



## “Pondering God” Psalm 77

In this series of “Godly Lament,” I’ve had a lot of encouraging and profitable conversations with different people. For those people who naturally lean towards lament, some of the sermons might have felt affirming and encouraging. But for those who may not naturally lean that direction, you could be thinking, “What does this look like in my daily life? Am I supposed to cry all the time?”

Here’s where a danger comes in. As I often have said, we humans tend to pendulum swing to extremes. Those who are more prone to sorrow might hear the sermons and look over at happier church members and say, “See! I can cry. And you should be sadder, too! C’mon!” Let’s now plan church services that only weep and talk about how bad and unfair life is. And, if anyone tries to encourage me, I’ll just say, “Read Lamentations, buddy.”

Now, I hope no one goes that far, but sometimes I think people can verge on that practically. And we need to be careful. The Bible says that we are to “weep with those who weep,” but it also says we are to “rejoice with those who rejoice.” For lamenters, the command to rejoice with others who rejoice is hard. For naturally-prone smilers, weeping is hard. But we’re all commanded with these words. So, let’s not pendulum swing to extremes. We are to rejoice and weep. And we are to be discerning about when to weep and when to rejoice.

I think that should be the concern: **When is lament appropriate or inappropriate?** Well, the title for this entire series is *godly* lament. Not all sorrow is created equal. There’s worldly sorrow. The apostle Paul says that kind of sorrow ought to be repented of. But there’s godly sorrow, too. And, as we study through lamentations and some psalms, I think we see that **Lament is appropriate when it encourages us to both remember the fallenness of this creation while also calling us to trust God as the all-sufficient Savior.**

Godly lament admits the pain around us. But godly lament doesn’t stay there. Godly lament leads us to go to God, trusting him and his plan for our lives. So, if you’re someone who keeps on talking about what you don’t have and what you’ve missed out on and what you wish you could have – godly lament hasn’t taken root in you. You’re still weeping over what could have been instead of finally coming to admit that you can trust God.

Think of it this way. Imagine you’re at a funeral. Why is there a funeral? Because of the fall. Death entered because of sin. And death is our enemy. It’s something we should abhor and understandably weep over. But what if, at the end of the funeral, you take the casket and try to fit it in your car so you can take the person home with you? In your mind, you’re still hoping for them to come back from the dead. So, you continue to try to live as though the person were alive.

That's clearly not going to work. But this is what many people do with their life circumstances. Pains of childhood, pains in a marriage. Job loss. Friendships breaking. And we accumulate these sorrows. And, in some ways, it's like we're going to a funeral over a dead friendship, a lost job or whatever the circumstances may be. But here's where a problem comes in. The problem isn't that you acknowledge the pain. The problem is that you take the dead friendship and try to live life with it. You keep wallowing over it and maybe wishing things would have changed. You're willing for these things to come back to life. But, let me ask you something. What if those things don't come back?

Now, lament doesn't say that God can't revive and restore a friendship. But lament does say, "God, you're in control and not me. And, if this is the life I'm called to live, then I trust you. I'm not going to wish for the good 'ol days or wish things to be different. I trust whatever you have given to me now." **Lament is not a resignation to live with sad circumstances, but courage to trust whatever God has for you – knowing he is in control and he is good in all his ways.** Think again about a real funeral of a loved one. Sorrow will continue long after the funeral. That's understandable. But many times, you'll hear friends counsel family members saying, "That person wouldn't want you to close up your life and stay in despair. They'd want you to live life." Yes, be sad. That's fine. But don't let the sadness define or destroy living. Instead, let the sadness remind you of how life is a vapor. And then seek to live today in bold and courageous trust in the goodness of our Lord. Psalm 145:17 says, "<sup>17</sup>**The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.**"<sup>1</sup>

So much of lament hasn't reached this point of admitting the goodness of the Lord and rejoicing in him even in the midst of trial. Lamentations, and even the psalms, teach us that godly lament recognizes darkness, but it points to light. Even as we look at the history of Judah and the study of Lamentations, we see that after their torture and exile from the nation of Babylon, many returned back to rebuild Jerusalem, and there God brought revival. This is often the pattern of God. Somewhere around the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christians picked up the Latin phrase "Post Tenebras Lux" to refer to this common way of God's working. It means "After Darkness Light."

