



FAITH 5 WITH FLAT JESUS!

The week of Sunday, June 18, 2017

SHARE – Share at least One High and One Low from the day or the week.

READ – Psalm 13

¹ How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

³ Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, ⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

⁵ But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

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TALK –

A little background info: Psalm 13 is an example of a “cry for help” psalm, otherwise known as a “complaint/lament” psalm. About 1/3 of all of the psalms are “cries for help” or “complaints/laments” to God.

Sometimes psalms are the prayers of individuals, and sometimes of a whole community. What kind of psalm is this?

Psalms of “cries for help” often share similar elements:

- Telling God that something has gone wrong, something bad/evil has happened.
- Bringing their pain, anger, frustrations, and questions to the Lord.
- Asking God for what they need and want to overcome or correct what is wrong.
- Affirming their faith, trust, and hope that God not only hears their prayer, but cares about them and will answer them according to who they know God to be from past experience.
- A promise to respond with praise and action when God answers their prayer.

How does this Psalm fit the pattern? How is it different?

Theologian and Biblical Scholar, Walter Breugemann, notes a familiar pattern in these Psalms of lament that reflect the normal spiritual journey of people of faith – Orientation to Disorientation to Reorientation.

Some questions to consider as appropriate (some basic, some complex):

Have you ever felt forgotten, lost, or abandoned? What was that like?

Tell a time when you were abandoned, afraid, or suffering in some way.

Have you ever had an “enemy”? Share that story.

Have you ever been shaken to your core? (explain what that means to someone who doesn't know)

What are some of your biggest challenges and struggles in life right now? How could you express that in the form of a question or request to God?

In what ways do you need/want God to help you today?

Why did the Psalmist ask God to both remember them and to give light to their eyes, instead of just defeating their enemies?

How have you experienced God's help in the past? How has God answered your prayers? How is having your prayers **not** answered the way you want/need like being forgotten?

Why do you think it is important to remember that 1/3 of the Psalms are “cries for help”? What is the Bible trying to tell us about our relationship with God?

Why is it so hard to ask for help?

What are some characteristics of God that you can name to remind yourself that God cares about you and can and will help you?

How can you show God your appreciation and tell others about what God has done for you?

How does this Scripture relate or connect to your life and faith, your Highs and Lows?

PRAY – You can hold hands or fold your hands when you pray together...

Thank God for the Highs you shared with each other.

Ask God for whatever kind of help and support you need for the Lows you shared with each other.

If you want, you can pray the Lord's Prayer together.

BLESS – Mark each other with the sign of the Cross on the forehead and say this, or some other blessing you may think of: “God cares about you and is always there to listen and help.”