

Session 5 – Psalm 69: the depths of unjust suffering

Psalm 69

(v1-5) Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.

I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.

Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me.

I am forced to restore what I did not steal.

You, God, know my folly; my guilt is not hidden from you.

(v13-18) But I pray to you, Lord, in the time of your favour; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.

Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters.

Do not let the floodwaters engulf me or the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me.

Answer me, Lord, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me.

Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.

Come near and rescue me; deliver me because of my foes.

(v19-28) You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed; all my enemies are before you. Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none.

They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

May the table set before them become a snare; may it become retribution and a trap.

May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.

Pour out your wrath on them; let your fierce anger overtake them.

May their place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents.

For they persecute those you wound and talk about the pain of those you hurt.

Charge them with crime upon crime; do not let them share in your salvation.

May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.

(v29-36) But as for me, afflicted and in pain – may your salvation, God, protect me.

I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.

This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hooves.

The poor will see and be glad – you who seek God, may your hearts live!

The Lord hears the needy and does not despise his captive people.

Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and all that move in them.

For God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah.

Then people will settle there and possess it; the children of his servants will inherit it, and those who love his name will dwell there.

Looking at the opening verses (1-5):

- **What are some of the emotions and thoughts that we have met in other lament psalms?**
- **What appears to be the cause of the psalmist's suffering?**

The prayer (v13-18) is anchored in who God is.

- **What are the qualities or characteristics of God that anchor this prayer?**

Following this amazing prayer, the psalmist erupts in anger and revenge (v19-28).

- **Do you think this is appropriate after praying such a prayer? If so, what place does it have in prayer?**

Like so many lament psalms, it ends with praise (v29-36).

- **What can we learn from this?**