

## David Flood Illustration with Psalm 13 - Russ Cotnoir

[READ PSALM 13:1-6]

1 How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?  
How long will You hide Your face from me?  
2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,  
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?  
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?  
3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;  
Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,  
4 And my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"  
And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.  
5 But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness;  
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.  
6 I will sing to the Lord,  
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

**When I read these words of Psalm 13 the life story of a missionary named David Flood comes to mind.**

David was a Swede who committed his life to Jesus Christ in his youth. He married a young woman named Svea who shared his commitment to Christ. They felt called to serve the Lord in Africa and arrived on those distant shores with their 2 year old son in 1921. With all their hearts they wanted to work among people who had never heard the gospel. As it turned out, the work was hard, the conditions horrible, and the people hostile and unresponsive. Their lives were constantly in danger.

The Floods had two children in those conditions. Shortly after the second child was born, Svea died. David, already consumed by doubts and discouraged by a lack of results, was devastated. All he had to show for his efforts was just one convert ... one young boy. He had sacrificed his wife and the best years of his life. For what? For one kid?

He had been a fool for bringing Svea to this hostile and cruel situation. He was eaten by guilt and despair. And it was under that cloud of defeat and failure that he decided to leave Africa. He took his young son with him, yet had to leave his infant daughter behind since she was too ill to travel.

A missionary couple took her in and when they subsequently died, she was passed on to another missionary couple, who later raised her in America. In the meantime, David, who was living in Sweden, turned his back on the faith. After his second marriage dissolved, he began living with a mistress. He thought little of the daughter whom he had not seen since infancy.

His daughter, Aggie, however, thought about him often. She had learned about the work he and her mother had begun in Africa, and she desperately wanted to talk with him about it. Aggie later married and together with her husband lived in America. But with all her heart she wanted to find her father. Years later she was able to arrange the trip to Sweden. She found her seventy-three-year-old, bedridden father living in a shabby apartment littered with liquor bottles.

Still bitter, he had one rule in his family: "Never mention the name of God - because God took everything from me."

Tragedy. Despondency. Depression. It happens. It happens to the best of us. It even happens to those who have been called of God to do great works for Him. And that's one of the most disturbing, yet powerful and encouraging things about the Psalms - they deal with *real* life. God didn't censor His word. He presented to us the entire panorama of emotional highs and devastating lows that a person on his pilgrimage of faith might endure. He leaves nothing out. *And He does it that we might have hope.*

In this psalm we find that David writes what we all sometimes wish we could express, but do not dare. "*How long, O Lord? How long...?*" There is no sin in that cry, rather there is *hope*. No greater disservice has been done to hurting Christians, especially pastors, than to dump a load of false guilt upon them by implying that true believers never get depressed or lose hope. This psalm declares with deafening sincerity that *we may in fact lose touch with our hope, but the source of all hope never loses sight of us!*

Experienced nurses tell us that no 2 babies cry exactly alike; and we can say that no 2 children of God ever went through the exact same "*dark night*" experience. Yet for every one of us there is relief in the words of Psalm 13. David's "*dark night*" experience assures us that: ***GOD'S GRACE IS STRONGEST WHEN OUR LIFE SEEMS HOPELESS!***

[READ PSALM 13:5-6]

5 But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness;  
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.  
6 I will sing to the Lord,  
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

What! In 6 short verses he has moved from turbulence to tranquility! But notice this - ***his circumstances had not changed***, there is no indication that his enemies were vanquished, there isn't even a word that God had shown His face or answered His prayer. *Nothing around the man was removed, but something inside the man had been restored.* He realized that God's heart was still a heart of

unconditional, loyal, steadfast love and that *he* was still a man after God's own heart, and that nothing on earth could separate him from God's love.

That is what you & I need to know. As Christians, nothing can separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, God has dealt ***bountifully*** with us.

When Aggie found her seventy-three-year-old, bedridden father, David Flood living in that shabby apartment littered with liquor bottles, that wasn't the end of the story. [David Flood conclusion]

She went to her father and told him she still loved him ... and that God did, too.

"Papa?", she said tentatively. He turned and began to cry. "Aina", he said. "I never meant to give you away. "It's all right, Papa," she replied, taking him gently in her arms. "God took care of me."

The man instantly stiffened. His tears stopped. "God forgot all of us. Our lives have been like this because of Him." He turned his face back to the wall. Aggie stroked his face and then continued, undaunted. "Papa, I've got a little story to tell you, and it is a true one. You did not go to Africa in vain. Mama did not die in vain. The little boy you won to the Lord grew up to win that whole village to Jesus Christ. The one seed you planted just kept growing and growing. Today there are 600 African people serving the Lord because you were faithful to the call of God in your life..."

[Incidentally, that young boy had grown up to be a missionary evangelist to his own country - which now included 110,000 Christians, 32 mission stations, several Bible schools and a 120-bed hospital.]

"Papa, Jesus loves you. He has never hated you."

The elderly man turned back to look into his daughter's eyes. His body relaxed. He began to talk. He soon came back to the God he had resented for decades. Father and daughter enjoyed several days together. A few weeks after Aggie and her husband returned to America, David Flood died. After nearly forty years of bitterness and despair, David Flood's faith and joy were restored. Now, if the Lord can do that for someone like David Flood, then He can do it for you. Its never too late when you put yourself in the hands of Christ.

**No matter how dark and depressing the clouds are around your life. The **SON** can and *will* eventually break through - if you let Him.**

David Flood source information: [Steve Farrar, *Finishing Strong*, pp.13-15; also <https://www.dailyencouragement.net/archives/2022-01-31.htm>]