Well, if God often works this way, then it would make sense that lament comes before joy. And lament is a servant to lead us to even greater joy. But through lament, God teaches us that our joy is found in him – not in what we have or don't have. This is the great trial in pain. We don't want to really admit that God is our passionate desire, glorious pursuit and magnificent obsession. But God intends for lament to come in to show us greater heights of glory in himself. He created us for HIM; therefore, he designs that our rejoicing would be in him. While circumstances may not change – and even if they do change in ways that we perceive are easier or better – lament teaches us that our hope and trust is in the Lord. Therefore, lament leads us to ponder God in greater ways.

This morning, we are going to see this progression from Psalm 77. We are going to see the funeral-like lament. But we are going to hear a psalmist who courageously and calmly rests in God's goodness. So, if you haven't turned in your Bibles to Psalm 77 yet, please do so and I will begin reading after I pray:

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*<sup>1</sup> I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. <sup>2</sup> In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. <sup>3</sup> When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit*

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 145:17.

*faints. Selah* <sup>4</sup> You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. <sup>5</sup> I consider the days of old, the years long ago. <sup>6</sup> I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search: <sup>7</sup> "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? <sup>8</sup> Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? <sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah <sup>10</sup> Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High." <sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. <sup>12</sup> I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. <sup>13</sup> Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? <sup>14</sup> You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. <sup>15</sup> You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah <sup>16</sup> When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled. <sup>17</sup> The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side. <sup>18</sup> The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. <sup>19</sup> Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. <sup>20</sup> You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.<sup>2</sup>

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I came across this Psalm a couple months ago, and thought to myself, "Have I ever read this psalm before?!" I literally did not remember ever reading it. I know I have read it because I've read through the Bible, but I could not remember anything about this particular psalm. As I read it, I wanted to study it more. And now, not only have I studied it more, but I get to preach from it. Before jumping into it, I want to share a couple of important points: **1) This is a personal psalm meant for congregational singing.** At the top of the psalm, we see it's for the choirmaster. The author is describing things from personal experience, but even though it's his personal experience, it's meant to be relatable. **2) This psalm uses multiple names for God.** You will see "God," "Lord" (in lowercase letters), "LORD" (in capitals) and "Most High." These are various terms and names for God that speak to something special about him. He's the Creator. He's the all-sufficient One. He's the covenant-keeping God. He's Most High and there are no other gods besides him. I bring this out now because I want you to see that as we are lamenting and sorrowing, we don't need band-aid fixes. We need God, in all of his fullness, to reach to us. Because he is who he is, that's why we call out to him. Only he can give the hope, satisfaction and life that we're yearning for. With all this in mind, let's get into this psalm. And, in this psalm, we're going to see practically how lament leads us to ponder God and rest in him.

### How does lament lead us to ponder God?

#### 1. By leading us to pray with desperation (vv. 1-3).

I have broken up these twenty verses by noting every time the author puts in the word "Selah." Sadly, there's at least one modern translation that has taken out every "Selah" in the psalms because the translators state that we don't really know exactly what the word means, so there's no point to having it. If you have that translation, you'll notice you don't see the word. But whether or not we know exactly what the word means, it does often seem to me to indicate a transition or a need for pause. And I see that even in this psalm. So, the first three verses clearly go in one category.

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:1–20.

He describes what's going on personally. His whole life is comprised of desperate prayer. Look at verses 1-2 again: "I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. <sup>2</sup>In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted."

The psalmist repeats himself in the first verse, emphasizing he's crying loudly to God. The pain is so intense, all he can do is cry. I came across a quote from a 17<sup>th</sup> century pastor named Samuel Rutherford, who said, "Tears have a tongue, and grammar, and language, that our Father knoweth." Then he gives this illustration: "Babes have no prayer for the breast, but weeping: the most can read hunger in weeping" (as quot. in Spurgeon, p. 320).

