

Life Of David Wk 1

Lament

Intro

Ant. Grateful to be here.

Psalm 142 - I'll meet you there in a minute.

I want to start today by acknowledging that even in just the last few weeks, in our country there have been some awful, awful tragedies that are on the forefront of our minds.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

May 14, 2022 - mass shooting in Buffalo, New York, at a supermarket. Ten people were killed and three other people were injured.[5][6][7] The shooter livestreamed part of the attack. The accused 18-year-old was taken into custody and charged with first-degree murder.”

LAGUNA WOODS CALIFORNIA

May 15, 2022, in Laguna Woods, California. There was a mass shooting at The Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church's Sunday worship service. One person was killed, and five others were injured, four of them critically

UVALDE (YOO-VAHL-DAY), TEXAS

May 24, 2022, 18-year-old Salvador Rolando Ramos fatally shot nineteen students and two teachers, and wounded seventeen other people at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

SBC SEXUAL ABUSE REPORT

May 22nd - SBC releases a report including emails, documents, interviews, and more providing evidence of numerous instances of Southern Baptist leaders intentionally hiding, dismissing, and mishandling reports of sexual abuse within the church.

QUICK QUESTION(S)

When we are suffering does our faith have anything to offer us? Is Christ relevant to a world that is full of real pain and real hurt? Does Christianity offer us anything by way of comfort while we're dealing with the trials and cares of this life?

Or is Christianity a faith where we have to put on our church faces - our good christian faces - such that the only way we can talk about how we're doing is some cliché like:

“Oh I'm doing alright”

“I can't complain”

“I'm fine, ya know. Just keeping busy”

I know its good to celebrate the blessings God has given us, but does being a Christian mean I have to pretend like everything is going well, all of the time?

Is Christianity only relevant/beneficial in times of joy and celebration? Or is it also relevant in times of distress, sadness, disappointment, anger, and frustration? Does the living Christ offer us anything by way of comfort when we're feeling low?

1 POINT TO MAKE

I have a very singular focus in my time with you today. The point that I want to make today is that the Christian who walks with God personally and faithfully is more equipped and empowered to deal with difficult times than anyone else.

LAMENT

In a moment, we'll be getting into Psalm 142. Psalm 142 is a Psalm of Lamentation, and as we go through it, we'll be focusing **Biblical Lament**.

Lament - *the expression of sadness and sorrow.*

GET INTO DAVID

David, in the bible was a lot of things. Leader. Warrior. Man after God's own heart.

And... he was a musician and a poet. You could say he was like a singer-songwriter that pours out his heart in his writings. Today, as we move towards concluding this sermon series on David, we'll begin to look at David's emotional life, and **I believe that in David's writings we'll find truth that will empower us to walk in emotional wholeness.**

Context For Psalm 142

In Psalm 142, David's in a cave, fleeing for His life. He's been pronounced as king. He's killed Goliath and a lot of others for the Kingdom of God. Now the king is trying to kill him, and he's hiding in a cave and the king and his men are close by to try to kill him. His life is in danger. He's afraid.

Let's look at David's writings as he is in this cave hiding from king Saul.

Psalms 142

1 With my voice I cry out to the Lord;

with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord.

2 I pour out my complaint before him; (Remember that part of verse 2, we'll come back to that)

I tell my trouble before him.

3 When my spirit faints within me,

you know my way!

In the path where I walk

they have hidden a trap for me.

4 Look to the right and see:

*there is none who takes notice of me;
no refuge remains to me;
no one cares for my soul.*

DAVID PROCESSES HIS EMOTIONS

In this Psalm, and in many other psalms, we see David processing his emotions.

Processing emotions - Appropriately acknowledging, experiencing, and expressing emotions.

Its accepting life as it actually is, and not living in denial of the things that aren't how we desire them to be. Processing one's emotions is accepting reality for what it is and allowing yourself to feel, and respond and adjust and deal with it.

Ever since Adam ate the fruit in the garden, our world has been full of suffering and pain and loss. Like David, you are going to have a lot of negative and painful emotions in this life, and if you're going to fight to pursue emotional and mental wholeness, you need to be in the practice of acknowledging, experiencing, and expressing those emotions appropriately. Now, Jesus came to reverse everything that came as a result of sin, but right now until he returns and makes all things right, we have to be able to deal with a world full of pain and harm and loss and abuse and murder.

This is what we see David doing in Psalm 142 verses 1-4. His prayer life is a means of processing his emotions.

In verse 2, we see that he pours out his complaint to God and tells God of his troubles. We also see in verse 4 that he's telling God that he's extremely lonely and that there's no refuge for him. **The term refuge refers to a safe place. Its where you go when you're afraid or insecure or worried.**

As he is hiding in this cave, to try to find safety from Saul who is trying to kill him, he says that there really is no safe place for him to run to. He's saying that he doesn't have anywhere to go where he feels secure and safe, and he's all alone!

