

# THE SERMON

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## Third Sunday in Pentecost

Sunday, June 29, 2025

Psalms of Summer Wisdom  
Sustaining Power

Psalm 77

Beloved Church, welcome to the second sermon in our series, *"Summer Wisdom from the Psalms."* Last Sunday, we began a journey through psalms that comfort us in sorrow, invite us into praise, and remind us of God's abiding presence. Today, we turn to Psalm 77—an honest song of one who feels abandoned by God yet finds new hope by remembering the Lord's mighty deeds.

It is not hard for us to understand that in our darkest moments, we may feel that God has turned away, that our prayers go unanswered, and that our strength has dried up. If you've ever cried out in despair, you will recognize the psalmist's first lament: ***"Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?"***

(Ps. 77:7-8). And yet, like the psalmist, we are called to shift our look from our distress to the steadfast love of God.

A few years ago, a friend named Ana lost her husband suddenly to a heart attack. She found herself walking the floors all night, sleepless with sadness and grief. One evening, as she sat at the kitchen table, she opened her grandmother's old leather-bound Bible. Among the yellowed pages was a scrap of paper on which her grandmother had written: *"When you cannot see the path, remember how God led you before."*

That small note sparked her determination to pray to God not only for comfort for her heavy heart but for sustaining power in the days ahead. Each night, she prayed, using simple words to express her feelings at the moment, recalling moments of God's provision—meals on her table, a neighbor's kindness, and the sunrise every morning through her window. Over time, her fear gave way to trust, and her despair gave way to hope. Ana discovered that remembering God's deeds sustained her through the darkest nights.

Let me repeat that last part: *"Remembering God's deeds sustained her through the darkest nights."*

We often need to recall those moments when God has been with us, sustaining us, comforting us, and guiding us.

However, it is not always the case; this is evident in these verses of Psalm 77. We can sense the Psalmist's anguished heart and his desperation when he says:

***"I cried aloud to God, aloud to God, and he may hear me. In the day of my trouble, I seek the Lord; in the night, my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted."*** (Ps. 77:1–2)

What strikes me the most is when he says, *"My soul refuses to be comforted."* It sounds like not giving God a chance to help you, entering a process of deception and hopelessness.

Have you felt that way? Crying out, yet feeling no comfort, trying to find God amid your situation? This is undoubtedly a ***psalm of lament***.

Give me a few minutes to share some information with you about the classification of the Psalms of Lament. There are ***two types of psalms of lament***. There are ***community psalms of lament*** that address situations affecting the community, its people, and national crises. There are examples of community laments that express

sadness or sorrow for the community as a whole, such as war, exile, or social injustices, among others.

The second type, exemplified by Psalm 77, is the psalm of **individual lament**. They address various isolated troubles – problems faced by one member of the people of God. There are many of these psalms written by **King David**; an example is **Psalm 86**, in which David prays as a supplication for help against his enemies.

In summary, according to Bible scholars, there are **forty-two individual psalms of lament** and **sixteen community psalms of lament**. This gives us an idea of the importance of individual lament facing different situations and issues in the personal and intimate lives of those who wrote them.

John Wesley taught that our relationship with God is so intimate that we may bring every fear and despair to the Lord. We do not hide our doubts, but we also do not dwell on them. The psalmist will not remain captive to grief—he decides to remember. Why? Even though we are a community of believers, when we come to the presence of the Lord, we mostly do it in an individual form, praying to God from our own ground, our own reality, and our own situations.

Last Sunday, we reflected on the importance of ***“remembering.”*** And I gave you the visual idea of the Lord’s Supper also as an act of remembrance – *“Do this in remembrance of me;”* as a way to remember, through the bread and cup, of Jesus’ sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins.

Well, remembering helps us recall moments – good or bad- as a way of learning.

For example, let us check verse 11. It says: ***“I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old.”***

In this verse, memory and remembrance become acts of worship. In the Wesleyan tradition, we talk about ***sanctifying grace***—God reorients our hearts toward ***holiness***. Here, remembering is sanctifying: each miracle we recall fills our souls with trust. We revisit the parting of the Red Sea (Ps. 77:16–19), the Israelites’ crossing on dry ground, and the pillar of cloud and fire that guided them through the wilderness.

Scripture assures us elsewhere: ***“Remember the wondrous works [God] has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered”*** (1 Chr. 16:12). And Jesus Himself invites us: ***“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”*** (Matt.

11:28). Rest comes when we cease to pace the valley of despair and instead stand on the mountaintop of remembrance.

So, what is next? Where does faith meet life in this text? Or how can we live out the truth of Psalm 77? Let me share with you three possible scenarios and actions we can take to help put these words into practice. You can add others, too.

- **Share Your Lament** - Create safe spaces where we can bring our honest cries. Find ways in which you can be heard, but also listen to others as a way of communal construction of trust.
- **Exercise the Means of Grace** - Set aside daily time to read and reflect on God's Word. - *Holy Communion & Baptism*: Participate regularly so the sacraments become living reminders. - *Fasting & Service*: Fast from comfort to fast into compassion for others.
- **Remember & Record** - *Journaling*: Write down moments of God's faithfulness. - *Testimony*: Share stories of deliverance in worship and small groups. And recall those stories in different seasons of your life, so you see God's act working through your life.

In doing these things, we do more than remember. We embody the sustaining power of God. We become agents of healing, hope, and transformation in our world.

In your moments of doubt, follow the psalmist's example: cry out, lament honestly, then remember. Recall Moses and Aaron leading the way, recall the sea made dry, recall Dorcas restored, Lazarus called from the tomb—and know that the God who did that is the same God who walks with you now.

May this truth challenge us to deepen our faith, to carry hope to the hopeless, and to testify boldly of the sustaining power of our Savior.

Let us pray:

***Gracious and Everlasting God, we confess our times of doubt and despair. We lay before you our deepest fears and unanswered questions. Yet in your mercy, you draw us upward by the hand of memory, reminding us of every rock you rolled away, every sea you parted, every tear you wiped away. Fill us with your sustaining power. Teach us to walk by faith, to remember your mighty deeds, and to share***

***your grace with a world in need. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Strength and our Song, we pray. Amen.***