New Mercies

When I Think, I Can't Help But Thank God

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Psalm 77:1–3 (NKJV)

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

1 I cried out to God with my voice—
To God with my voice;
And He gave ear to me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;
My soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled;
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. *Selah*

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Psalm 77:4–6 (NKJV)

4 You hold my eyelids open;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5 I have considered the days of old,
The years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night;
I meditate within my heart,
And my spirit makes diligent search.

Psalm 77:7–9 (NKJV)

7 Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will He be favorable no more?

8 Has His mercy ceased forever?
Has His promise failed forevermore?

9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? *Selah*

Psalm 77:10–12 (NKJV)

10 **And I said, “This is my anguish;**
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.”

11 I will remember the works of the Lord;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

12 I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.

Psalm 77:13–15 (NKJV)

13 Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary;
Who is so great a God as our God?

14 You are the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.

15 You have with Your arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

Psalm 77:16–18 (NKJV)

16 The waters saw You, O God;
The waters saw You, they were afraid;
The depths also trembled.

17 The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.

18 The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lit up the world;
The earth trembled and shook.

Psalm 77:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Your way was in the sea,
Your path in the great waters,
And Your footsteps were not known.

20 You led Your people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

The Central Truth

Right thinking about God produces right worship toward God.

When thanksgiving goes, our thinking goes dark. When our thinking goes dark, thanksgiving goes too.

Romans 1:21 (KJV)

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

Unthankfulness and darkened thinking go together.

Asaph · The Writer



- One of David’s three chief musicians (with Heman and Ethan)
- Led the Levites in worship before the Ark (1 Chronicles 16:4–5)
- Proclaimed God’s message through music (1 Chronicles 25:1–2)
- A worship leader, not just a poet

Jeduthun · The Director



- His name means praise, celebration and thanksgiving
- Worship leader appointed by David (1 Chronicles 25:1–6)
- Called “the king’s seer” (2 Chronicles 35:15)
- Psalm 77 was sheet music for corporate worship

What Was Going On



- “The day of my trouble” (v. 2) — the crisis is never named
- Likely written in the 10th–8th centuries B.C.E.
- “Jacob and Joseph” (v. 15) may point to the northern tribes
- He remembers the Exodus: the Red Sea, Moses and Aaron (vv. 16–20)

The man whose job was to help everyone remember God's goodness was struggling to remember it himself.

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The Journey of Psalm 77

vv. 1–3

Seeking but not comforted

vv. 4–6

Sleepless and overthinking

vv. 7–9

Six questions

vv. 10–12

“BUT I will remember”

vv. 13–15

Worship restored

vv. 16–20

A song in the storm

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vv. 1–6: How the Night Took His Song

- Cried out loud
- No sleep
- No words
- Lost his song
- Talking to himself
- Questioning God



Verse 2

“My soul refused to be comforted”

- The same words Jacob used mourning Joseph (Genesis 37:35)
- Comfort was offered; his pain wouldn’t receive it

Verse 3

"I remembered God, and was troubled"

- Remembering to compare deepens the pain
- Remembering to trust brings healing (v. 11)

Verse 6

"My song in the night"

- The worship leader lost his song
- God "giveth songs in the night" (Job 35:10)

vv. 7–9: The Six Questions

#	Asaph's question	What he's really afraid of
1	Has the Lord rejected me forever?	*My standing with God is gone*
2	Will He never again be kind to me?	*My future has no good in it*
3	Is His unfailing love gone?	*God's covenant love has run out*
4	Have His promises failed?	*God's Word isn't reliable*
5	Has God forgotten to be gracious?	*God isn't paying attention*
6	Has He slammed the door on His compassion?	*God has shut me out*

It starts as “What’s wrong with my situation?”
and ends as “What’s wrong with God?”

Selah. Pause.

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JOHN 8:36

A Spiritual Struggle, Not Weak Faith

70%

of people report a spiritual struggle at some point

Spiritual struggles: tension, strain and conflict about sacred matters.

They are not a sign of weak faith.

Source: K. I. Pargament & J. J. Exline, Working with Spiritual Struggles in Psychotherapy (Guilford, 2022)

A Fork in the Road



- A struggle can lead to growth or to decline
- The struggle doesn’t decide where you end up
- What you do with it decides
- Verse 10 is the fork: the word “BUT” is where Asaph picks his road

“This is my anguish; but I will remember…”

Psalm 77:10 (NKJV)

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vv. 10–12: The Turning Point

1. He admits his weakness
2. He interrupts negative thinking
3. He refocuses on God’s works
4. He chooses truth over feelings

Your breakthrough begins when you choose what to remember.

One Word, Two Directions

Siach (Hebrew): to muse, to rehearse over and over

v. 3

"I complained"

→ Spirit overwhelmed

v. 6

"I meditate within my heart"

→ Overthinking

v. 12

"And talk of Your deeds"

→ Worship returns

What you rehearse determines what you feel.



“Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps were not known.”

Psalm 77:19 (NKJV)

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JOHN 8:36

vv. 16–20: A Song in the Storm

- God didn’t stop the storm. He made a way through it.
- The song Asaph lost in verse 6 comes back in the middle of the storm.
- A flock depends on its shepherd (v. 20).

Songs in the Storm



- Exodus 15: the song after the Red Sea
- Acts 16:25: singing at midnight in prison
- Job 35:10: God gives songs in the night
- Isaiah 43:2: “I will be with you”

The Big Idea

AT FIRST

Focus = pain
Result = distress

THEN

Focus = God
Result = thanksgiving

He didn’t get a new situation. He got a new focus.

If the enemy can influence your thinking, he can interrupt your thanking.

But when you think right about who God is and what He's done, you can't help but thank God.

New Mercies UNLEASHED JOHN 8:36

Reflect & Respond This Week

3 current struggles

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3 ways God has come through

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which list have you been rehearsing more?

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Take-Home Challenge



Between now and Thanksgiving, thank God for one specific thing each day before you ask Him for anything.



“When I think… I can’t help but thank God.”

God will give you a song in the midst of your storm.