



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

72 – The Deeper Problem

Announcements:

6/12 @ 6:30-

Men's Discipleship

6/14 @7:30 -

Prayer

6/15 @6:30 -

Grace Group

6/18 @8:30 -

Sunday School

6/25 @5:00 -

Joint Service with

La Luz @ Grace

ICE BREAKER: Do you have a favorite nursery rhyme or children's poem? What is it? (bonus points so anyone who can figure out the tie to today's GracePoint!)

On Sunday, we opened by looking at the background that Jesus spoke into, in particular the weight and importance of the Davidic king. But there was one detail that was left out, and that is the feeling like all that had failed. The things we did look at were at the heart of the promise. Things like a king sitting forever on the throne, hope that the kingdom would be vast and encompassing all nations, and ultimately that there would be peace and goodness and godliness. But when the Pharisees, and really anyone around at the time of Jesus, looked around, they would see none of this. Instead of a descendant of David on the throne they would see Herod and ultimately the authority of Rome. Instead of the nations bowing to the Davidic king, they saw themselves bowing to Caesar. In other words, the promises were all there, but maybe the promises of God failed? The Pharisees were not the first (or last!) people to think in this way, as long as people have been alive it seems this has been a natural feeling. So today I would like to look, not at Matthew, but rather at a Psalm that shares this heart in a beautiful way. Psalm 89

READ: Psalm 89 (fair warning it is long, like the 3rd longest Psalm long! So a few people should read it!)

There are three large parts to this psalm, and each one is important and can teach us much. We will be looking at them a little out of order though, starting with verse 19-37. This section is particularly interesting for the psalmist (some guy named Ethan!) sings God's words to the people in the first person. In each promise of God it is as if God is the one saying it again to the people. Over and over again each and every promise is said to us *by God*. 19 verses full of the wonderful promises of God. Before we dive into the people's feelings or experiences it is important to note this: God has made a great many promises, and if the faithful God makes the promise we can be sure that it is the faithful God who will ensure that it comes to pass. It is good to be reminded of the weight and beauty of God's promises. In doing this before we get to the next section (the lament!) we place our thoughts in the right place, look to him first and foremost, above anything else that we see!

DISCUSS: What promises of God do you need (or like) to be reminded of? Why is it important to understand that God is the one that is making those promises?

The next part that we will look at is verse 38 to the end, formally the lament section, practically the complaint section. For those of us who are familiar with the writing of Paul, the word BUT is often a sign of wonderful things. ("And you were dead in your sins and trespasses... BUT GOD... made us alive in Christ" Ephesians 2) Here, however it is a sign of things going horribly wrong. They have recounted the promises of God first, BUT now you have cast off and rejected (verse 38). It is tragedy after tragedy and the promises of God all seem to be far from true. Verse 46 reaches the height of the lament: "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" If we are being honest, much of the language here is shockingly harsh. There is a story of a pious Spanish priest in the middle ages that would not allow this psalm to be read, for he felt it was blasphemous in the allegations made against God. I would disagree, rather I think that the psalmist is just being brutally honest in what he was feeling (both emotionally and most likely physically!). Sometimes the calamities of today cloud our vision of the eternal promises of God. Sometimes God feels far away, far from being blasphemous, it is an honest assessment of life, and a helpful one for us at that.

DISCUSS: How can reading such a brutally honest assessment be of help to us and our souls?

But we skipped the first part, verse 1-18 are some of the highest praise that we could expect to read. The Psalmist *begins* by praising the God who made the earth and all that is in it. The God who delivers, the God who saves, the God who is good. In all the laments that we find in the book of Psalms this is the only one that places this praise at the beginning and not at the end. Usually you read things like "my bones are broken and wasting away, but even still I will praise God" (see Psalm 77, for example) but here it is different. We open by reminding ourselves of who God is, singing his praises. Then the movement is straight to reminding ourselves of the promises of God, what he has said he will do. Then, in seeing that we can acknowledge the weight and difficulties of what we see. The important thing to remember is that the first two are the underlying truth, the last is fleeting. Here then is our tie to Matthew 22. For though the world is going crazy, we look around and are often struck by the weight of sin and the brokenness of the world around us, this is what we know to be true: The Lord said to my Lord, "sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet!" That is our Lord, he is seated on the throne and he will take care of us!

DISCUSS: Why is praise so important when looking at thoughts like laments? How does having the praise before the complaint change our understanding of the things we face?