

# A time to weep

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to be looking at this great series in summer psalms. We've got Psalm 4 today. But I'm just going to pray for us and ask for God's help as we look at his word together. Almighty God, we do thank you for your word, the Bible.

And we thank you that that is the way that you've, the primary way that you've decided that you've ordained, that you've planned to speak to us. We pray for our hearts now that you'd help us to fixate our attention on you, that you teach us about yourself, teach us about ourself and the world that we live in.

And would you teach us, and where we need rebuking and correcting and shaping, would you do that? Would you train us in righteousness that we might be equipped as your servants for every good work? We ask for this in the name of Christ.

Amen. And so Psalm 4, great psalm to think about. Great psalm that comes from the king, a psalm of David.

He's the leader of God's people. And what we see is David looking out on his people. And what he thinks of his people. I wonder what leaders in our world today think as they look out on their own people in the nations that we see in today's world.

[ 1 : 14 ] I want to read out a speech, a bit of a quotation from a speech. You'll probably be able to guess who said it by the end. Listen to this. This is our chance to answer that call.

This is our moment. This is our time to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids. To restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace. To reclaim the American dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth.

That out of many we are one. That while we breathe we hope and where we are met with cynicism and doubt and those who tell us that we can't. We will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people.

Yes, we can. Don't know if you can remember any. Anybody remember who said that? Barack Obama. Yes, we can. It was the famous mantra that he was in his sort of presidential vote, becoming president.

That was Barack Obama. But even our own leaders. Keir Starmer, this one, he said, I want to build a Britain built to last, built with respect, built with pride, because together we have shown that Britain belongs to you.

[ 2 : 26 ] What you see is when a new leader maybe takes the centre stage and they look out on their new role, when they take the reins, there is always hope and appetite that things will get better, that they're there to change, and that Britain as a people will come together and work for the common good, to break free from the shackles and the old ways of society, to make it a better world.

That is what leaders we see today think or say as they set out on their mandate. In this psalm that we have today, we see a king who looks out at the people that he's called to lead, called to serve, and yet his analysis, as he looks out, his analysis of the nation of Israel is very different to the types of things that we hear from our leaders.

And just to forget, let us not forget, we see a prayer here, but these words are not the private prayers of a king, are they? They're the public prayers of a king.

This is a public prayer. All of God's people could read this and actually would sing it, and we're still singing it today, 3,000 years later. The public prayers and songs of God's people.

And what we see is that when King David looks at the nation at the time of writing it, does he see a people that will come together for the better of society? We don't see that.

[ 4 : 04 ] We see a man who is distressed. We see a man who is hopeless. And the only thing that he can do is pray. That is what we see.

And so as we move through this psalm, we're going to see three things. We're going to see the distressed praying king. We're going to see the preaching king and then the peaceful king. The distressed praying king. The preaching king. And then the peaceful king. The first thing is the distressed praying king. Now we don't know exactly the situation that's happening in the background to writing this psalm.

We're not privy to that. But one thing that we can say is that we know that the king is praying. The appointed king. He's concerned. He's distressed.

And there's a neediness to him that's forcing him, bringing him to pray to the living God. Just look with me in verse 1. And answer me, answer me Lord, when I call to you.

[ 5 : 08 ] My righteous God. Here we say, give me relief. Give me relief from my distress. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer. The king's in distress. There's no doubt about that.

Give me relief. Answer me. You can almost hear, can't you? The kind of anguish. There's a suffering, a pleading in his voice. Bring me relief. Have mercy. As I say, this isn't just a praying king. This is a desperate, a distressed praying king. David knows the importance of prayer. We see his dependence, his neediness before God.

I think what we see right from the office, just from a prayer life point of view, is quite revealing, isn't it? I think if we were to look at any sort of prayer life, if you, the things that we say to the living God, the things that bring, that soak up our attention, the things that we worry about, the things that we, when we are on our beds, as we'll see later, and we're silent.

Our prayer life is revealing. Now, I don't know whether you pray regularly. Maybe you are a person who regularly prays.