Maybe you've been there before... no matter where you go or what you try to do, **there is no where you can go to get away from what is troubling you!** Maybe you've tried to run away from it or maybe you've tried a number of things only to come to a place of feeling like, there's nowhere for you to go to find safety.

We see David processing his sorrows and his complaints in his prayer life. We see him taking those emotions to God.

The opposite of processing emotions is to suppress our emotions.

Suppressing emotions - when we don't appropriately acknowledge, experience and express emotions. **The suppression of negative and painful emotions:**

- Is the practice of living a lie

- Not allowing ourselves to live fully as humans because we're afraid to acknowledge the reality of pain and suffering in the human experience
- is at its core, an attempt to create a reality where you live in a world that is free of pain, sorrow, and grief.

This often looks like us Finding ways to:

- distract ourselves from our problems and/or...
- Numb ourselves from our hurts
- Always stop the tears from flowing when you think about that one thing that makes you really feel sad or hurt
- Shut down the conversation anytime someone tries to bring up a subject that reminds us of our past hurts

Its:

- a misguided attempt to escape/reverse the curse of sin
- an attempt to save ourselves from the brokenness of this world.
- us trying to bring heaven to earth in our own strength.
- Its trying to create a reality in place of what is truly real and this attempt to live in pretend world leads to a lack of emotional wholeness

PROCESSING PAIN IS DIFFICULT

And we do this because processing our hurts and sorrows is difficult. It can be incredibly painful to:

- revisit painful experiences.
- Think about the time someone abandoned you.
- Dive into the feelings of you felt when you lost a loved one

Processing our painful emotions, though important, is terrifying. Its necessary to pursue emotional wholeness, but its also painful. Its difficult to allow ourselves to accept the full brunt of the brokenness of this world. And this makes sense because we weren't designed to live in a broken world of sin and suffering. We feel that and sense that, and its easy for us to try to reject the reality of the pain of this world.

UNFORTUNATE PROBLEM

And to make matters worse, many have been told by leaders in the church that if they really had faith in God then they wouldn't be depressed like they are. ***"The bible says 'rejoice in the Lord at all times' so I feel like if you really just relied on the Lord you wouldn't be feeling this depression."***

We have basically led God's people to live in denial of their troubles and struggles and griefs which is actually perpetuating the problem. **In an attempt to encourage people to keep faith in Christ, we have pushed them further into emotional un-health.**

EXPLANATION OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SUPPRESSING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Pretty much every therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist agree that suppressing, ignoring, being in denial of negative emotions is harmful. **I'm not saying that you have to think about your grief/sadness/pain every moment of every day, but we also shouldn't pretend we're not grieving when we actually are.** I read an article on Psychology Today years ago where a Doctor who was a Professor of Psychology at James Madison University said that emotions basically serve to give us information regarding needs and goals/desires.

For example: If you had a desire to be in a longterm relationship with someone, but it ended up not happening that way, you'd have emotions that reflects that.

He made the point that **suppressing our negative/painful emotions** like sadness, anger, fear, etc often times cause us to be **more easily triggered** into having sudden, uncontrolled emotional outbursts or episodes at random times.

(Quick Example: Cleaning my room, but not really)

He says that suppressing our emotions is like jamming a bunch of clothes into a closet or drawer. Yea, things look good at first glance of the room, but if you open that door, its easy to see that things are right because everything just comes falling out.

Example. You ever had an issue with a friend or loved one and you were hurt by them and angry with them. And maybe more offenses happen, and you never actually sit down with them and work through the issue, and you find yourself getting more and more upset with them, until one day you snap, and it all comes out?

What happened? You tried to stuff too many things in that closet, and all it took was for someone to crack the door open, and stuff just started falling out.

It is my experience in my life and others that I have counseled and advised that much of our lack of wholeness emotionally, comes from our tendency to suppress our emotions, to jam them into the closet because we're not ready to deal with them.

GOD IS OUR REFUGE

I'm about to read verse 5, but first, let me tell you what my goal is for the rest of this sermon. I want to lay before us, from the Word of God, how our God, and our faith in Him, actually empower us to process our negative emotions more than any one else on the planet. When the Christian walks in faith in Christ, he empowers us to be able to process our negative emotions appropriately.

Let's see what David has to say...

5 I cry to you, O Lord;

*I say, "You are my **refuge**,
my **portion** in the land of the living."*

David, just like all of us, **has many things** that are troubling him

He has:

- The brokenness of this world
- People who should be protecting him that are mistreating him
- Fear and uncertainty and loneliness
- Real danger
- No truly safe place that he can run to

But He also has a refuge.

