

NEW HOPE GLOBAL SERMON | 9/30/ 20 How Long, O Lord?



Bible passage: Psalm 13 – The Passion Translation

I'm hurting, Lord—will you forget me forever?^[b] How much longer, Lord? Will you look the other way when I'm in need?^[c] ²How much longer must I cling to this constant grief? I've endured this shaking of my soul. So how much longer will my enemy have the upper hand? It's been long enough! ³Take a good look at me, God, and answer me! Breathe your life into my spirit. Bring light to my eyes in this pitch-black darkness or I will sleep the sleep of death.

⁴Don't let my enemy proclaim, "I've prevailed over him." For all my adversaries will celebrate when I fall. ⁵Lord, I have always trusted in your kindness, *so answer me*. I will yet celebrate with passion and joy when your salvation^[d] lifts me up. ⁶I will sing my song of joy to you, the Most High, for in all of this you have strengthened my soul. My enemies say that I have no Savior, but I know that I have one in you!

Passion Footnotes:

- [Psalm 13:1](#) This is the psalm that describes the journey from self to God, from despair to delight, from feeling abandoned to feeling affirmed. It begins with pain and ends with praise. Moaning gives way to music. We each can take comfort in what David experienced. . . .
- In the wilderness David trusts and prays his way out.
- [Psalm 13:1](#) David feels as though God is hiding his face from his cries. David is left alone to wrestle with his doubts, feeling as though his patience can hold on no longer. Have you ever been there?

Introduction

How long, O Lord? This cry is going up around the world right now. And it either is a cry in anguish and despair – in the darkness of a tunnel with no light at the end. The height of deep emotion and distress.

Or, it is the cry of anguished faith that believes – "In the day of trouble, . . . I am confident that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living". Ps. 27: 51, 13-14.

This week I want to walk together through the anguish of this cry and help us move from a sense of hopelessness or futility to the faith that will grow strong as we wait expecting to see God turn our "impossible" situations around.

The very cry is a paradox – because there are two realities that are affirmed at once. The first reality is in the words "How Long"?

"How Long?"

In times when this is the cry of our hearts, there is a seeming silence of God in our situation - we have prayed, no, rather cried out for mercy and help, but no answers have come. For days. Sometimes months, or even years. Problems or reverses or return of negative circumstances or emotions make our

hearts faint. Our situations seem hopeless and that is a literal, realistic assessment. We are actually running out of money, or have unyielding visa issues, or shrinking time before deportation deadlines, or the unrelenting stress of a heavy academic schedule, or strained relationships, or disappointed hopes or weariness from burden-bearing or unanswered prayer.

Thinking over each of our New Hope Global members, one or all of these areas are center stage right now for many of us. We have prayed. But still no change, still no deliverance, still no visible answers and the clock keeps ticking. We are waiting on the Lord, but we are being worn down by the sadness or hopelessness that comes in waves, washing over us.

I poured out my complaint to you, God. I lifted up my voice, shouting out for your help.
²When I was in deep distress, in my day of trouble, I reached out for you with hands stretched out to heaven. Over and over I kept looking for you, God, but your comforting grace was nowhere to be found. . . . Has your well of sweet mercy dried up? Will your promises never come true? (Ps. 77:1-2,8 . *The Passion Translation*)

How long?

“O Lord”

But in the midst of our pressing problem(s) there is also the voice on the other side. . . .A voice we can't and won't forget: “O Lord.”

No matter how difficult things may be, we DO have a God who is the Lord. The Lord over heaven and earth. The Lord over all principalities and powers. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Sovereign Ruler of the universe. A God who knows all our worries and impossible situations and disappointed hopes; a God who is our Comforter, our Deliverer, our Sure Defender and our Loving Shepherd. The God who is the Lord. And this God is in control. Plus, this God is good and compassionate and all-powerful.

Nothing is too hard for this God, our God, our faithful, loving omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God. So, in the midst of trouble, we remember “all your miracles, my God, . . .all your wonders of old. . . . Your steps formed a highway through the seas with footprints on a pathway no one even knew was there” (Passion Translation Ps.77:10-11, 19). These memories help us maintain our vision so we stay on track, with the energy, the focus and the desire to love others and fulfill the purpose He wants us to work out as His workmanship (Eph.2:10).

“How Long,” “O Lord.” Beloved, if we can hold both these seemingly contradictory realities together - one in each hand, and swing between them in faith, we will get through this time with a song in our heart:

May your name be blessed and built up! For you have answered my passionate cry for mercy.
⁷You are my strength and my shield from every danger. When I fully trust in you, help is on the way. I jump for joy and burst forth with ecstatic, passionate praise!
I will sing songs of what you mean to me! (Ps. 28:6-7 Passion Translation).

What songs come to your mind that express this hope in the midst of the impossible? A few songs that come to my mind are:

Press on: (words and music: Dan Burgess)

Though the valley is deep, though the mountain is steep, when the body is weary, when we stumble and fall; when the choices are hard, when we're battered and scarred, when we've spent our resources, when we've given our all,

Refrain: In Jesus' name we press on, In Jesus name we press on. Dear Lord, with the prize clear before our eyes, we find the strength to press on. 2X

Mighty to Save (words and music: Ben fielding, Reuben Morgan)

Everyone needs compassion, a love that's never failing. Let mercy fall on me.

Everyone needs forgiveness, the kindness of a Savior, the hope of nations.

So take me as You find me, all my fears and failures. Fill my life again, I give my life to follow.

Everything I believe in I now surrender.

Chorus: Savior, He can move the mountains, my God is mighty to save. He is mighty to save.

Forever, Author of salvation, He rose and conquered the grave. Jesus conquered the grave.2x

Nothing is Impossible (words and music: Carol Cymbala – sung by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir)

Refrain: Nothing, nothing at all, nothing, nothing at all is impossible, is impossible with God. 2x

It is no secret what my God can do; what He's done for others, He can still do for you, because Nothing's impossible, impossible with God.

When He speaks, we know it's done through Jesus Christ His Son for nothing's impossible, impossible with God.

Refrain: Nothing, nothing at all, nothing, nothing at all is impossible, is impossible with God. 2x

We walk by faith, never, never by sight. Our trust is in Christ Jesus and the power of His might.

For nothing's impossible, impossible with God.

Amen! This is the truth to stake our future on.

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