

**Series:** *Praying and Living through the Psalms*

**Sermon:** *What to Pray When Suffering Overwhelms Us?*

**Text:** *Psalm 102*

**Preacher:** *Chris Blackman*

### **Introductory questions -**

Of the 150 songs in the book of Psalms, the majority are laments. The superscription of Psalm 102 provides a precise definition of a lament: "A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poured out his complaint before the Lord." Generally, laments have a discernible structure. Laments found in Jeremiah, Lamentations, and the book of Job contain a similar format to those found in the Psalms: 1) address to God, 2) complaint, 3) confession of trust, 4) petition, 5) words of assurance, and 6) a vow of praise.

- 1) Lament is a common experience to the people of God. Read Exodus 2.23-25. What's the context of Israel's suffering? How is it described? What's God's response to Israel's suffering? What verbs are used to describe God's actions?
- 2) The fact that the Lord, the God of the covenant, is present in the struggles of his people is one of the pillars of Israel's faith. And so with us, God's adopted children through Christ's death and resurrection. Is that a comforting thought for you? How?

### **Read Psalm 102 and consider -**

- 1) The Psalmist cry to God (vv.1-2)
- 2) The Psalmist's circumstances (vv.3-11)
- 3) The Psalmist's confession of trust (v.12-22)
- 4) The Psalmist's petition (vv. 23-24)
- 5) The Psalmist's vow of praise (vv. 25-28)

### **Reflection questions -**

- 1) What words and phrases does the Psalmist use to describe his suffering?
- 2) What words and phrases does the Psalmist use to appeal to God?
- 3) What does the Psalmist wish on his enemies? What do you think about that?
- 4) The Psalmist ends this song with a reference to "the children of your servants" (v.28), an idea first mentioned in verse 18 (a generation to come). What does the Psalmist request of the Lord for the heirs of Israel? What's the relevance of such request in light of God's salvation history?
- 5) What, in your context, would you want God to "hear" from your life? What about the life of your children?

### **Prayer -**

Take some time over the next week to write a lament to God, beginning with the line, "Hear my prayer, Lord".