David cries to the Lord because he knows that his refuge is a person and not a place.

His refuge isn't somewhere that he goes. His Refuge is The One who is with him wherever he goes. David says that God is His refuge, and He's running to that refuge as he pours out his heart to God in prayer... as he pours out his complaint to God, he is running to his refuge.

CHILDREN EXAMPLE

Y'all my children taught and continue to teach me what it looks like to run to a refuge. Oftentimes when I'm with them, if there's someone or something that makes them afraid or uncomfortable, they just run behind my leg. Why? Because to them, I'm their refuge. And the powerful thing about that is that the thing that was troubling their mind and their hearts, didn't go away when they ran to me. But being close to me in that moment helped them to deal with the reality and the presence of the thing that was troubling them.

They were able to find peace and comfort in the fact that I was with them in that moment.

Saints, do you know the peace and comfort of God that He allows us to experience when we run to Him?

1 Peter 5:7 *casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you*

The Greek word for "anxieties" there can also be translated "cares". It is biblical for the Christian to bring all of their lament to the Lord. This verse says casting **all** your anxieties on him.

In **Psalm 62:8**, David writes:

*Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. Selah*

To pour out something is to empty it! If you asked me to pour out a cup in the sink, you're not talking about pouring out some of it. You mean to get it all out. So when David writes for us

to pour out our hearts before God and reminds us that he's our refuge, he's instructing us to remember that God is our safe place and we should bring all of our cares and troubles to Him!

CONNECTION BETWEEN PROCESSING EMOTIONS & PRAYER LIVES

If you have painful feelings and emotions that you haven't allowed yourself to acknowledge, experience, and process that tells me something about you. It tells me that your prayer-life is very superficial. (Let me say that again...)

Let me be more direct. **Show me a Christian who is not in the habit of processing their emotions, and I'll show you a Christian with a shallow prayer life.**

If you read through the many psalms of Lament in the bible, you'll see God's people being very honest and specific with God about what's going on and how they feel. The Psalmists feel so free to be honest and express raw emotions to God that to be honest it makes me uncomfortable to read some of it. You see them questioning God and His faithfulness. You see them asking God to give them justice by bringing death and destruction and disaster to their enemies who have done harm to them and their people.

God wants you to bring it all to him! All of the anger and frustration. He doesn't want you to dress up your emotions. He doesn't want you to pretend you're not feeling and thinking what you're actually feeling and thinking. **He doesn't want empty cliché's. He knows what's in your heart, and He wants you to pour it out to Him.**

If there's hatred in your heart, tell Him that.

If you have a sinful desire for revenge in your heart, tell Him that!

If you're bitter towards your parents, spouse, children, siblings, tell Him that.

If you don't know how you're gonna make it through what you're dealing with, tell Him that!

Bring your lament to God and pour out your heart to Him!

Peter instructs in the verse we read a few minutes ago to cast **ALL** of our cares on Him! Every single one of them! This means, if your prayer life is to be all that God desires it to be, you have to be allowing yourself to acknowledge, experience, and express the full spectrum of your emotions to God!

Look at what David said in verse 2

2 I pour out my complaint before him;

I tell my trouble before him.

David says, I complain to God. What a radically different way to look at your prayer life. He's saying that he vents to God. **A complaining Christian is really just a Christian with a misguided prayer life.**

You can't have a rich and deep prayer-life and consistently practice suppressing your emotions. God is a friend to His people. A relationship with Him is the most important relationship a person can have. **He wants your relationship to be such that He's your person.** He's the One you go to first to pour out your heart. In times of celebration, you praise and thank God. In times of distress and heartache and grief, you cry out to Him first! We are to run to Him quickly, if not instinctively. He is your companion and refuge throughout all of life's experiences if you are a follower of Jesus!

WHAT'S YOUR REFUGE/SAFE PLACE?

Here's something I know about us as people, we will instinctively do whatever we believe will take care of us and help us to be or feel okay.

So if in your life, you aren't constantly running to God as your safe place... as your refuge... then rest assured, the problem isn't that you aren't seeking refuge, the problem is that you're seeking refuge in something that is completely insufficient and inadequate. Every one of us in the room has something that we run to as our refuge in times of trouble. We all have ways of trying to deal with pain, grief, and heartache...

