

# Psalm 88

by Henry Law

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*Psalm 88 is a cry for relief from God, highlighting the Psalmist's desperation and hopelessness, but ultimately pointing to Jesus as the source of redemption and forgiveness.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 88:1-15

**Topics:** "Persistent Prayer", "Suffering Faith"

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## Description

Henry Law preaches on Psalm 88, depicting the deep anguish and despair of the psalmist as he cries out to God in the midst of overwhelming troubles and the feeling of being abandoned. Despite the intense suffering and loneliness, the psalmist clings to God as his only hope and salvation, emphasizing the importance of persistent prayer and seeking God's presence even in the darkest moments of life.

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## Transcript

Sounds of bitter grief wail through this Psalm. We hear the mourning of a wounded spirit. All earthly refuge is shunned; help only is in God.

1-2. "O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry."

This Psalm is received as the wailing of Heman the son of Zerah. He was illustrious among men for mental gifts. Solomon scarcely exceeded him in wisdom. But under sense of sin he did not find relief in intellect. He flies to God, and pours out his heart in prayer. The whole strain is misery at its full. There is but one word of comfort. He calls upon God, as the God of his salvation. Grasping the plank of saving grace, he could not sink. Let us learn the happy art of wrestling with God, in like spirit of supporting faith.

3-5. "For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to the grave. I am counted with those who go down into the pit; I am as a man who has no strength. Free among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more; and they are cut off from Your hand."

His soul is faint through excess of anguish. All vital power seems to be extinct. He regards himself as utterly cut off from life, and as now moldering in the grave. So terrible was his grief that he speaks of himself as already an inhabitant of the tomb.

6-7. "You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Your wrath lies hard upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves."

Misery sighs in deeper notes. He mourns as now separated from God. He wails as though lying in the very pit--amid all blackness of darkness--in the uttermost depths. Can misery be more miserable! Let us look up to Jesus. He has delivered us from all wrath.

8-9. "You have put away my acquaintance far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. My eye mourns by reason of affliction; Lord, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You."

Troubles lose much of their burden, when loving friends are near to solace. This comfort was denied to Heman. Alone he mourned. Such too was the lonely state of our beloved Lord. All His friends forsook Him and fled. Prayer will bring Jesus to our side. We may plead His promise, I will never leave You, nor forsake You.

10-12. "Will You show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or Your faithfulness in destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? and Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

The plea is urged, that relief delayed may be too late. When we lie down in the grave, we can no more show forth God's praise, or spread abroad His wonders. While life continues, let us strive to magnify Him, before all our powers are silent in the grave.

13-14. "But to You have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer comes before You. Lord, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?"

While we have life let it be prayer. This grace will prevail. Let the earliest dawn witness our supplications. Let our cry be the first utterance which reaches God. Let us thus seek to learn why He is absent from us, and why His smile no longer cheers.

15-18. "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer Your terrors I am distracted. Your fierce wrath goes over me; Your terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. You have put lover and friend far from me, and my acquaintance into darkness."

Fearful is this picture of a soul agonizing under a sense of God's withdrawal. What must be the misery of those realms, into which hope never comes! Let us strive to look off from sin's deserts, to the boundless merits of the dying Savior. He verily redeems from all iniquity. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Let us flee to Him. Let us cling to Him. Let us rejoice in Him. Sheltered in Him we cannot be exposed to wrath. There is redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. O Jesus! we bless You, we adore You!

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