His circumstances are so painful, all he knows to do is cry. And, not only cry once and then move on. In verse 2, the psalmist uses the terms "day" and "night." He's saying that he cannot stop crying. Therefore, his hand is stretched out without wearying. Here's an example of hands raised, but it's hands raised in desperation, saying, "God, fill me. God, help me. God, give me what I need!" But, for whatever reason, his soul refuses to be comforted. Circumstances aren't changing. Circumstances continue to go on in pain and weariness.

Have you ever felt this way? A weariness that won't go away? You go to God in prayer, but you still feel in turmoil? You can do a couple of things in this scenario. You can either turn from God, like Job's wife encourages him to do. Or, you can run to him in prayer. Now, I know, you could say, "I have prayed, but he just won't listen," but do you notice verse 1 starts off with a statement of confidence: "he will hear me." In his mind, there's no doubt about whether or not God will hear him.

Last week, in my sermon, I said that for us, we who are Christians have that confidence, too. Jesus says that he died on the cross to give us access to God, even in prayer. God hears us because of Jesus' glory. That's what it means to pray in Jesus' name. Will God hear us when we pray? YES! Now, you could say, "But I still feel in turmoil! Clearly, he's not listening." But that's not what Asaph does here. He says, "he will hear me." Therefore, he prays and prays and prays and prays. He doesn't give up going to God. There's an utter desperation, but it's not a "giving up" kind of desperation. It's a confident desperation in prayer. He's in complete need of God, therefore, he goes to God.

This reminds me of the parable Jesus tells of the persistent widow. He knocks, and knocks, and knocks on the door of the judge in order to get an answer. Jesus says that God is working in us to have a persistence in prayer. Will we trust God enough to know he'll answer that we'll desperately knock and believe he'll answer in his timing?

The situation for Asaph was intense. It was so intense that it seems like he was tempted to give up in prayer. Verse 3 says, "<sup>3</sup> When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. *Selah*"<sup>3</sup> When we ponders God, he moans. When he meditates, his spirit gives up.

This is part of the turmoil in Asaph. His circumstances are so bad that when he thinks about God in comparison to what he's going through, he moans. Listen, it's easy to say "God is so good," when you're getting all you naturally want. But what happens when God takes the rug out from under you? Then you're in circumstances wondering, "Is God good? How could he be if this is happening?" Yet, even though his spirit is moaning and questioning and "giving up," clearly his spirit doesn't give up entirely.

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:3.

He can't stop praying. This is what I said last week, too. It amazes me how prayer is the breath of a Christian. A true believer cannot ultimately give up on prayer just like a human being cannot give up on breathing – or else they die! So, one man named Matthew Henry wrote of this psalm, “Days of trouble must be days of prayer (as quot. in Plumer, p. 742).

So, we see here that lament must lead us to desperate praying. If you're not led to dependence on the Lord through prayer, you don't know lament. You're still depending on yourself. But if God is leading you to desperation on him, praise the Lord! He's drawing you to himself. No matter how painful, be confident he hears your prayer! Pray with desperate dependence. *Selah*. Now, move into the next point.

## 2. By allowing us to sorrowing with faith (vv. 4-9)

As I think about Asaph's word in verse 4, I think God is saying, “Don't waste this pain!” Many of us, in our humanity, seek to dull the pain through turning to various other things. Some people turn to drunkenness or food. Some turn to overworking or proving themselves through how good they are in their behaviors. They try to control other people for various reasons. Others will wallow in the pain and be angry. But look at verse 4 and notice something with me: “You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.”<sup>4</sup> Do you see it? You could say, “Maybe, but tell me first.” Ok, here it is. God is forcing Asaph to face the pain. To lament the funeral. And when I say “forcing,” the psalmist also says that God is keeping his eyelids open. In other words, God won't let Asaph sleep.

