

Your Troubles and God's Global Purpose

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Preacher: mcl

[0 : 00] We look this morning at Psalm 86, a prayer of lament by David who is crying out to God for deliverance from difficulty and danger and distress in his life.

We've been singing about difficulty this morning and holding on to God's hand. David makes 15 petitions of the Lord, one right after the other in these 17 verses.

And we aren't told exactly what the trouble was, what the circumstances were that led him to write this prayer to God. But he makes reference to a band of ruthless men who are seeking his life.

So let's look at the scripture I'll read as you follow along. For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer. Listen to my plea for grace. In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me. There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

[1 : 31] All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things. You alone are God.

Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth. Unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord, my God, with my whole heart.

And I will glorify your name forever. For great is your steadfast love toward me. You've delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. O God, insolent men have risen up against me.

A band of ruthless men seeks my life. And they do not set you before them. But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Turn to me and be gracious to me. Give your strength to your servant. And save the son of your maidservant. Show me a sign of your favor. That those who hate me may see and be put to shame.

[2 : 36] Because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me. Amen. Those are the words from the Lord this morning for us. Amen. Let's pray and ask his blessing.

Father, we thank you for these words that were written centuries and centuries ago. But they're still relevant to us today. We pray by your Holy Spirit that you'll apply the word to our hearts.

For the sake of your name. For the sake of your glory. Teach us to walk in your truth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. Amen.

so david was recognized as the king in all of israel at 30 years old and he reigned until he was 70 he reigned for 40 years but we know that before 30 david lived a lot of the time on the run from jealous saul and from bands of ruthless men who were out to murder him and psalm 86 is one of those psalms that reflects some of those times of trouble in the life of david you know by god's grace and mercy you and i don't live under that kind of danger or persecution that we're not hiding in caves and running from men that would want to kill us but we do face difficulty and trouble in our lives right we have three enemies the world the flesh and the devil uh yesterday we had a wedding here darius and and becca were married beautiful wedding and uh her father married them and i was talking to him before the ceremony and telling him you know we've been in darius's life since he was in the ninth grade and he said so we have nothing to worry about right and i i said well except for the human nature and he said yeah you're right i'm going to say something about that so we do face trouble in our lives mainly from that that fallen nature right there are times when you feel worn down by the cares of life times when you've cried out to god for relief you've you've prayed that prayer incline your ear oh lord and answer me for i need you help maybe it's some trouble in relationships or financial stress or family drama or perhaps it's failing health or grief from the loss of someone you love or some other situation that you you prayed to god god change my circumstances please come and help me you know we we are uh in america we are so blessed because we don't face uh the the kind of persecution that others face around the world uh but we

do you can relate right that we do have trouble in our lives that sometimes takes away our joy is there a way for you to view your specific trouble you know when it comes to you through the lens of god's universal purpose in the world is there a way to even view severe persecution of our christian brothers and sisters around the world through the grid of what god is doing like uh in the news this week there are 49 christian people who were murdered in a church last sunday while they were at 1 a.m they were in in the church praying for peace in the congo and there's a an islamic uh group that wants to have kind of an isis-like uh caliphate in the congo and and in nigeria and uh another 70 were murdered in another church back in february uh we need to pray we need to remember our persecuted brothers and sisters never to forget uh how blessed we are in america and how much we need to pray for justice pray for peace pray for their comfort you know can knowing god's global purpose bring us peace in the midst of the trouble and the danger and the tragedies of life i want to invite you this morning to learn from david uh this uh how to trust in god's unfailing hand in the midst of trials and just to take comfort in

