

## **II. Psalm 88 Shows You How Genuine Faith Can Be Tested and Forged in the Dark**

In the midst of darkness there are some nuggets of faith that are being refined in the furnace of suffering and silence.

### **A. Look at How He Still Prays to God Even though He's Gotten No Answer**

The fact that he's still praying is proof that hope has not died and his faith is still alive.

In **v. 1, 2, and 13**, three different Hebrew words are used for the word 'cry.' It's as if the writer can't express the depth of this kind of sorrow with just one word, but he has to come at it from several different angles.

The word 'call' in **v. 9** means to make an appeal and the word for 'stretched out' means to spread out or open from a closed or folded position.

**v. 9** "LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You."

He is still lifting open hands to God and crying out to Him daily despite how long the suffering has gone on now and how silent God has been. He's not resorted to clenched fists.

He's confused and he has a lot of questions, but he has not lost his faith.

### **B. Look at How He Prays Without Any Felt-Sense of God's Presence or Favor in His Life**

Even though he doesn't feel God's presence or favor and feels cut off and abandoned, he prays and keeps looking to God because his faith is being forged in the furnace.

If you make the choice to hold on to your faith and keep lifting your hands in seasons of darkness, you'll find that the prolonged pressure in those seasons can turn your heart into something wonderful, like pressure that turns a lump of coal into a diamond.

You will have fortitude and poise because it's in those seasons of darkness that you develop a soul that cannot be dominated or daunted by circumstances, people around you, or your own feelings.

### III. The Darkness that We Have in Psalm 88 is Never the Last Word for Any Believer

This chapter ends so broken because God knows there are times in this life that believers feel shattered, confused, and abandoned by God, but the experience of Psalm 88 is never the final experience for any believer! Even though this is the darkest Psalm in Bible, it's not the darkest chapter in the Bible!

The darkest chapter is **Matthew 27** when Christ took on flesh, stepped down into the darkness of our broken world, and took on Himself our sins on the cross where He drank the cup of God's wrath for us.

**Matthew 27:45-46** "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'"

If you feel like you're in a pit of darkness, languishing in a prolonged season of suffering, turn your attention away from this present darkness and to Jesus who stepped into the ultimate darkness of God's wrath for you so that darkness will never have the last word in your life!

(A CD or DVD of this sermon is available. Order forms are located in the Resource Center. You can also visit: [gbcmt.org/sermons](http://gbcmt.org/sermons))

## Do You Ever Feel Hopeless? Psalm 88

### I. Psalm 88 Shows Us the Reality of How Dark You Could Feel and How Long It Could Last – Even as a Believer

#### A. Don't Think It Could Never Happen to You

Psalm 88 is in the Bible for a reason, and one of those reasons is to prepare you for the possibility of a season like this in your life.

#### B. Don't Assume It Will Always End Quickly

This Psalm in particular seems to be talking about a prolonged season of suffering or some kind of chronic illness that's been going on for a long time.

Psalm 88:15 "I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth up..."

This Psalm is a gift from God for anyone who is experiencing prolonged suffering and their soul is in turmoil because they're more aware of feeling the absence of God than His presence or comfort.

The book of **Job** is an example of prolonged suffering. God gave us a very long book with 42 chapters in it for a reason—to express the anguish of prolonged suffering that seems to have no explanation.