

Evening Sermon Outline – January 17, 2021

“A Prayer from Deadly Pain” Psalm 88

A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician. Set to “Mahalath Leannoth.” a Contemplation of Heman the Ezrahite.

I. *This psalm is a personal prayer psalm, the product of great pain(s) -*

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. <sup>2</sup> Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry. Psalm 88:1–2 (NKJV)

1. *The Psalmist, one of the Sons of Korah, knows God, as the God of His salvation!*

“This is a hopeful title by which to address the Lord, and it has about it the only ray of comfortable light which shines throughout the Psalm.” C.H. Spurgeon

2. *Note his prayer is constant “day and night” :1  
Even every day -*

LORD, I have called daily upon You; Psalm 88:9 B (NKJV)

3. *Note his prayer is fervent, emotional, even physical – “I have cried out” :1 “my cry.” :2*

<sup>9</sup> My eye wastes away because of affliction. Psalm 88:9 A (NKJV)

I have stretched out my hands to You. Psalm 88:9 B (NKJV)

4. *His prayer, like many we see in the Psalms, is first for access for his prayer to God’s presence and for God’s ear -*

<sup>2</sup> Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear :2

5. *His cries and prayers come to God EARLY each day –*

<sup>13</sup> But to You I have cried out, O LORD, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. Psalm 89:13

A. *This is because the pain will not let him sleep!*

B. *This is because he knows God is his only HOPE!*

Verse 13.—“But,” etc. That “but” seems to come in as an expression of his resolution hitherto, that though these were his apprehensions of his condition, yet he had sought the Lord, and would go on to do the same. Suppose thou finds no relish in the ordinances, yet use them; thou art desperately sick, yet eat still, take all that is brought thee, some strength will come of it. Say, “Be I damned or saved, hypocrite or no hypocrite, I resolve to go on.”—Thomas Goodwin.

“Let prayer and holy hymn - Perfume the morning air;  
Before the world with smoke is dim - Bestir thy soul to prayer.  
While flowers are wet with dew - Lament thy sins with tears,  
And ere the sun shines forth anew - Tell to thy Lord thy fears.”

C. H. Spurgeon

II. *This psalm is a near-death or death bed song –*

1. *A soul troubles song - :3*

<sup>3</sup> For my soul is full of troubles, ... Psalm 88:3 A

2. *A grave and pit song - :3 - :4 A*

And my life draws near to the grave. <sup>4</sup> I am counted with those who go down to the pit; Psalm 88:3- 4 A (NKJV)

*In this Heman is like Christ -*

Verse 4.—“I am counted with them that go down into the pit.” Next to the troubles of Christ’s soul, are mentioned the disgrace and ignominy to which he submitted: He who was the fountain of immortality, from whom no one could take his life, who could in a moment have commanded twelve legions of angels to his aid, or have caused heaven and earth, at a word speaking, to fly away before him, he was *counted among them that go down into the pit*; he died, to all appearance, like the rest of mankind; nay, he was forcibly put to death, as a malefactor; and seemed, in the hands of his executioners, *as a man that had no strength*, no power, or might, to help and save himself. His strength went from him; he became weak, and like another man. The people shook their heads at him, saying, “He saved others, himself he cannot save.”—Samuel Burder.

3. *A weakness song – 4 B*

I am like a man *who has* no strength, Psalm 88:4 B (NKJV)

4. *Worst of all, a fear of Hell Psalm - :5 - :6*

Adrift among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And who are cut off from Your hand. <sup>6</sup> You have laid me in the lowest pit, In darkness, in the depths. Psalm 88:5–6 (NKJV)

III. *Why does the Psalmist have such fears?*

1. *He feels God's wrath –*

A. *It is heavy, more weight than he can bear -*

<sup>7</sup> **Your wrath lies heavy upon me, ... Psalm 88:7 (NKJV)**

B. *Multiple afflictions, constant waves –*

**And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah Psalm 88:7 (NKJV)**

C. *It is a casting off, a rejection –*

<sup>14</sup> **LORD, why do You cast off my soul? Psalm 88:14 A**

D. *A hiding of God's face, meaning His positive providence -*  
**Why do You hide Your face from me? Psalm 88:14 B**

E. *Long term affliction, from his youth-*

<sup>15</sup> **I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth; Psalm 88:15 A**

Verse 15.—“*I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up.*” How much some suffer! I have seen a child, who at the age of twenty months had probably suffered more bodily pain than the whole congregation of a thousand souls, where its parents worshipped. Asaph seems to have been of a sad heart. Jeremiah lived and died lamenting. Heman seems to have been of the same lot and of the same turn of mind.—*William S. Plumer.*

*Some of you will remember Jonathan Baldini who we prayed for regularly on Wednesday nights, until the Lord took him home. He lived his life in hospitals, in constant pain and surgeries ...  
Born July 31, 1991 – He died September 6, 2017*

F. *Terrors, distraught, fierce wrath surrounds, engulfs him*  
*constantly, he is drowning in terrors -*

**I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught. <sup>16</sup> Your fierce wrath has gone over me; Your terrors have cut me off. <sup>17</sup> They came around me all day long like water; They engulfed me altogether. Psalm 88:15 B–17 (NKJV)**

G. *This prison of pain is a place he cannot escape –*  
**I am shut up, and I cannot get out; Psalm 88:8 B**

2. *He has lost his friends; God took them away –*

<sup>8</sup> **You have put away my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; Psalm 88:8 A (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> **Loved one and friend You have put far from me, And my acquaintances into darkness. Psalm 88:18 (NKJV)**

IV. *Questions from this hellish place of pain –*

<sup>10</sup> **Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Selah**

Verse 10.—“*Shall the dead arise and praise thee?*” So far from this being an argument against the resurrection, it is Messiah’s own most powerful plea for it—that otherwise man would be deprived of salvation, and God of the praise which the redeemed shall give for it to all eternity. Thou canst not show wonders to *the dead* as such; for “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matt. 22:32.) Or even if thou wert to show thy wonders, it is only by their rising to life again that they can duly praise thee for them.—*A. R. Fausset.*

<sup>11</sup> **Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? <sup>12</sup> Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?**

...  
<sup>14</sup> **LORD, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? Psalm 88:10–12 & :14 (NKJV)**

*Some ask these questions all their life,  
because so full of pain and strife!  
They tasted Hell while they were here,  
in Christ that taste will disappear!*

*Arnold Brevick*