

In the face of our sorrow, the Psalms of Lament are an invitation to ordered congregational authenticity.

Order to the Psalms of Lament

- **Call to God**
- **Cry for help**
- **Complaint of wrong**
- **Confession of sin**
- **Curse of enemies**
- **Confidence in God**
- **Commendation of God**

Heman's Story "Crying in the Darkness": vv.1-2

- On the brink of death: vv.3-7**
- Soul is tortured by the thought of what is next: vv.3, 7, 9-12 physically difficult to look at: v.8a**
- Cannot see a possible solution: v.8b**
- Has battled illness since childhood: v.15**
- Finds no other explanation except, "God caused this": v.14-18**
- Friends, family and possibly spouse abandoned him: v.18**
- Left alone in darkness: v.18**

“Psalm 88 is one of the bleakest of all the prayers in the book, but still it is a prayer... the psalmist continues to turn to God to voice his anguish and call for aid. Psalm 88 is the model prayer for those whose previous prayers have been met with silence from God.”

***—Tremper Longman III
Psalms***

**Psalm 88 moves us from crying in the
darkness to crying for hope in the darkness.**

Crying for hope in the darkness—Psalm 88

I. Keep praying—vv.1-2, 9b, 13

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II. Keep listening—vv.7, 10

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III. Keep asking—vv.10-12

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- **Steadfast love/Grave**
- **Faithfulness/Abaddon (place of destruction)**
- **Wonders/Darkness**
- **Righteousness/Land of forgetfulness**

Crying for hope in the darkness—Psalm 88

I. Keep praying—vv.1-2, 9b, 13

II. Keep listening—vv.7, 10

III. Keep asking—vv.10-12

IV. Keep reading—vv.15-18

“Finally, the speaker is shunned and in darkness. The last word in the psalm is darkness. The last word is darkness. The last theological word here is darkness. Nothing works. Nothing is changed. Nothing is resolved. All things deny life.”

***—Walter Brueggemann
The Message of the Psalms***

²⁵And it was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.

²⁹And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

³¹So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself.

³²Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

**³³And when the sixth hour had come,
there was darkness over the whole land
until the ninth hour.**

³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Mark 15:25-34

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

Isaiah 9:2

Crying for hope in the darkness—Psalm 88

I. Keep praying—vv.1-2, 9b, 13

II. Keep listening—vv.7, 10

III. Keep asking—vv.10-12

IV. Keep reading—vv.15-18

V. Keep singing—Title

**For the choir director: A psalm of the
descendants of Korah. A song to be sung
to the tune “The Suffering of Affliction.”
A psalm of Heman the Ezrahite.**

**—*Psalm 88 Title*
(*New Living Translation*)**

⁷Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

**¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and
your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say,
"Surely the darkness shall cover me, and
the light about me be night,"**

¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

Psalm 139:7-12

Crying for hope in the darkness—Psalm 88

I. Keep praying—vv.1-2, 9b, 13

II. Keep listening—vv.7, 10

III. Keep asking—vv.10-12

IV. Keep reading—vv.15-18

V. Keep singing *together*—Title