

Sermon Series: *Praying and Living through the Psalms*

Sermon: *What to Pray When I am in Distress*

Text: *Psalm 80.1-7*

Preacher: *Josiah Katumu*

Introductory questions -

The retelling of God's mighty deeds towards Israel is a common feature of the Psalms. Specifically in the context of laments, the recalling of God's guidance and provision throughout their history had the purpose of, on the one hand, encouraging Israel towards faith and trust, and on the other hand, calling upon God's continued blessing and salvific intervention.

- 1) Read Genesis 48. What's the context of the conversation between Joseph and his father, Jacob? What account does Jacob retell Joseph? What image does Jacob use to refer to the Lord? Why is that image so significant? Jacob blesses Joseph (vv.15-16), and subsequently blesses his children (v.20). What's the relevance of such blessings?
- 2) Read Ezekiel 37.15-28. What promise is this acted-out prophecy referring to (vv.21-23)? What are the features that will accompany the fulfillment of this promise (vv.24-28)?

Read Psalm 80 and consider -

- 1) A plea of salvation to God, the Shepherd of Israel (vv.1-3)
- 2) A lament to the Lord for his angry humiliation of Israel (vv. 4-7)
- 3) A metaphor for God's care of Israel and a plea for renewed blessings (vv. 8-19)

Reflection questions -

- 1) How would you describe the tone of these verses?
- 2) What deep feelings does the writer let out?
- 3) What types of circumstances would lead someone to pray like this?
- 4) Does God actually reject prayers? Explain your thoughts.
- 5) Does God actually feed people with sorrow?
- 6) What does the writer hope to accomplish by stating what he does in verse 6?
- 7) Verse 7 is identical to verse 3. Why would the writer repeat these words?
- 8) Is "faith" in God big enough to express frustrations and doubts in prayer? How could voicing deeply felt concerns to God actually be a sign of trust in God?

Prayer - *"Lord God, you reveal to us that the vine of your church is one with the vine of your creation, one in the sap of life, in health and in suffering; we pray you to care for this your vine, that is so plundered and harmed; stir up your mighty strength and come and save us by the light of your face, through the Son whom you raised in power to your right hand."* John Eaton. The Psalms.