

When God seems far away

Introduction

Most of us know what it is like to go through hard times and the sense of loneliness that deep personal struggles can bring. At times we do of course feel free to talk to a friend or a family member and we find that simply talking about it helps us to get a better perspective or the strength to carry on. At other times however, we find that we are unable to share our burdens and our only recourse is to take our problems to the Lord in prayer. This is the great privilege that every believer has, a privilege that we should never take for granted or ignore. But there are times when even after we have prayed, we still feel alone and abandoned. At times like this it seems to us as if God is far away and our prayers have not been heard. We wonder whether we have done something to cause the Lord to draw away from us or worse, whether the Lord is there at all.

One of the encouraging things about the book of Psalms is that the Psalmists' own experience of life so closely mirrors our own. We find Psalms of thanksgiving and of praise to mirror our own experience of God's goodness and grace. But we also find Psalms of lament which echo our deepest struggles and which, if allowed to speak to our minds and hearts, can renew our faith when it is most under pressure. Psalm 13, our text for this study, is one such Psalm.

Psalm 13 begins with an honest and heartfelt question, a question born out of the Psalmist's sense of being alone and forgotten by God. The language of the Psalm is graphic and reflects the depth of Psalmist's struggle. As we move through the Psalm we see however that lament (verses 1-2) gives way to renewed prayer (verses 3-4) and that renewed prayer gives way to quiet confidence that the Lord will answer in His time and that even in the midst of trials the Lord in fact continues to be good to His people.

Read Psalm 13:1-6

Investigate

1. What circumstances did the Psalmist face?

Think



1. In what way is the Psalmist's situation and response applicable to us today?

2. How would you use this Psalm to encourage someone who is going through a difficult time and who feels that God does not care?



Apply

1. What key things have you learnt from this Psalm?



In what ways has this psalm challenged your thinking?



In what way has this Psalm encouraged your heart?



What changes do you need to make in the light of this Psalm?