God is in the midst of the pain. God is there. Elsewhere, we read that God gives his beloved sleep. But in this verse, we see that God is keeping his beloved from sleeping. Listen, if God gives you sleep, praise him! But if God keeps you from sleep, you have to preach to yourself that he is still good! God will only refrain sleep from you with good intentions behind it. While sleep might have been the last type of pleasure to escape from the pain, and God is withholding sleep, this situation preaches to us that God has greater purposes than giving us some sleep for a season. Christian, remember this! Remember this. Don't waste your pain.

Well, what does Asaph do now that he has even more time on his hands? He does a couple of things: **he rehearses God's past faithfulness and ponders what has made him sing in the past.** Verse 5 says he considers the days of old, the years long ago. This isn't him looking at his past. This is him getting outside of himself and looking at how God worked in past situations. This is important for us to do, too. Some people can only look at the sorrow upon sorrow in their lives and continue to say, “My life consists of just one big shoe dropping after another.” But faith requires us to realize that God is at work in bigger ways. My individual life is a part of something so much more grand. That if I can see it from his perspective, hope would arise. Think of it this way, do you remember what God said about the apostle Paul after he trusted Jesus? He said that he has to show Paul how much he's going to suffer. Yet, Paul endured and kept fighting for joy in Jesus. He doesn't look behind, but he looks ahead! He is confident God has only good in mind for him. How does he know this? Because of who God is. And here, the psalmist reminds himself of who God is by looking at God's past works. We can do this, too. Look at Abraham and his pains. But look at God's faithfulness. Look at Esther and her pain. But look at God's faithfulness. Look at Job. Look at Jeremiah. Look at Elijah. Look at Isaiah. Look at the apostles. Look at the saints throughout the ages. And yet, discover God's faithfulness!

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<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:4.

But Asaph doesn't stop here. He does something else quite interesting. He ponders the songs he's sung. Actually, rehearsing God's past faithfulness and songs went hand-in-hand in Israel. Read the psalms. So, this could be one act. But I'm dividing the two here because I find it so intriguing. What we sing informs our theology. And in times of distress, we begin to question. And we can even question what we've sung, thinking, "Do I really believe that?" Do I believe "Great is thy faithfulness?" Is it really "well with my soul?" Is God a firm foundation and a mighty fortress?

In times of despair, we might not want to sing anymore because the songs might tempt us to moan. But we need to confront ourselves with our songs. Now, of course, if they're not biblically correct, chuck them! But if they're correct, they can confront us. We can allow singing to confront our souls and breathe life into us. And it's great faith to sing when still in pain.

Now, as Asaph ponders these things, he moves on. While he didn't have words and he was groaning, now, in God keeping his eyes open, he is able to verbalize his struggle. Look at verses 7-9: <sup>7</sup> "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? <sup>8</sup> Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? <sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" *Selah* <sup>5</sup>

These questions could be questions of unrighteous anger. Meaning that he is so upset because it seems as though God has forgotten. God is spurning. God won't follow through on his promises. Or, these questions could be asked in such a way that we would say, "Of course not! He has not shut up his compassion. He hasn't forgotten to be gracious." I tend to think that these questions reveal the tension of his heart. He's being honest about the questions that are coming to his mind because of the pain of his circumstances. But these questions are being formed and asked out loud because he doesn't really believe that the Lord, Adonai, Sovereign Ruler, would cast off who he is and forget his people.

Here, we begin to see the beauty of faith-filled lament. As the dark thoughts come out to the light, they're able to be addressed. Praise God, he kept Asaph awake. He did so in order to have his burdens come to the light. As a result, Asaph can see more clearly and move forward in greater faith. *Selah*.