what he's doing in the world that god has made so we see from david's prayer this principle this biblical truth that we know to be true and it's this god's global purpose is to make his name great and to spread his glory to all the peoples of the world that's god's global purpose is to make his name great and to spread his glory to all the peoples of the world why why are any of us here on this this little planet you know in the vast universe we're just a little dot and then human beings are even smaller dots on this planet earth um you know what's the chief end of man what's our purpose for existence you know the answer right to glorify god and to enjoy him forever uh it's the glory of god and his enjoyment forever why we exist uh but what does it mean to glorify what does glorify mean sometimes you know a word is used so much we tack it on to the end of sentences that we kind of forget what the meaning is and to glorify something or someone is to take ultimate joy and pleasure in them because you believe that they are above they are supreme above every other thing in your in your world to glorify god's name it's not merely to just admire who he is admire his name it means that you assign ultimate worth to his name because he's supreme above every other god he's supreme above every other thing in the universe and his global purpose is therefore supreme above every other purpose every other purpose that you might have god's purpose is is greater it's it's supreme god's global purpose is to make his name great and to spread his glory to all the peoples of the world that's really what mark and rachel kim and their kids are about in japan they're working to make god's name great among people who don't yet recognize their purpose in life the japanese people's purpose in life is to glorify god and enjoy him forever and to make other worshipers um 1.86 percent of christians among 220 million people and uh that 0.86 percent is important because it's you know it's more than one percent and so uh people who study missiologists you know want to make it to make it clear that uh god god is working in japan but we would love to see it uh 50 percent all right 80 percent how does it compare to hamilton county do you think i don't know the statistics but what would you say what would you guess in hamilton county the percentage of people who uh would say that they're christian not maybe not everybody uh who says that really has a genuine relationship with jesus christ but it would be above 50 percent right um we are truly blessed um think of those two first century missionaries paul and silas you know they're sharing the gospel in philippi when they ran into some trouble they ran into some difficulty an angry mob pounced on them and dragged them into the marketplace before these unjust roman magistrates and act 16 records the mob joined in attacking them and the magistrates tore the garments off of them and gave orders to beat them with rods and they had inflicted after they had inflicted many blows upon them they threw them in prison ordering the jailer to keep them safely having received this order he put them in the inner prison and fastened

[11 : 14] their feet in the stocks so this persecution that these missionaries were facing wasn't part of their plan they hadn't planned to go and get beaten up by a mob and thrown in prison but we know that their beating and their imprisonment wasn't the end of their gospel ministry right if we've read that account it was just part of god's bigger plan to make his name great paul and silas uh they realized they had a captive audience and they used the opportunity to start singing god's praises uh to proclaim his power and goodness you know i don't know what songs they were singing in hebrew or greek you know maybe it maybe it was a psalm because they sang the psalms maybe it was psalm psalm 86 i don't know um maybe it was uh nobody greater nobody greater nobody greater nobody greater right it's all about you jesus um and as they were singing praise to god you know he demonstrated his goodness by causing uh just an earthquake just powerful enough powerful enough uh to force open the the prison in philippi the doors were flung open uh their stocks were

were broken uh but more importantly god was breaking open the heart of the jailer he thought he would surely pay with his life because the prisoners would all escape he pulled out his sword he was ready to take his own life and paul and silas stopped him from doing that and god ended up giving him new life through faith in christ and luke writes that he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in god you know even the magistrates had a change of heart toward paul and silas they came and they apologized for beating them and for their unjust treatment and luke writes earlier in chapter 16 that the churches were being strengthened in the faith and they increased in numbers daily every day they were increasing in numbers because of what god was doing to make his name great uh that's what god is about that's his purpose to make his name great and no amount of danger or trouble uh was going to stop him from revealing his glory right in the middle of david's prayer this prayer of trouble this lament calling out to god uh for for rescue in the middle uh of his suffering at the hands of ruthless men he reminds god of his grand purpose in the world let's look at it again verse 7 uh he says in the day of my trouble i call upon you for you answer me there is none like you among the gods oh lord nor are there any works like yours all the nations you have made shall come and worship before you oh lord and shall glorify your name for you are great and do wondrous things you alone are god you know when we pray especially in times when we're we're praying about trouble that we want god to fix it's a good thing to remind him of who he is you know remind god uh that he is above all gods and and maybe it's good for us to start our prayer with for the sake of your name for the sake of your glory lord would you do this for me and david's words here really point us to the universal worship of jesus one day soon and very soon we are going to see the king we're going to be with the king and there's going to be this grand multitude that no one can count you've never been in a crowd that big in your whole life john wrote about it in his vision in revelation 7 9 and 10 he said after this i looked and behold a great multitude that no one could

