

A VOICE TO OUR STORY

I. The Psalms force us to be real with God (Psalm 55:1-15)

In his book, *The God I Don't Understand*, Christopher Wright bemoans the lack of lament in our churches saying,

"There is an implicit pressure to stifle our real feelings because we are urged, by pious merchants of emotional denial, that we ought to have 'faith' (as if the moaning psalmists didn't). So we end up giving an external voice to pretended emotions we do not really feel, while hiding the real emotions we are struggling with deep inside" (p. 52).

We cannot rightly address the Psalms and continue to hide real emotions. The Psalms force us to address the full range of human feelings. Consider Psalm 55. Notice the strongly emotive language David uses. He says that he is "restless" and that he "moans". He refers to his heart as being "in anguish" and to be overwhelmed by horror. He is so overcome with despair that he longs to have wings and fly away.

Scripture calls us to "weep with those who weep". The Psalms give us an outline for doing just this. They give words to our emotions in ways that bare phrases cannot. They force us to cast off our mask and be real with God. The Psalms call us to be honest with life in a fallen world.

Application: Are you being real with what is going on in your life? Perhaps you've heard it said that we are to "drop all our burdens at the door of the church" so that we can worship unhindered. The Psalms seem to encourage us to take a different route. **Perhaps our act of worship is to come heavy but leave light.** The Psalms encourage us to be real with God no matter where find ourselves. We cannot "cast all our anxiety upon him" unless we first acknowledge its presence.

II. The Psalms force us to rest in God (Psalm 55:16-23)

The Psalms not only force us to be real with God they also force us to rest in God. The Psalms are to be read in light of redemption. Carl Trueman explains when he says

It is right and proper, and pastoral good sense, that we [lament], because to do otherwise is to fool nobody, not even ourselves, and thus to store up trouble for later on; but as we do so, we should also remind ourselves that it is not what we feel now that determines our status, but who God was, is and always shall be. Thus, the lamentation should be set, as it almost invariably is in the psalms, within the context of God's larger redemptive acts and purposes.

Reformation: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, pp. 124-25.

The Psalms seldom leave us in lament. Yes, we are to be real with our emotions. But Psalm 55:22 also encourages us to "cast [our] burden on the LORD". Whether it is a psalm of confession, lament, or praise the worshipper is always encouraged to lay his hope on the

LORD. Psalm 55 echoes many other psalms that begin with the brokenness of humanity but end with a steadfast trust in the Lord.

Ultimately, the hope enjoined in the Psalms is realized in the finished work of Christ. As the Psalms call us to hope in God they exhort us to rest in what Christ has accomplished. There is no other place in which we can find ultimate rest.

Application: Are you resting in God or in something else? Life in a broken and rebellious world is difficult. **The Psalms call us to not only be real with our suffering but also to cast our burdens upon the Lord.** Are you doing both? Do you have a tendency to minimize suffering under the guise of "trusting in God"? Or do you have a tendency to focus on suffering at the expense of trust?

Conclusion

The Psalms are the songbook of the redeemed. Anyone can sing songs. Anyone can lament. But only those that trust in Christ experience the full force of their beauty. This is because only believers in Christ Jesus know the One who is the hope to which the Psalms point. The Psalms cry out to unbelievers to find hope in God. More specifically, they call unbelievers to trust in David's Lord (Psalm 110). For believers the Psalms give a voice to our story of redemption. They call us to be real in everyday life and to hope in the Lord.