

**Psalm 88 - A Psalm for the Afflicted**

The issue for the unbeliever is not the discovery of truth, it is the discovery of another reason to reject God.

**One of the most common excuses against faith in God is the suffering that exists in the world.**

**QUESTIONING GOD’S PURPOSE: The Garden. Satan brought God’s purposes into question. “*did God really say? . . .*”**

**Psalm 88 is one of the saddest Psalms in the Bible.  
Little hope or praise in Psalm 88.**

**We can never say “Things can’t get any worse.” WE JUST DON’T KNOW!**

**We know believers whose life seems marked with a heavy dose of suffering.**

ALL of us will experience trials.

SOME of us will experience a greater degree of suffering

- death of a child
- lengthy physical afflictions
- disabilities
- injuries
- financial hardships
- physical or emotional abuse
- inescapable relationships with difficult people
- persecution for Christ’s sake

Is there a Psalm for this person? YES!

- I. The CONDITION of the Afflicted.  
HEMAN is at the END of his LIFE (**88:3**)  
He has been afflicted all of his life (perhaps leprosy?) **88:8-9, 15, 18**
  - A. The afflicted feel FORGOTTEN. 88:3
  - B. The afflicted feel HOPELESS. 88:5
  - C. The afflicted feel OVERWHELMED. 88:7
  - D. All that the afflicted have is GOD. (1, 9, 13). *Even though he has known affliction all of his life, he has not rejected God!*
- II. The DESIRE of the Afflicted
  - A. To be useful for God’s purposes. 88:10-11

- B. To be delivered for God's glory
  - 1. Delivered from suffering. 88:3, 13
  - 2. HEAVEN is an even greater joy for those who are afflicted!
    - a. 2 Cor 1:8-10 "he will deliver us. . ."
    - b. 2 Cor 4:16-5:9

### III. Helping the Afflicted.

- A. Listen, not lecture (Proverbs 25:20) "Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart."

- B. Be there.

- 1. (Galatians 6:10) *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*
- 2. (Romans 16:7) *"Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was."*
- 3. (2 Timothy 1:8) *"So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,"*
- 4. (Hebrews 10:34) *"You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions."*
- 5. (Hebrews 13:3) *"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."*

- C. Do not despise suffering

- 1. **What would faith teachers do with Psalm 88?**
- 2. (1 Peter 2:21) *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you **an example, that you should follow in his steps.**"*
- 3. Jesus Example:
  - a. Lazarus tomb
  - b. Rejected by his family
  - c. Rejected by his people
  - d. Anticipating the cross (in the garden)
  - e. Abandoned by his disciples
  - f. Suffering on the cross

### IV. Application: In this life.

- A. ALL will suffer

- B. SOME will suffer greatly
- C. Is God still there?

**Interview with Rick Warren:**

People ask me, What is the purpose of life? And I respond: In a nutshell, life is preparation for eternity. We were made to last forever, and God wants us to be with Him in Heaven.

One day my heart is going to stop, and that will be the end of my body—but not the end of me. I may live 60 to 100 years on earth, but I am going to spend trillions of years in eternity.

This is the warm-up act - the dress rehearsal. God wants us to practice on earth what we will do forever in eternity. We were made by God and for God, and until you figure that out, life isn't going to make sense. Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is that God is more interested in your character than your comfort. God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy. We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness.

This past year has been the greatest year of my life but also the toughest, with my wife, Kay, getting cancer. I used to think that life was hills and valleys - you go through a dark time, then you go to the mountaintop, back and forth. I don't believe that anymore. Rather than life being hills and valleys, I believe that it's kind of like two rails on a railroad track, and at all times you have something good and something bad in your life.

No matter how good things are in your life, there is always something bad that needs to be worked on. And no matter how bad things are in your life, there is always something good you can thank God for.