number from every nation from every tribe and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice salvation belongs to our god who sits on the throne and to the lamb we're going to sing that that was john's vision of heaven giving glory to the lamb of god and here at new city you know we want to see greater kingdom diversity we want to see different peoples coming into our church various languages and cultures joining together in community and worship with us lord willing next sunday we'll restart simultaneous translation we had a couple that came into the office this week i spoke to on tuesday carlos and marguerite are here from mexico and they want to improve their english and so they've read about us on the on the website and they came and i said come to come to church come and worship with us because we'll we'll have this simultaneous translation uh for you but that's what we want right as a church we want to see god bringing the nations here the nations are here among us we want to see uh them coming being a part of our church god saving people from every tribe and tongue and group and john's vision of universal worship is what should motivate us that's the motivator for us that uh this is what god is doing what god is doing in the world god's great purpose in the world is to redeem unto himself an amazing diverse group of worshipers who will be together forever talk about unity in diversity in heaven right how many different people groups in the world are there do you think uh what missiologists talk about ethno-linguistic groupings of people there are at least 12 000 maybe maybe 20 000 people groups in the world all gathered around the throne worshipping the lamb uh you know making god's name great why did god rescue paul and silas from trouble and why does he rescue you from trouble why does he show mercy well it's because of his passion for his glory god is passionate about his glory think about his rescuing israel from bondage in egypt isaiah writes about it in chapter 63 he says he caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of moses who divided the waters before them why to make for himself an everlasting name in isaiah 43 25 he blots out our transgressions for his own name's sake in first john 2 12 our sins are forgiven for his name's sake psalm 143 11 david reminds god of what he knows god is doing in the world he says for your name's sake oh lord preserve my life in your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble and in psalm 31 verse 3 david says you are my rock and my fortress and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me are you seeing a pattern seeing a principle in scripture and there's and and there's many other uh parts of scripture where you can see uh god proclaiming uh his own glory for his name's sake now god's global purpose is to make his name great and to spread his glory to all peoples of the world but what's the problem you know what what what hinders that uh chris tomlinson in an article for the gospel

coalition entitled whose name whose glory he writes if the chief end of man is to glorify god then the chief sin of man is to glorify self

maybe we should add that to the catechism after the first question what's the chief sin of man to glorify self he says so i suspect we all might war against this common enemy of self it's true right we know it to be true the story is told of a london newspaper a century ago asking readers to write in and respond to this question what's wrong with the world that's a good question and um author g.k chesterton he wrote a very brief letter in response and his letter said dear sir i am you know he was right of course we're the problem the problem with the world and the problem with us is the the problem of the fallen nature of mankind and when we were faced with the troubles of life in our in our fallen nature even as christians we often seek god's help uh but for self-centered reasons you know we tend to ignore his passion to glorify his name among other people and when we're faced with trouble we we tend to forget to trust god that he's doing something much bigger in the world in our world in our community in our family uh even through the trouble that we're facing at the moment so how do we give glory and ultimate worth to his name in the middle of our circumstances how can we resist this idol of self-glory where humans really steal glory from god and apply it to themselves they want to make themselves glorious right if god can help me build my success if god can help me achieve my plans then great you know i'll take all the help i can get i'd love to have god in my corner to help me with my plans but what about his plans you know how can christians resist this idol of self-glory how can we as american christians resist the idol of nationalism or tribalism and i guess we could call this idol americanism americanism i first heard that term from my aunt janet who's a canadian my parents are canadians and she talked about that's americanism you know um there's probably some canadianism too no but aunt janet was a missionary for 40 years in the philippines with send international um and she talked about this american idol you know nationalism idol wants us to worship so that we forget god's passion for all the peoples of the world we just kind of focus in on us and our problems and forget you know there's there's a great big world out there that god cares about and loves and he's doing something in the world you know tribalism idol may reveal itself in a ministry of a church that says we can't be worried about those you know all the the problems in the world we got enough problems right here in our own community you know we we need to reach these people right here and overlook the fact that god has a bigger plan a bigger purpose you know another idol that uh tempts us is the idol of comfort and ease this idol tempts you to avoid suffering at all costs no suffering even for christ's sake uh one of david's 15 petitions in his prayers god teach me your way that i may walk in your truth verse 11 and to walk in god's truth is to believe that his global purpose is to make his name great it's to glorify himself so making your life great making sure that you have a wonderful life is not god's highest priority right i love what pastor john piper says in his book let the nations be glad i read this years ago in seminary he said god is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation he has an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the supremacy of his name among the nations therefore let us bring our affections in line with his and for the sake of his name let us renounce the quest for worldly comfort and join his global purpose isn't that great um at new city one of the things we love about our church is joyful worship right we love the worship at new city we had about 45 people gathered together in a fellowship hall a month or six weeks ago and we were talking about strategic planning and we had a couple there that were leading us through um a process called a swot analysis that's looking at your strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats and as we were talking about the strengths people were giving their thoughts what what is a strength about new city this thing of joyful worship kept coming up must have been mentioned 12 times that that's a strength that we have but we know that our joyful worship is not primarily so that we feel good so that we leave the service feeling good man that was really joyful today and uh what a great feeling it was you know it's first and foremost for god's glory it's it's so that others may become joyful worshipers themselves that they would come in and see our joyful worship and say what are these people so happy about you know what's going on uh just like the jailer and his household right their their destiny was changed forever by paul and silas's testimony and their joyful worship god has this inexhaustible enthusiasm piper says for the supremacy of his name god is the most enthusiastic person in all the universe for his name to be exalted among the nations think about god is the most joyful worshiper in the universe he's the happiest person in the universe he doesn't have bad days like we do right although sin can grieve the holy spirit uh but but god has a purpose and he sees the end from the beginning and he is about his business that he wants us to

