

Music and Lyrics, I: “You Done Me Wrong”

Reconnect – February 1, 2009

Text: Psalm 13 (1-6);

Key Thought: It’s OK to be angry with God, but having a relationship means working it through.

**O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?
How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day?
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?**

Turn and answer me, O Lord my God! Restore the light to my eyes, or I will die.

Don’t let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have defeated him!”

Don’t let them rejoice at my downfall.

But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

I will sing to the Lord because he has been so good to me.

(Psalm 13 (1-6), NLT)

Intro: Let’s Go Crazy (Prince)

- (I always wanted to start a Sunday morning like that)
- “in this life, things are much harder than in the afterworld – in this life, you’re on your own”
- It’s not hard to feel like that some days, is it?
- Some feel that way because they don’t believe in anything more than themselves – other people feel that way because they really do feel like that, and some people are worn out with trying to get ahead
- In short, they’ve got the blues

The Blues

- Prince isn’t exactly the first person you think of when you think of the blues – but his music quickly tracks back to Jimi Hendrix and then the blues – the heart of rock, jazz and even country
- The blues are what you sing when you’re feeling low – when you’re down and out, when you’re at the end of your rope, when you’re pushed around and left behind, and the only thing they can’t take away is your music – that’s when you sing the blues
- There’s no pretense with the blues – nothing fake or put on – when they’re done right, they’re from the heart, from a life that’s been stepped on, that’s got nothing left except for a sad song

And Church

- Blues and church don’t generally match up well today
- We’re generally told that Jesus is supposed to make us happy all the time, so if we’re feeling down or out, then we’ve missed it
- And yet, when you turn to the songs of the Bible – the main section is called Psalms, but there are some other parts that are songs, too – and you start to read, you quickly realize that there is every kind of emotion under the sun found in the Bible expressed to God, from joy to blame to pain to anger

- The Bible comes with the blues included, because the Bible is the story of the relationship between God and people, and both sides get a turn at different times to write it down
- Emotions that pretty much everyone would say are “unspiritual” – people at their worst moments, not their best – uncensored – and how did these expressions find their way into this book?
- Like this one specifically this morning – anger – “You done me wrong”
- What do we do when God seems absent – or worse, when it seems like he’s against us, not for us?
- And here are this morning’s instalment of the blues:

A Closer Look:

(For the choir director: a psalm of David)

- We don’t know when in David’s life exactly that he wrote this
- It could have been, as many think, after he was King – an older man, struggling with illness and looking for God - or, it could have been sung first by David as the guerrilla leader, trying to set his people free from the different tribes that were oppressing them
- But one way or another, it’s been handed over to the choir director – the supervisor of the people who were tasked to worship God in their temple, as singers
- A “psalm” – a very churchy word, but at its heart (and that word isn’t actually Hebrew, it’s Greek, from a time hundreds of years after these songs were originally written) it means a song that gets played on a stringed instrument – voila the blues – a “tab”, a riff, a hook, a lick – somebody grab their guitar
- David, for all his successes, knew the blues, because his life was a roller-coaster ride of ups and downs

O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?

How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day?

How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

- “How long?” (4x) – repeated again and again
- “forget me” – “look the other way” – intentional? Feels that way...
- Q: When do you want to blame God? What’s a pressure point between him and you?

Turn and answer me, O Lord my God! Restore the light to my eyes, or I will die.

Don’t let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have defeated him!”

Don’t let them rejoice at my downfall.

- To a request – a prayer – change it, God
- Restore the light to my eyes – generally a health metaphor in the Bible – a person was healthy when their eyes were clear and bright
- Enemies – people gunning for him – sometimes still true, but more often they become forces in our lives today – our money, relationships, health struggles, jobs – don’t let everything stay screwed up, don’t let everything go belly up

But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

I will sing to the Lord because he has been so good to me.

(Psalm 13 (1-6), NLT)

- This seems to be a too-quick transition – was the rest of the song not real? Was it just put on – a contrived problem to resolve in a few bars?
- No – this is something different – something that’s still real, and it goes to the heart of what we need to do when we’re angry with God
- What’s the singer already done?

Told Him that he was angry – and been honest about it

- We feel guilty about being angry with God, so we don’t talk about it – or if we tell him about it, we worry that He’s now angry with us – and we lose both ways
- But God is big enough to handle our anger, because He knows us through and through – He sees why we’re angry, the way we’re seeing the situation, and God has clarity on what we don’t – He gets it – He’s been human, too
- One of the books in my basement says this:

[One way] I have conversed with an absent creator is through audible, spoken words. This is best pursued for me when I am alone - perhaps in the car or on a walk in the woods. I don’t want to be observed by those who might fear I am becoming unhinged. But actually speaking the words I think and feel has a way of getting out of my head and objectifying them. It also gives God a certain presence as the one to whom I am speaking – waking alongside me or sitting in the passenger seat of my car. By voicing my complaints - really voicing them – I acknowledge a continuing connection with God where none is immediately apparent.

P. 284-285 NIVAC – “Psalms, Volume 1” – Gerald H. Wilson – Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2002.

Tried to remain patient – and “continue the conversation”

- Stay in relationship – when you have a relationship that matters, you want to keep it, and the way you do that is through communicating – in any relationship, husband and wife
- Ill. – our first year of marriage

He now gives Him the benefit of the doubt – and reminds himself of God’s nature and their past relationship together

- Things do change – things get clearer, we get some distance – and even in the middle, we affirm what we know in our hearts to be true, even when our eyes and hearts might deceive us
- God has purposes, He has reasons
- Ill. – me and God on money – there’s never enough of it, but it’s something that ties me to Him, until I learn enough to be able to walk beside Him more completely on my own

Brings it into community (full circle)

- Puts it to the choir – shares the burden a bit – looks for help and consolation and faith to carry on
- Deilitzch – a rock into a pond, starts with a splash and then ends with a ripple – “surfacing” – coming up for air, getting clear again

Key Thought:

It's OK to be angry with God, but having a relationship means working it through.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13, NIV)

Conclusion:

- Who do we get angry with? The ones we're closest to – even swear words show it – who do you get really mad at? If we don't have intimate relationships with people we know, then we get called derogatory remarks for getting angry at those we don't know – a crime of passion, a psychopath, it's not normal
- But those around us love us, and we love them, and cooler heads prevail – and even if you can't see it today, or next week, keep talking to Him, keep working it out

Response: Cry in My Heart