THREE WAYS WE SUPPRESS OUR EMOTIONS

For some of us, we're looking for something to make us feel good, like:

- **Food. Gluttony is when we place faith in food to do for our souls what only God can. Gluttony isn't simply over-eating.** The people of God are instructed to have feasts in the Old Testament. Jesus teaches on how to show honor to others when attending a feast. **He's not against feasting** and giving thanks to Him for His provision. **He's against replacing Him with food by running to food to comfort us in times of trouble more than we run to Him for comfort in times of trouble.**
- **Social Media/Internet.** So many of us, when we get a quiet moment or a little break, we quickly whip out a screen and start scrolling looking for something fun/exciting/thrilling to give us a little bump and make us feel better. We're stressed out, anxious, sad, so we need a boost, so we scroll the internet to find something to elevate us a bit... **often unaware that we grab a screen whenever we don't have anything to do because we're running from our grief and our pain.**
- **Sex.** The enemy loves to feed us the lie that, "You know what'll really make you feel good? If you had him. If you had her... I wonder if such-n-such has posted a pic of themselves lately. Let me see what they looking like. Or... You'd be good if you masterbated. Just one time, you'll feel so much better"

Or oftentimes, we're looking for something to distract us. I know for me, when I heard about the shootings, I just didn't want to think about it. I wanted to put my mind on other things. Oftentimes we distract ourselves with things like:

- Busy-ness. For some of us, the unprocessed sadness and grief is so bad that we just have to stay doing something because we can't stand to be still for any period of time because if you stay still and quiet, you'll feel that grief that you jammed in the closet working its way out. You'll feel your brokenness. You'll feel your heartache. You'll feel your sadness. And you're terrified to acknowledge it so you just find something else to do
- Entertainment. You have to have shows on Netflix or Hulu or video games or whatever that you're into because you have to find something to fill the time between when you get home and when you fall asleep. You can't just spend that time alone with yourself, so you have to fill it with something that can hold your attention.

For some of us, we're looking for something to numb us, like:

- Substance abuse. Often times when someone abuses alcohol or drugs, we look at the abuse of that substance as their problem. **Abusing a substance is a problem, but its generally not the first problem.** Often times there was another problem that they didn't know how to effectively cope and deal with... so they ran to a substance to numb them from the pain of the problem that they're not dealing with. Often times, people have problems before substance abuse became a problem.
- Denial. I'm going to pretend that this isn't actually a thing. Maybe you grew up under the belief that admitting that you're sad and hurting is a sign of weakness and you need to "man-up" or "woman-up" and just keep pushing.

I wonder what you've done recently when you've heard about many of the awful things that have been in the headlines the last few weeks, or when difficulty and trouble has come into your life recently. Did you just try not to feel? Did you suppress your emotions? God desires us to cast all of our cares on Him.

I imagine there are some of us who don't know how to begin processing through our emotions. If that's you, here's what I want you to do. I want you to go to feelingswheel.com or if you want, you can go to the sermon page and find [a link](#) to it in my sermon notes. It has a wheel diagram that lists out many different emotions that we experience, and I find it to be very helpful.

And I want you to prayerfully read and consider all of the emotions that are on that wheel diagram, asking the question, am I experiencing this emotion in any way in my life right now? And if so, the same way you might share how you're doing with a trusted friend, share with God what you're feeling and why you're feeling that way. Pour out your heart to God by using this diagram of emotions to give you the vocabulary share with God as fully and precisely as you can how you're doing.

One thing that I'd really recommend is writing down those prayers in a way that someone might write in a journal. I know for me, having to write it out forces me to think deeply about what I'm

feeling, which helps me to really pour out my heart to God instead of just giving superficial prayers.

Whatever way you choose to pour out your heart to God as you take refuge in Him, there are two things that I want you to keep in mind about God as you do this.

1. He Is With You and He Gets it

Man of Sorrows, Acquainted with Grief

When we are hurting, we so often crave to be around those who get it. No matter what pain you have, He is the only one who understands it fully.

The irony is, the enemy would have us to believe that God isn't with us when we're going through pain, when the truth is, in times of distress no one is closer to us than He is.

Psalm 34:18 *The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*

I want to encourage you to not let your suffering tell you who your God is. No, you look at God's suffering to tell us who your God is.

His suffering tells us that when things are difficult and painful and full of sorrow, He is there for His people.

2. He will Return To Take The Pain Away

Not only is He **kind and caring enough to walk with us through** all of our hurts in this life, but He is also **mighty enough to destroy our pains when He takes us home** in the next life.

The heaven on earth that we are looking for when we suppress our painful emotions, He will provide for us at His return.

He won't provide it through weak, Christian Cliches like:

- "Just pray about it and everything will be okay."
- Or by telling us to ignore the current reality of a broken/fallen creation where we do have real hurts

No, He will provide it by powerfully ushering in His glorious Kingdom **where there will be:**

- Healing for the broken
- Relief for the hurting
- Tears of joy in the place of tears of sadness
- No more need for coping strategies or support to deal with difficult times
- No more hurting or sorrow or pain
- Grief or trauma or worry

Because the king will have returned to take all of our lament away.

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

As a final encouragement, I want to read to us the lyrics of a song named What A Friend We Have In Jesus.

*What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer*

*Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer*

*Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.*

Communion