be a part of bringing joyful worshipers uh into uh an understanding of who he is it's okay for god to exalt himself isn't it right it's okay for god to do that another thing that john piper is known for saying is that god is the the only one in the universe for whom self-exaltation is the highest virtue so none of us can say that if we exalt ourselves immediately somebody's going to think bad of us because we're self-righteous and it would be true but for god to exalt himself so that we would see his greatness is the best thing for us that would create the greatest joy for us the greatest peace the greatest comfort give us the the best perspective on our whole lives and our trouble if we understood how supremely great god is so what's the answer for our preoccupation with self and with the idols that draw our affections away from god and his purposes in the world that the answer really is daily humble faith and dependence

on jesus jesus as our substitute jesus did for you what you cannot do for yourself jesus resisted the worship of every idol and he perfectly brought glory to his heavenly father at all times um whether he ate or drank whatever he did he perfectly did it for the glory of god the father think about this even at 12 years old jesus understood that his life was being lived for a greater purpose of god's glory in the world luke simply records in chapter 2 that after the festival of the passover was over and jesus's family was returning home jesus stayed behind in jerusalem he's 12 years old it just says he stayed behind in jerusalem and when his parents discovered him missing on their journey home they returned to jerusalem looking for him and you can imagine the difficulty for mary and joseph have you ever lost a child maybe for an hour all right but three days three days overnight three days they were looking for jesus um and uh it says in luke 2 46 to 50 after three days they found him in the temple court sitting among the teachers listening to them and asking them questions everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers and when his parents saw him they were astonished and his mother said to him son why have you treated us like this your father and i have been anxiously searching for you why were you searching for me he asked didn't you know that i had to be in my father's house but they did not understand what he was saying to them see mary and joseph uh at that moment uh just like we are they were laser focused on the problem at hand they weren't thinking about the big the bigger picture of what god was doing i mean they had some idea of what this child was being prepared for um but they didn't understand everything you know they had already experienced danger from ruthless men trying to take the life of this child jesus but jesus never saw his life as a self-contained story like sometimes we do we think of our lives as the most important thing and and don't think of our our little story of our time here on this earth as part of a much bigger story in god's redemptive plan that what god is doing in the world involves us in our story um even even in childhood jesus lived as your perfect substitute doing what you often fail to do and it's good to remind children when they mess up when children fail of this good news that jesus is their perfect substitute even at 12 years old jesus was the perfect substitute jesus never gave into the idol of self-glory he never gave into selfish ambition or conceit but in humility he always counted others more significant than himself he always looked not only to his own interests but to the interests of others and he did this perfectly jesus bore our sin and failures and transferred his righteousness and perfection to us so that now in him we can glorify god from the heart you know the cross was the ultimate display of god's glory it's where jesus glorified himself and he glorified the father john records jesus's prayer as he prepared for the greatest trouble that any human could ever face the perfect human was going to face the greatest trouble of his time here on earth by taking sin on himself that he became sin the perfect god man