[ 6 : 27 ] Some people, maybe you've never prayed. And we pray for different things, don't we? Some people might pray for things that they want, or when they want them. Maybe some, they hardly ever pray, but when we're really desperate, then we'll pray.

I think that's quite a fascinating insight into, sort of, if you look at people in the UK, when there's a situation and there's terrible potential consequences, even the most, like, non-religious person will kind of turn to prayer.

And you think, well, what's going on there? There's a few years ago, you might remember, I think it was, there was a footballer called Fabrice Mwamba, and in the middle of the football match, he just collapsed.

And he needed, sort of, medical expertise to get on, and he was, I think he was clinically, like, his heart had stopped beating for, like, 78 minutes.

But all around the stadium, people made impromptu signs, and at the next football matches saying, pray for Mwamba, hashtag pray for Mwamba. Like, just, sort of, a distressing circumstance that brings people, that brings prayer out of people.

[ 7 : 42 ] It's interesting, isn't it, that those, the things that we pray for, the things that people pray for, says a lot about a person.

I just wonder, I wonder what our prayer lives would say about us. Maybe how often we pray, what we pray for, is it in desperation?

Is it only, I mean, it's good to pray in desperation, is it only ever in desperation? Your prayer life, if exposed, would say a lot about us.

I wonder myself, if I was to, sort of, if you could see a record of it all, what that would say about me. What do we notice about David here?

Well, we notice that David is not afraid of being honest with God. He's not afraid of being honest about how he feels.

[ 8 : 39 ] There is an emotional outpouring, isn't there? We're known as Brits, I think, maybe we've moved a little bit since in the last 50, 60 years, but traditionally we've been known as being quite a reserved culture of showing emotion can be quite hard.

We struggle with that as you think of people from other nations. There's even a name for somebody who is, sort of, more open and emotional. They say that person wears their hat on their sleeve.

They're kind of, that's what they say. There's a lot, you know, there's a lot of other nations that are more emotional. And yet what we see here is that it's okay, it's good, in fact, to pour out your emotion and bring that emotion to the living God in prayer.

That's what we see from David here, that emotions with God is a safe place. It means that if you're distressed, if you're in anguish, you don't need to keep those things locked away in the recesses, the nooks and crannies of our hearts, but we can bring them openly to God.

And there's not a particular language that you need to, sort of, be restrained and, sort of, oh, I could never, sort of, say that to God in prayer. You can, you can, you can, you can tell him how you feel with absolute open honesty of your heart.

[10:13] You can pour it out. David exposes himself. And even more so, he exposes his heart because, remember, this prayer is public.

It is public. It is for all God's people to listen in on. You see what that also means? It means that you can be open in prayer, not just in, and you put in your own prayer, you know, private prayer.

It means you can bring your emotions to the Lord with other believers. When you're praying with other believers together in a, you know, a time of prayer, you can lay all out before the Lord.

You don't have to be reserved privately, and you don't have to be reserved publicly when you're speaking to the living God. You don't need to hold back. Even if others are there, David's prayer here gives us permission to let it all out.

To let it all out. We know Jesus was an emotional man. John 11, he weeps at the death of his friend.

[11:29] But what is it that distresses David? Why does he call to God to hear his prayer? You can sense the urgency, the anguish. But the question is, what is it all about?

Well, what we see in the next few verses is what David is concerned about, what he's desperate for, what brings him this distress. And we see it with who he's speaking to and what he says.

And we're going to see that. It's almost a prayer that can, he's praying, but he sort of switches to almost like preaching, to speaking to the people that are listening to him pray.

So second point is we have the stressed prayerful king, now we've got the preaching king. It is people, the nation, that are causing distress to David with how they treat God.

It's the people. David looks out on the people. He doesn't say, together you're great, you're going to change everything. No, he's distressed at them. He's distressed. And he confronts them.

[12:36] And what we see actually from verses 2 to 5 is we kind of see this kind of almost like a little mini sermon in his prayer. You see the first thing that he says?