But that's not the end of this psalm. We see in the next several verses a third principle of lament:

### **3. By summoning us to mediate with confidence (vv. 10-15).**

Verse 10 says, "<sup>10</sup> Then I said, 'I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High.'" <sup>6</sup>

While I lean towards this translation of verse 10, I need to admit an older translation of this verse. The King James says, "<sup>10</sup> And I said, This *is* my infirmity: *But I will remember* the years of the right hand of the most High."<sup>7</sup> Many older commentators state that the "infirmity" is the psalmists painful questioning of God. I think if "infirmity" is right, then this is talking about the whole circumstance. And, he's saying, "This is my lot. I can't get out of it. I can't change it. But I can do something. I can recall the years of the Most High's right hand." The years of the hand of the most High refer to past actions of God's clear saving power where he showed mercy, forgiveness, steadfast love.

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<sup>5</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:7-9.

<sup>6</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:10.

<sup>7</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: King James Version\*](#), Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2009), Ps 77:10.

Asaph is saying, “While my circumstances look like this, it doesn’t change one bit of who God is and what God will continue to do!” This reminds me of the hymn written by William Cowper that says, **“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace; Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.”** Asaph is saying, “I will trust God’s providence and trust that he’s smiling.” But he will also trust that this is his lot for now.

As I say this, I actually think this interpretation can flow with how the ESV writes it, “I will appeal to this. . .” He is saying that he’s going to raise his mind up and outside of his own circumstances. His circumstances aren’t going to define who God is. God is going to define who God is. And he’s going to trust God never changes because God has said he never changes!

So, Asaph fills his mind with the power of God. Ventura, this is what I mean by meditating with confidence. Asaph fills his mind with what he’s supposed to think. Lament isn’t to lead him away from God. It’s to lead him to greater trust in God. As I’ve said in previous weeks, faith bridges the gap between who God says he is and our perception of our circumstances. Faith clings to the Lord despite our circumstances saying “let go.” Read verses 11-15 with me again: <sup>11</sup>I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. <sup>12</sup>I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. <sup>13</sup>Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? <sup>14</sup>You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. <sup>15</sup>You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah* <sup>8</sup>

To remember means that he is going to recall – and here, he’s not just going to spend a little bit of time and then move on. He’s going to meditate. He will ponder *all* God’s work. Notice the different words he uses for God’s work. His mighty deeds, wonders, might, work of redemption. These words refer to God’s power, authority and miraculous abilities. And he’s going to ponder it all.

Ventura, this is a huge lesson that we need to learn. In my own experience, and in counseling others, the discipline of the mind is, for all practical measures, the hardest thing. I can’t help but wonder if our microwave anything culture has taught us to think that spiritual discipline should be easy and quick. So, someone is struggling and in pain and they’re counseled to ponder God and his works, and they say, “I tried that for a month, but here I am and I’m still struggling.” A month? Are you serious? You think that’s a long time? Plus, are you wanting to simply experience relief from pain or do you want the ability to endure and believe whether it’s in times of pain or pleasure?

My counsel to people is that meditating is a daily habit that is to continue on. For some, it’s harder than others, but it’s a discipline that’s necessary in our lives – to fill our minds with God and his ways in order to tell our hearts to believe what God says of himself. And when parts of us say, “Not true or ‘yeah, but,’ we respond back with God’s truth.” God is not a liar. My emotions can lie. My own thought processes can lie. But God doesn’t! So therefore, I must look to God. Trust him. And not simply glance. I must gaze. I must stare. I must ponder. Even while my soul could be in turmoil day and night, my response must be like that of the blessed man of Psalm 1: meditate day and night.

There is plenty of evidence of God’s greatness and goodness in the Scriptures. Asaph affirms that God’s way is holy. In other words, God’s ways are beyond us, so much higher. They’re absolutely perfect and good. Really? Asaph can say that in the midst of his pain? Yes, because faith rises up to the throne room

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<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:11–15.

of God and glories in him! Therefore, he confesses God is the only God. He performs miracles and can do whatever he pleases whenever he wants. And he redeemed in the past. Therefore, since he's a God who never changes, the inference is that he'll continue to redeem.