[31 : 34] became sin for you and for me and jesus prays in john 17 father the hour has come glorify your son that your son may glorify you for you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those who you have given him now this is eternal life that they know you the only true god and jesus christ whom you have sent i have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do and now father glorify me in your presence with the glory i had with you before the world began before the world began jesus had the glory of god the supreme worth and he came as a man perfect human being god man 100% god 100% man to to live not just to die for us but to live for us his life he lived as a substitute perfect substitute for us jesus took the penalty for our glory stealing sin for our stealing glory from god and he perfectly glorified the father on our behalf so that now god declares us to be righteous isn't that great news that's the gospel that's gospel good news but the good news doesn't just stop there we now have union with christ by faith we're united to him and jesus gave us this metaphor you remember of the vine and the branches he said i'm the vine you are the branches whoever abides in me and i in him it is he that bears much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing if anyone does not abide in me he's thrown

away like a branch and and withers and the branches are gathered thrown into the fire and burned if you abide in me and my word abides in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you by this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples john 15 1 to 5 so part of the way that god is glorifying himself as we think about that metaphor of jesus is the vine where the branches part of the way he is bringing glory to himself is through fruit that is produced by us right he's the vine we are the branches and the holy spirit where does the holy spirit fit in the holy spirit is that unseen sap that flows from the vine through the branches to the beautiful fruit where do you where do you think paul and silas got the power to sing praises after they'd been stripped and beaten and unjustly treated by these magistrates it was through their union with christ it was the sap of the holy spirit right flowing to them so that they could sing god's praises and the person that they were singing about understood what it was mean what it meant to be stripped and beaten with rods mistreated unjustly treated uh murdered uh he himself showed mercy and love for the mob and those who unjustly condemned him to death right father forgive them for they don't know they don't understand they don't know what your purpose is in the world and how i have fit into that purpose and it was his power that flowed to paul and silas you know they didn't just pray for personal rescue god save me out of this prison this suffering they prayed for god's glory to be revealed through the suffering through the suffering that they were experiencing and a beautiful fruit was the jailer and his household god saved and baptized and his life changed forever eternally right we're going to be worshiping with the jailer and his household uh in eternity because of paul and silas's situation that god allowed put them into that difficult trouble so a few questions for us to consider got a few minutes uh how can god's glory in the world become your deepest joy and your greatest passion you know where are you success where where are you experiencing success in your life right now maybe your life has just taken off great success and work and career and so on um can you put that success in the context of god's global plan to make his great name make his great name known among others you know in in your sufferings or weakness or trouble in your life right now can you see even those trials that are being allowed so god can display his glory through you how can god display glory through failing health god god by his holy spirit right can display his glory um through us as we produce fruit you know how can the understanding of god's passion for making his name great move you into greater service for him you know great preaching and worship and singing praise to god each week and taking communion are wonderful gifts to you that god has given you the means of grace and you're receiving grace from week to week but are you making room in your schedule to give grace you know to give grace so others can receive it also our staff worked incredibly hard this past week at urban camp in saudi daisy i know they're tired and they're here this morning but what they were doing was joining god in his great global purpose of making his name known among these young campers you know so so do you have an outlet at new city where you're using god's gifts that he's entrusted to you do you understand his global purpose have you thought about serving in the esl program or helping with the youth of the children's ministry or maybe joining the mission committee that's trying to care well for our missionaries are you giving back as a generous person a generous portion of your income so your local church can support and grow in these ministries remember that you can't bring glory to god with any of these things in your own strength or your own righteousness jesus is the hero of your story jesus is the only hero and so in him we respond with a heart out of love for him and for his glory amen so what a beautiful gospel truth it is that even in times of difficulty danger or distress god has a grander purpose to make his name great among the nations among people around us and we are a part of that so maybe you you are here this morning you've never repented of your sins and never trusted in christ as your savior maybe you've never been made aware of god's universal plan for bringing himself glory through your life well i would invite you to pray with me as we close you can pray this prayer or something similar father in heaven i thank you for giving me life on this earth that you created thank you for your word to me this morning through david's prayer in psalm 86 and i realize that you're calling all people whom you have made to repent of their sin and falling short of your glory acknowledge that you allow trouble oftentimes to come into our lives so that we'll call out to you for mercy please forgive me for all my sins for stealing your glory and just focusing on myself thank you for christ jesus who died and rose again so that we could be saved so that we could be saved to give glory and honor forever and ever before the throne and we say come lord jesus come quickly help us to abide in christ so that we'll bear much good fruit for your glory and for the good of the world for the sake of your name we pray in jesus name amen let's stand and

respond in song