He kind of has three points as well. It must be a classic sort of, it almost lays the groundwork for the way that we might do things.

The first point from David is like a mini sermon. Look with me. Verse 2, see what he says? How long will you people turn my glory into shame?

How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? You see the first point, how long are you going to keep on sinning? How long are you going to keep on disrespecting God?

How long are you going to keep on misrepresenting him and turning him to other things? How long are you going to keep on living like that? It's this way of life that he sees in the nation of Israel that causes him anguish, distress.

[13:35] He's distressed by their lifestyle. Can you imagine hearing that from one of our leaders? He doesn't say how great the nation is. He doesn't say that they can make it through together.

It's not make Israel great again. Their lives bring him to tears. A leader with this message today wouldn't last very long.

In a democracy, this is a way to get no votes. Saying, I'm distressed to all of you. Looking out of the nation, I'm distressed to all of you. But it's what God's people need to hear.

They need to be alerted to it. They need God's king, God's representative to the people.

Remember, he is installed by God as God's mouthpiece. He's more than a king. He's a prophet.

To tell the people not just what he thinks personally, but this is what God thinks. It reminds us of the Lord Jesus.

[14:37] Jesus, when he looked out over Jerusalem, he wept as he looked out on his people. And I suppose, just as the first point of this mini-sermon, And it sort of reminds us that when we look at how people, maybe in our nation, But maybe in our own communities, When we see how they treat the living God, When we see how they treat our king, Does it move us?

Does it distress us? Does the fact that Jesus is not honoured, What does that, does it move us?

Because of how much we love him, And how much they're treating the one that we love. So that's the first point of Jesus' and David's mini-sermon. How long will you keep on sinning?

The second point of his mini-sermon, We have a promise and a warning. See in verse 3, It's the second point, It says this, He says this, Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself.

The Lord hears when I call to him. He listens to me, Because I'm being faithful. And then he says to them, Tremble and do not sin. When you're on your bed, Search your hearts and be silent.

[15:55] There is a promise and a warning, A carrot and a stick. He's saying to them, Do you want to be set apart by the Lord? You can see me, the faithful, He set me apart, So that he hears when I call to him.

Do you want to be heard? Israel should know this. He shouldn't have to remind them. I mean, you think it's, At the time this was written, It's not that long ago, That their ancestors were rescued out of Egypt, From Moses.

Why are they now turning to false gods? Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. If you're godly, David is saying, If you're godly, You will be favoured.

You will be heard. That's the carrot. Then comes the stick, Verse 4, Tremble and do not sin. That word for tremble, Kind of means to stand in awe.

You know, To be so amazed by the thing that you're looking at, That it's almost caught, You're so, Almost, Like, It's the kind of thing of being starstruck.

[17:10] You know, The god in front of them is so incredible, That they're so in awe, That it causes them to shake.

Stand in awe. Tremble before this god, And do not sin. Search your hearts. When you're on your beds, And the end of the day, And you've looked back at the way that you've lived that day, Search your hearts.

And the only response, If you were to do that, Would be silent. You don't have any exclusives. Be silent. Don't answer, You can't answer the living god back. Well, you see what he's doing there.

He's saying, Consider the way that you've lived. Search your hearts. Reflect. Think about what you're doing. And then turn to the living god. Turn and realise that the god that you will stand before, Is the same god, That is speaking through David.

He's the god of the bible. Consider the greatness of god. Consider everything that you've done, Is seen by him, And lets you stand back.

[18:19] Stand in awe of the god, Who made you. How long will you keep on sinning? Then be warned. The carrot and the stick.

And the final point is, Come and worship. Verse 5. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous, And trust in the lord. Once you've realised the way that you've lived, Come to the living god.

Come to offer a right sacrifice. Offering a sacrifice, Is kind of a way that, It's an acknowledgement, That you can't pay for your own sin.

Offer a sacrifice that would pay, For all the things that you've done, That you've realised. Once you've resented, Once you've stood in awe, Of almighty god, After you've trembled before him, Now that you've searched out, And been silent, Come and offer a sacrifice.

