

introduction

We're beginning a new Advent series, spending the next four weeks in four different Psalms. In a culture that prizes immediacy and efficiency, we are reminded that God's work in us often unfolds over time, in ways we cannot rush or control. Waiting, then, becomes not a passive delay, but a spiritual practice — a way of learning to trust God's character, timing, and promises.

Advent season invites us into a different rhythm, calling us to slow down and become more attentive. As we reflect on the various Psalms, prayers spoken from the tension between longing and hope, we'll consider what it means to wait patiently for the God who comes to us in Jesus.



**What's something you've had to wait for recently – big or small?
How did it feel to be in that waiting period?**

read **Psalm 13 (NIV)**

- ¹ How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- ² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
- ³ Look on me and answer, Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
- ⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
- ⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
- ⁶ I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me.

Take a few moments to reflect on the Scripture. Share some insights, questions, or points that strike you. Then read what follows.

Lament as an expression of faith

In Psalm 13, the psalmist's lament is not the cry of someone who has walked away from God. His repeated, "*How long?*" shows a heart that is still turned toward God even when God feels distant. One commentator notes that David's pain is not merely circumstantial — it is profoundly relational.¹ In the Old Testament, God's blessing is often illustrated as his face shining upon a person. In this psalm, David senses that God's face is hidden from him — a contrast to the many times he had experienced God's favor. And what wounds him most is the sense that God is hidden, that the face he longs to see has dimmed.² So, when David feels forgotten, it is not a theological conclusion but an anguished perception that drives him to seek God more urgently, not less.

Lament also pulls back the curtain on David's internal world. He describes a mind churning with anxious thoughts, not a dull resignation but an active struggle to make sense of his situation. This turmoil we see in David is part of what it means to live faithfully in tension — David is not numbing himself; he is thinking, wrestling, and examining his fears before God. Even his concern about his enemy's triumph (v. 4) is shaped by his covenant identity. If his adversaries prevail, it would call not only his kingship into question but God's justice itself.³ His lament is therefore charged with a deep moral and spiritual sensitivity.

discuss

- 1. Can you relate to the depth of David's anguish? Have you ever felt God's absence linger through a long season of struggle or suffering? How did that affect you (or your faith)?**

¹ Kidner, Derek. *Psalms*. 2 Vols. TOTC. InterVarsity Press, 1981.

² *Ibid.*,

³ *Ibid.*,

2. How do you typically respond in moments of deep grief or suffering? Do you feel freedom to bring your honest feelings and thoughts before God?
3. In verse 3, what three specific requests does David bring to God? What do these requests reveal about the depth of his need and his relationship with God?
4. In your long-suffering, what practices, habits, or supports have helped you feel grounded, connected, or able to keep moving forward? And if you believe in God, what practical ways have you found to stay connected to him when he feels far away?

confident hope

The turning point in the psalm is quiet but decisive, “*But I trust in your unfailing love*” (v. 5). The contrast between David’s lament (vv. 1-2) and his expression of trust is not the result of changed circumstances, but of a deliberate shift in his attention. David is making a choice — one that only he can make. His hope is grounded in looking again at the God who binds himself to his people with steadfast love. In other words, David’s confidence rests not in his grip on God but in God’s grip on him.

This trust is forward-looking. The verb tenses in verse 6 indicate that David anticipates a future in which he **will** rejoice in God’s salvation and sing about God’s goodness because of the good that God **has done** to him (past tense). It’s unclear if David is leaning on God’s prior goodness as the grounds for present and future trust, or if David is speaking of future deliverance as though it were already an accomplished memory because of his past and present confidence in God’s character. Either way, David’s praise is not naive optimism but a profound act of faith. He doesn’t deny his pain; he simply refuses to let his present suffering define the whole story. He knows that when he eventually looks back on this season, he will discover yet another chapter of God’s goodness. Confident hope, then, becomes the bridge between lament and praise — the assurance that the God who feels hidden will once again show his face, and that no anguish is beyond the reach of his redeeming compassion.

discuss

5. What connections do you see between David's lament (vv. 1-2) and his confident hope (vv. 5-6)? What process did he pass through for this change to take place?
6. David's hope is rooted in remembering God's past goodness and anticipating future praise for what God will have done. What do you think about this kind of confident hope?
7. In what ways have you seen God's goodness in your own life, and how does that help you trust that he will not fail you?

group application : practice personal lament

Take 5-10 minutes to write your own version of David's "*How long*" prayer and share your prayer with each other.

1. **Voice your lament:** What questions, frustrations, or uncertainties have you been carrying silently that God is inviting you to voice?
2. **Name the relational dimension:** Are there areas where your anguish stems more from sensing God's absence than from the circumstances themselves? Name those honestly.
3. **Practice trust amid turmoil:** Reflect on a place where your thoughts feel chaotic or unsettled. What would it look like to bring that inner turmoil into conversation with God rather than trying to resolve it on your own?

upcoming

- Friday, December 12 | **Young Adults Christmas Party**
<https://redeemerws.com/event/young-adults-christmas-party/>
- Saturday, December 13 | **Volunteer at His Toy Store, various times at All Angels' Church** (W. 80th St & Broadway)
RWS is partnering with YoungLives to provide toys to families in deep need and volunteers are needed to help run the store with joy. Various positions available, sign up soon to volunteer together as space is limited.
www.hfny.org/redhen/org/43006
- Sunday, December 14 | **Spiritual Practices Workshop, 1:15-2:30 pm**
*Join for lunch and this month's discussion on how reimagining **community** might encourage how we weave it into our daily lives.*
redeemerws.com/spiritualpractices
- Wednesday, December 24 | **Christmas Eve Candlelight service, 4 pm & 6 pm**
We encourage you to invite friends, coworkers, and family member to join us as we remember the incarnation of our Lord. Programming available for ages 0 through Pre-K only at the 4 pm service.