

**What to Remember when God seems to Forget
Psalm 74
Sermon prepared for WellSpring Church
May 29, 2011**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Hearing the Psalmist's Cry (Listen Lord! Why?) Dereliction**
 - a. Why**
 - i. do cast off forever?**
 - ii. do you reject**
 - iii. does your anger smoke?**
 - b. This is a repeated prayer from the people of God in times when it seems like God has forgotten, when it seems like he isn't listening, when he seems faraway, when the enemy seems to be victorious.**
 - i. Psalm 22:1**
 - ii. Psalm 43:2**
 - iii. Psalm 44: 9, 24**
 - iv. Psalm 77:7-9**
 - v. Psalm 88:14**
 - vi. Job 3**
 - c. It is good to ask this question when:**
 - i. he sends a frowning providence and I want to amend my ways**
 - ii. when I am seeking to learn God's ways**
 - d. It is dangerous and wrong to ask this question with**
 - i. anger with God**
 - ii. Petulance**
 - iii. self-righteousness**
 - iv. An attitude of Challenge**
 - e. Whenever this question is asked it needs to be done remembering that God is still God, he is the Divine Potter and I am merely clay in his perfect hands.**
- 3. Seeing the City's Devastation (Look Lord!)**
 - a. The Holy City is in ruins**
 - i. Everything is destroyed**
 - ii. the enemies have roared**
 - iii. they set up their signs—ensigns**
 - iv. They were like crazed woodsmen**
 - v. there have been fires – look at the ashes**
 - vi. temple profaned**
 - vii. they acted in Pride**

b. And worst of all there is no word from the Lord. God is silent in all of this. There is no prophet to speak, no interpreter to explain. There is no greater devastation to any nation, any people, and individual than to be devoid of the Word of God.

i. I Samuel 3:1

ii. Lam. 2:9

iii. Amos 8:11

iv. What would it be like for you if there were no more preaching?

c. How tragic it is that we have the word of God and ignore it, despise it. As great as the devastation of having no word is the grievous tragedy of ignoring the Word. May I ask, "how do you treat the word of God?" On a weekend like this when patriotism is running high we might lament that America has left its Christian roots—But we can be thankful that the word of God goes forth.

4. Again, Hearing the Psalmist's Cry. (Listen Lord! How Long?) Despair

a. How Long? Perhaps he realizes the why, now he wants to know how long?

b. Notice too that there is a significant change in emphasis—one that we too seldom bring into our prayers—Not only how long, but how long will you allow your name and your fame to be trashed. Your city is trashed, your people are desolate, your word is silent—How long Lord will you allow this to go on?

c. When will you get your hands out of your pockets and do something about this?

d. Too often our prayers for God to act are all about us and our suffering. Let me implore you to form your prayers in reference to the Glory and honor of God.

5. Watching the Psalmist's Change of Perspective (Yet Lord!)

a. Rehearsing the History of God with His people.

b. Focus on God's Past Goodness and not your present troubles. The present is never a trustworthy interpreter of God's ways. The present is never a trustworthy predictor of the future.

i. A bad present doesn't mean a bad future

ii. A good present doesn't mean a good future

c. What does Scripture tell us about the past of God?

- i. All of past things are written for Our instruction and Good
 - 1. I Cor. 10:6ff
 - 2. Romans 15:4
 - ii. God Hears and Sees: Exodus 3:7
 - iii. There has never been a God like the God of the Bible Deut/ 4:32-40
 - iv. God's Works are meant to be noticed
 - d. I would add to Scripture the past goodnesses of God to his people seen in Church History. History and Biography are imperative reading.
 - e. In times when it seems as if God has forgotten, when God seems far away, when God seems to be ignoring our prayers, when the enemy seems to be victorious—It is good to ask questions. Try these:
 - i. Why has God shown me even the least bit of his favor?
 - ii. How long will I refuse to learn the lessons he is seeking to teach me?
 - iii. How long will I not trust his goodness?
 - iv. Why am I more concerned with my present situation that the honor of God?
- 6. Hearing the Psalmist's Prayer of Confidence (Remember Lord!) Here is what to remember when God seems to forget. here is what to say when it seems like God is not listening.**
- a. Call upon the Name of God—his holiness, his honor
 - i. How long will the enemy scoff
 - ii. do not deliver you people to your enemy—do not let the enemy look to others as though he is powerful
 - b. Appeal to the Covenant of God
 - i. Ex. 2:23-35
 - ii. What is the Covenant?
 - 1. A covenant is relationship of oaths and bonds and involves mutual, though not necessarily equal commitments. There are requirements, promises, and consequences of both covenant keeping and covenant breaking. "A bond made in blood sovereignly administered"
 - 2. Three types in Scripture

- a. **Parity**—as a contract between two equals
 - b. **Grant**
 - c. **Suzerainty**—a greater makes a agreement with the lesser to protect and provide in return for services and loyalty.
- iii. **Some examples**
 - 1. **Adam**
 - 2. **Noah**
 - 3. **Abraham Gen. 12**
 - 4. **David**
- iv. **We are people of the New Covenant—The institution of the Lord's Supper is the declaration of a new agreement between God and his people.**
 - 1. **I am Holy**
 - 2. **My demands are Holy and Just**
 - 3. **You cannot keep the law**
 - 4. **You bring on your self the just punishment of God for breaking this Law**
 - 5. **Jesus has come and Jesus has kept all of the Laws of God perfectly**
 - 6. **Jesus has taken the punishments from God that should have been yours and mine.**
 - 7. **God has agreed to accept the death of Christ in place of the punishment that you are I deserve.**
 - 8. **Our side of this is repentance, acceptance and belief.**
 - 9. **God's Side is to never exact or require from us the additional punishment for sins. (I John 1:9)**
 - 10. **The sign of the Covenant is given to us in the Lord's Supper.**
 - 11. **The assurance of the Covenant is the faithfulness of God. This word is often given to us in the construct of Lve—Loving kindness.**
- v. **Look how this works in Romans 8:25-29—notice the appeal to Psalm 44:22→How Long?**

- c. The worship of God is Ultimate.**
 - i. Let not the downtrodden turn back in shame- Give them a reason to praise, not to lament.**
 - ii. Let the poor and needy praise you.**
- d. The Cause of God is to be proclaimed (Let us speak of you with Boldness) Defend your cause.**
 - i. Do not forget the clamor of your foes.**
 - ii. Psalm 2**
 - iii. Acts 4:23-31**
 - iv. Let us speak with boldness-give us something to brag about and give us boldness in our bragging.**

7. A few important applications

- a. Be sure to know your true enemy—it is very, very seldom people.**
 - i. be careful about villainizing people**
 - ii. be careful not to judge motives**
 - iii. be careful about the brokenness of Christian unity.**
- b. know that your worst danger and plight is an eternity in Hell, not what you are calling a hell on earth.**
- c. Make knowing the praiseworthiness of God your greatest goal.**