To remind yourself, That you do not, You can't, You can't depend on what you've done in the past, But you actually must throw yourself, On the living god, Providing a way to pay for your sin.

[19:27] A sacrifice. A sacrifice. And it's the, That's the answer for us, Isn't it? That, And it's the answer for, For the people, For maybe the people that, For everyone, That after we tremble, And, At our own sin, As we realise that the living god, The one that we stand in awe of, Is the one that sent his son.

That we can come, We don't have to offer our own sacrifices, But we come, And we remember, The sacrifice of the lord Jesus, In our place, To pay for all the things, That have made us, Tremble.

The reason that we tremble, Before the living god, Because we're not worthy of him. All the things that we've done, When we've turned his glory into shame, When we've loved delusions, Where we've sought false god, He has paid, For all the mess that we've made, By sending his son, To die for our sins.

We don't offer sacrifices, Because Jesus is the one sacrifice. Come and worship God. Come and worship God.

When David's world distressed him, When he agonised over the hearts of the people, And how they treat God, And almost in answer, Into his own prayer, He is moved so much, That he can't not tell them.

[ 20 : 55 ] He can't not tell them. He has to speak. He's compelled. What distresses us? What distresses us? Does it distress us?

Do we call and plead, In anguish and distress, About those in our world, Maybe our community, Maybe our family members, Who turn away from God? Do we mourn at the lack of, Honour given to our king?

Does it distress us? When it does fill us with anguish, What do we do? I think the answer, There's two things, Isn't there? The first is, Get on our knees for them.

Plead, Plead. That they would hear this message, And come to realise, To stand before the living God, Without Jesus, Is that, Should cause people to tremble. And the second thing is that, To let them know, They need a saviour.

They must know, They must, They must know, That the living, The consequences, So that they would, Tremble. But know that the living God, Has made a way for every person, Who turns to him, Can be, Have their sins washed away.

[ 22 : 01 ] The verse that we started, The beginning of the service of, That their sins would be, As far as the east is from the west. So we've got the distressed praying king, The preaching king, And then finally, The peaceful king, The peaceful king.

In the remaining three verses, From six to eight, We see David as, He started praying, And we've got this little mini sermon, And then he reverts back, To praying.

But, The way that he now prays, Is different. You see, This isn't a cry for help, This isn't a plea, Or a cult, There's no signal of distress here.

You see, What is it that, What do we see here? Just look with me in verse six. Many Lord are asking, Who will bring us prosperity? And then he says this, Let the light of your face, Shine on us. Let the light of your face, Shine on those, Who have gone the wrong way. Those who longed for delusions, Who turned his glory into shame, Those people, The many, The false God worshippers, Those that have turned towards something, That promised everything, And yet delivered nothing.

[ 23 : 16 ] The many, Looking for satisfaction, In the wrong places. Would you shine on them? Would you let the light of your face, Shine on them, And on us?

What do we see? That there is an awareness here, That, David proclaims the message of the gospel, But he realises that, That message in and of itself, Can't change anyone's heart.

That David depends on the living God, To illuminate the message, To their hearts, Shine on their hearts, So that they understand, What I've said to them, And move them by, By your Holy Spirit, In other words, Let the light of your face shine, It's an echo, From the priestly prayer, We often close the service, With it.

It is an image of God, Almost like the life giving sun, Shining down, Used to symbolise his presence, The same thing that Paul writes about, In 2 Corinthians 4, You see what he says?

He says, For God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, Made his light shine in our hearts, To give us the light, Of the knowledge of God's glory, Displayed in the face of Christ.

[ 24 : 34 ] Without that light shining from the living God, We were still in darkness. But you see, The living God shone that light in our hearts, Something that happened in us, Something that happened in us, Happened on the same scale, As the beginning of creation.

Let God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, That's what he says in Genesis 1, He made the light, That same creative light, Making a new creation inside of us, That can only be done by the living God.

He made us realise God's glory, Displayed in the face of Jesus. That's what David is praying. That is what we pray, For the people that we love.

