

# Worship on the Journey

{the songs of ascent}

## The Journey and Perseverance

---

Psalm 129

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | “Greatly have they afflicted me<br>from my youth” —<br>let Israel now say—                      | 5 | May all who hate Zion<br>be put to shame and turned<br>backward!  |
| 2 | “Greatly have they afflicted me<br>from my youth,<br>yet they have not prevailed<br>against me. | 6 | Let them be like the grass on<br>the housetops,<br>which withers before it grows<br>up,                                 |
| 3 | The plowers plowed upon my<br>back;<br>they made long their furrows.”                           | 7 | with which the reaper does not<br>fill his hand<br>nor the binder of sheaves his<br>arms,                               |
| 4 | The LORD is righteous;<br>he has cut the cords of the<br>wicked.                                | 8 | nor do those who pass by say,<br>“The blessing of the LORD be<br>upon you!<br>We bless you in the name of<br>the LORD!” |
- 

Overview

Psalm 129 is a psalm about perseverance during persecution. While we are encouraged to lament and interact with God about our pains (vs 1-3) this should always lead us to a focus on God (vs 4) and a plea to him for justice (vs 5-8). While God cares for us and hears our grief as we express it, he is also working for his glory in how he handles the wrongs in this world. He is righteous and always does the right thing.

## Introduction

While we live in relative safety as Christians in this country, living in a world that is hostile to Christianity is a reality. Many Christians face physical persecution around the world. Though you may not face physical persecution personally, you may have experienced other forms of persecution, such as relational ostracization, for identifying with Christ. This psalm helps us navigate such events in our lives specifically in three ways.

### 1. Lament [verses 1-3]

This kind of prayer doesn't get enough credit in most Christian circles. Yet, it is a valid and often exercised form of prayer in Scripture. God invites us to openly express our pains and grief to him even as we recall that evil has not prevailed against us (vs 2b).

2. Focus [verse 4]

Though we begin in lament we don't stay there. We focus on God and his character. He is righteous. He always does the right thing. He deals with evil in this world in a righteous way.

3. Ask [verses 5-8]

Finally, the psalmist pleads for justice during persecution. Since God does the right thing and is glorified in it then it is right for him to pray for God's glory as he deals with evil head on.

1. What is your default setting when you are in pain? How do you cope with pain?
2. Do you give time for lament in how you pray? If so, what does that look like for you? If not, why not?
3. When could lament be hurtful instead of helpful? When has either (helpful lament or hurtful lament) been true for you?
4. How can a Christian focus on God (vs 4) even while lamenting? Brainstorm some practical options.
5. How do you balance praying for justice (such as in verses 5-8) while also working to forgive? Is it possible and appropriate to pray for justice *and* repentance of the persecutor? Explain.
6. What is a main takeaway for you from this psalm? How does it change the way you think and/or live?