

### A. DARK PLACE

- One of the darkest places we can be is in a long season of waiting when it feels like God isn't keeping His promise. This can push us to the limits of our faith.
- David struggled with God's seeming delays. He provides an example of rising above dark circumstances and reconnecting with our Ever-Present God: Psalm 13 NIV--  
 How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?  
<sup>2</sup> How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?  
<sup>3</sup> Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, <sup>4</sup> and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.  
<sup>5</sup> But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. <sup>6</sup> I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me.
- David was feeling the pain of unanswered prayer. He was very preoccupied with how long it was taking for God to act, and it impacted his relationship with Him.
- Our emotions can be unreliable witnesses. When we're distressed from not seeing God move, we can begin to question His goodness.
- Questions like this can be so much louder than what God says is true. These competing thoughts and feelings can block our ability to hear from Him.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*When you don't feel God speaking what do you do?*  
 -- Stop reading your Bible?  
 -- Avoid the people and activities that point you to Jesus?  
 -- Be still and wait upon the Lord?  
 -- Other?

*When you don't think God is listening, what is your response?*

- Stop praying?
- Run to people and things that provide instant attention or gratification?
- Press on and press into the secret place of God's presence?
- Other?

- In our dark places, when it seems like the waiting will never end, we must remember that God is closer than we think and will, in time, rescue us: Ps 34: 17-19 NLT --  
 The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.<sup>18</sup> The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.<sup>19</sup> The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time.
- Insights:

## B. SEEK HIS FACE

- David poured out his heart to God. He told Him that he was having a fight staying out of his head and was holding onto sadness in his heart: Ps 62:8 NLT -- O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge
- In our relentless, “how long” situations, we must look to the Lord for the reassurance that He is still with us and is still committed to us and the words He has spoken:
  - God promises to hear: Is 65:24 NLT -- I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!
  - He promises His nearness: Ps 145:18 – The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth.
  - He promises to help us: Rom 10:13 MSG -- Everyone who calls, ‘Help, God!’ gets help!
- After telling God your feelings, open your heart further by inviting Him to reveal any way that you may have knowingly or unknowingly hindered relationship with Him.
- Have we grieved Him through sin? Ask Him to reveal anything: Ps 139:23-24 NLT -- Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.
- When He shows us our offenses, we need not despair. God has given us the Cross as well as new hearts so that we might live righteously and joyously before Him: Psalm 51:10, 12 NLT -- Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me ...<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you.
- Are there any coping mechanisms that need to be rooted out? While not sinful, they 1) aren't life giving and 2) they compete with our true source of life: Mark 4:19 TV -- The things of this life—the worries, the drive for more and more, the desire for other things—those things *cluster around close and* choke the life of God out of them
- Where are we on willingness to submit and surrender? We need Holy Spirit to move our hearts to a place of trust in His sovereign plan for us.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*Lord, I pause before You now to allow you to reveal anything in my heart that is interfering with Your light and life flowing freely in me:  
 -- Anxious thoughts*

*-- Offensive ways*

*-- Coping mechanisms*

*I'm asking for Your help. Help me stay connected to You and to surrender to Your sovereign plan.*

### C. REPLACE

- When we are so weary from waiting that we end up in a dark place, we inevitably focus on what we are lacking vs. the good things that we do have.
- Faith bridges the gap between God's truth and our dark thoughts and feelings.
- In order for God to enlighten our eyes, we must confront the thoughts and feelings that we've allowed to come in and replace them with the truth:
  - Darkness with Light: Micah 7:8 NLT -- Do not gloat over me, my enemies! For though I fall, I will rise again. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.
  - Anxiety with Peace: Ps 29:11 NLT -- The LORD gives his people strength. The LORD blesses them with peace.
  - Pain with Hope: Ps 22:24 NLT -- For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy. He has not turned his back on them but has listened to their cries for help.
  - Distrust with Trust: Ps 28:7 -- The LORD *is* my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore, my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him.
  - Impatience with Anticipation: Ps 30:5b NLT -- Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.
  - Sadness with Joy: Ps 30:11 TV -- *You did it:* You turned my deepest pains into joyful dancing; You stripped off my dark clothing and covered me with joyful light.
- David traded his frustration and sorrow for a renewed conviction to trust. He turned away from a mindset of lack, looking to the Lord's supply of what he needed most.
- As he let go of his struggle and left it in God's hands, he was able to appreciate again God's unchanging love, salvation, and goodness. (vv. 5 – 6)
- David concluded with new resolve to focus on God's goodness. What an antidote to weariness and a powerful boost to our faith and endurance as we Wait on God!
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*Holy Spirit, I ask you to bring to mind the many ways that Your goodness is actively at work in my life right now. List them here:*

*Lord, thank You for all the evidence of Your goodness in my life. Please remind me to really trust You for them whenever I get distracted or discouraged in the waiting!*

### D. TESTIMONY

**E. PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- **ONE THING**

- The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- **PONDER THE TRUTH**

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

- **PROCESSING THE TRUTH**

Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He is calling you to take. Write down your insights.