To pray that, It distresses us that they don't love him, But would you shine on them? Would you give them the light of the knowledge, Of God's glory in the face of Christ?

Would you create a new creation, Inside their hearts? Would you reveal yourself to them? And you see what, What they answer, You see what happens.

[ 25 : 45 ] You see what he asks for, When that light will shine on his heart, He said, He says, Fill my heart with joy, When their grain and new wine abound, When they turn, When we see fruit, Welling inside them, Grain and new wine, Spiritual fruit, He knows that will fill my heart with joy, Fill my heart with joy, By bringing them to new life, In peace I will lie down and sleep, For you alone, Alone Lord, Make me dwell in safety, I'll have joy, I'll have peace, Because those who've agonised, Those that I've agonised over, Have come to know you, Have come to know you, It will surpass and

be greater, Than any other joy, The joy of the Lord, God's full of joy, Jesus is the most joyful man, That ever walked the earth, And he fills David's heart with it, I will lie down, And sleep in peace, I will lie down and sleep, Because I know, That the people I've agonised over, I'm placing into your hands, I know that you've got this,

I know I can leave it in your hands, I know that the success, Of the gospel, Is out of my hands, I don't need to feel the burden, Of it, Because it's not my job, To win people to, To worship you properly, That's your job, I'll leave it in your hands, Gospel ministry, Spiritual fruit, Is down to the Lord, So we can sleep in peace, Because we put it in his hands, If you're distressed, At family members, Who don't know Christ, We can lie down in peace, Because we leave it to the Lord, Knowing it's in his hands, A psalm of David, The king's prayer book, It is Jesus' prayer book, And so, Whilst we've been talking about King David, It reminds us doesn't it, That if, That King David is the, He's the great, If King David is, The distressed prayer, The great preacher, And the peaceful king, How much more is Jesus, The great praying king, The great preaching king, And the great peaceful king, He is, Our saviour, Is the great praying king, So many accounts of Jesus praying, Being emotional in prayer, In John 17, In the night Jesus, Was betrayed before his crucifixion, He put, He was, Full of anxiety, So that it's so much, That he, He, There was sweat drips, Drops of blood, But the, The amazing thing is, That our king is still praying for us, You know, Jesus is still in, Distressed in many ways, Peaceful and yet, Distressed, Sorrowful yet rejoicing, Because, He looks out, And he wants people to turn to him, He cares about us, Romans 8, 34 says, Christ Jesus, Who died more than that, Was raised to life, Is at the right hand of God,

And is also interceding for us, He's praying for you now, He will never stop interceding for you, And for his world, At the right hand of God, He is praying, Jesus is the great praying king, If Jesus needed to pray, How much more do we need to get on our knees?

Secondly, We see Jesus is the great preaching king, Many times, Jesus preaching to his people, Matthew 4, He goes through Galilee, Teaching and proclaiming, The good news of the kingdom, He tells people of their need, For him to turn away, From their sin, And turn to him, He's the great preacher, And he tells them to turn, To stand in awe of the living God, And then finally, He's the great peaceful king, He's satisfied, He has perfect joy, In relationship with his father, Full of joy, When people turn, Turn to the living God, Full of peace, The peace of the plan, That he made, With his father, Before the creation of the world, And the promise, Is, That when, One day, We will know that perfect joy, And perfect peace, And the peace, And the joy that we experience today, Are foretastes of the perfect joy,

[ 30 : 16 ] And peace we will experience, These things I have spoken to you, That my joy may be in you, Jesus says, John 15, And that your joy may be made full, Jesus has come, For us to experience that, Jesus has come, How if we're distressed, That we would be sorrowful, Yet always rejoicing, That it is right, That the state of our world, Does make us feel like that, But that as we come, And we pray, And we bear our hearts, To the living God, About those we love, About the state of the world, That he will give us peace and joy, Difficulties in life, Won't disappear, But we will be able to say, With the psalmist, You have filled my heart, Or fill my heart with joy, When their grain and new wine abound, In peace I will lie down and sleep, For you alone Lord, Make me dwell in safety,

Thank you,