on God and His goodness and love. This is the way prayer works. God wants us to be honest with Him, no matter what we are feeling, and as we pray, He opens our eyes to His truth and reminds us of His goodness and love.

**What does David's prayer teach us about God?**

In the midst of David's suffering and lament, he affirmed some key characteristics of God that are important for us to never lose sight of. David called to mind God's steadfast, unfailing love, His saving power, and His goodness. David had firsthand experience with each of these

characteristics of God, and even in the midst of fear and despair, David knew they were still true. God had not changed.

**David could be confident in God because of their covenant relationship. Read 2 Samuel 7:8-16. What promises had God made to David?**

**What promises has God made to you that you can hold to when you feel isolated from Him?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What circumstances in your life have led you to question God? Who are the people in your life with whom you can share your questions?**

**As Christians, our relationship with God is rooted in His covenant of grace, which He has sealed with Christ's blood. Think about a lament you have brought before God recently. How does the gospel speak into that issue?**

**David questioned God about His involvement in David's life, but he did not stay in a place of questioning. Is it obedient to continually question God in these moments? Why or why not?**

## PRAYER

Thank God that He has promised to never abandon His people, even when it feels as though we are forgotten.

## COMMENTARY

### | PSALM 13

13:1-2 The phrase how long is not uncommon in the lament psalms (6:3; 35:17; 74:10; 79:5; 80:4; 94:3); however, it appears more times here (four times) than in any other single text. This highlights the fact that the psalmist had endured his suffering for a long time and was considering that Yahweh might have hidden His face from Him and forgotten Him. Both of these descriptions convey the idea of rejection (44:24).

13:3-4 Brightness in the eyes represents vitality and is the opposite of one's eyes growing dim during times of grief and suffering (6:7; 38:10; Job 17:7). In this context it is contrasted with

death. The enemy was adding to the psalmist's suffering by proclaiming triumph over him. The statement I am shaken could refer to dying, but it could also be used to indicate defeat. In most contexts it is used with the negative as a statement of the assurance of security: "I will not be shaken" (16:8; 30:6; 62:6).

13:5-6 Even though the question about the time of God's intervention remained, the psalmist reaffirmed his trust in Yahweh's faithful love. This is the Hebrew word "chesed," which is rooted in Yahweh's covenant with His people; sometimes it is even synonymous with the term "covenant." The psalmist's trust was not in himself but in the God of the covenant who promised that He would show faithful love to those who love and obey Him (Dt 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4).