Asaph's meditation leads him to confidence. And so it is with us. Preach truth to yourself. Preach the faithfulness of God to yourself! Meditate on his acts. Oh, and by the way, the only way you can meditate on God's acts is if you actually know them. That means you must read or listen to the Bible being read! This would also include having biblically accurate songs to fill your mind to rehearse God's faithfulness! This would include Bible memorization so that you can quickly draw truth to your mind. All of this preaches to your laments and leads you to greater faith. And, I say greater faith because when you go through pain, lament helps you to defy the pain you see by saying God is greater still!

Oh, and he is greater still, isn't he, Ventura?! Even as we are continually encouraged to look back to God's past acts of faithfulness, the New Testament gives us that encouragement, too. Hebrews 11 tells us to look at saints who have gone before us for encouragement. But the greatest "past" even we are to look to is Jesus himself. He lamented in the Garden of Gethsemane. But he trusted the Father in the midst of it all. He didn't stand and say, "Well, I sure with things were different and I guess I'm just a loser." No. He trusted the faithful Creator and Father, and the Bible tells us that he rose up and called the disciples to come with him and face his betrayer. Jesus' lament strengthened him as he laid himself before the Father. And then he moved on to endure what no man has ever endured – the wrath of God. This wrath of God was placed on him because sin must be judged, but no human would ever be right with God if God left it to us to make ourselves acceptable before him. So, Jesus took human beings punishment. And Jesus then rose from the dead, ascended to Heaven to give us hope, life, future, victory! In this past event, we see God's justice and God's mercy. We see God keeps his promises. We see in Jesus grace and truth and infinite love because he took eternal wrath.

And, so, the New Testament constantly goes back to Jesus as our steadfast hope. Will your suffering separate you from God? No. If God is for us, who can be against us? If God sent his Son to die for you, will he now forget about you? NO! Look to the past faithfulness of God and tell your soul with confidence who God is. *Selah*.

Now, Asaph concludes with some final thoughts. Charles Spurgeon commented on this psalm saying that it seems as though this psalm stops abruptly. And I get that feel, too. Read verses 16-20 again with me:<sup>16</sup> When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled.<sup>17</sup> The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side.<sup>18</sup> The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook.<sup>19</sup> Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen.<sup>20</sup> You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.<sup>9</sup>

Ok, so what's the point? While maybe Asaph didn't conclude all of his thoughts, there's sometimes a beauty to be found in leaving things open-ended. Asaph's experiences don't seem to have changed, but his confidence is increasing. The words lead us to think, "If God does this, then he's going to continue to do so." In these verses, Asaph goes back to the Exodus. This was the great story of redemption in the Old Testament. And in that story, Asaph brings up the things that we would be scared of: waters, clouds, thunder, lightning, whirlwinds, earthquakes.

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<sup>9</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:16–20.



Through all those things that would frighten us, he says that God’s way was through the sea. And yes, they couldn’t see God, but he was there! He led Israel through it all and kept them safe. One man wrote of these words, **“Who is more lawless, less controlled by reason than waters and lightnings, and yet they obey God. . .”** (Plumer, p. 743).

I know, some can still say, “Well, they made it to the promised land. And there were miraculous signs to protect them. If I had those, I’d be obedient!” I’m not convinced. Have you read of all the disobedience and complaining of the Israelites? What they kept forgetting was what we allow ourselves to forget: who God is and what God had done. So, call your heart, soul and mind to believe and trust the Lord with all your strength. Because, as Asaph closes this psalm, he ends on a tender note: **<sup>20</sup>You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.**<sup>10</sup>

Throughout this psalm, the psalmist mentions hands. He talks about his weary hands. He talks about the hand of God. Then he says that through Moses and Aaron, God led with his hand. Asaph is reaching out to God and reminding him that God’s hand is holding him. And while circumstances are scary, God knows we’re sheep. We’re his flock. Think of this. Sheep are skiddish. They can get scared easily. Why take them through storms and thunder and water? That’s absolutely frightening. But God says **he knows who you are and he leads you with care and precision. Now, remind your fears over and over again with who he is, and know that he tenderly cares for you. He takes you by the hand to protect and save!**

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<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 77:20.