

## Psalms for the Suffering

*Learning the language of lament, waiting, and rejoicing through the narrative of Joseph*

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### I. The Pit and the Prayer — *Psalms of Lament (Psalms 13, 22, 44, 88)*

**Joseph:** Genesis 37 — Betrayed and thrown into the pit by his brothers

**Key Verse:** *"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" — Psalm 13:1 (ESV)*

1. **Honest lament** taken to God is an act of faith, not an *absence* of it.
2. God gifted us a hymnal full of human emotion, including sorrow!
3. Psalm 88 ends in **darkness** — and still God put it in the canon! Even *seemingly* unresolved prayer is received.

### II. Falsely Accused — *Psalms of Vindication (Psalms 26, 35, 37, 43)*

**Joseph:** Genesis 39 — Falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, imprisoned for doing right

**Key Verse:** *"Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity." — Psalm 26:1 (ESV)*

1. The psalms of vindication redirect **bitterness** from nursing a grudge to filling a case in heaven's court.
2. **Faithfulness is often built in obscurity.** God's eyes are on you even when every human eye has turned away!
3. And the Psalms of vindication give us the language of what we need to do with our heart (sometimes on an hour-to-hour basis) to redirect our righteous anger not **inward** or **outward** but **upward**.

### III. Forgotten in Prison — *Psalms of Waiting (Psalm 27, 62, 130)*

**Joseph:** Genesis 40 — The cupbearer forgets Joseph; two more years in prison

**Key Verse:** *"For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope comes from him." — Psalm 62:5 (ESV)*

1. The **character** required for that level of responsibility had to be forged in the furnace of long, unrecognized faithfulness.
2. The question isn't so much whether we are waiting as it is how we are waiting. We wait like a watchman who knows that morning **WILL** come (Psalm 130:5-6)

### IV. When the Wicked Prosper — *Fighting Bitterness / Growing in Contentment (Psalm 73)*

**Joseph:** Genesis 37–41 — Joseph suffers while his brothers prosper from their crime

**Key Verse:** *"Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you." — Psalm 73:25 (ESV)*

1. Bitterness is the settled conviction that faithfulness was a bad investment. Psalm 73 walks us through it!
2. The turning point: "until I went into the sanctuary of God" (v. 17). Worship recalibrates everything, gives us the proper **perspective** on our life and trials.
3. Contentment is proven on a path through trials, and coming out the other side holding firmly to one thing: God himself.

### V. The Cry for Justice — *Imprecatory Psalms (Psalm 35, 37, 69, 109)*

**Joseph:** Genesis 42–44 — Joseph holds power over his brothers; chooses mercy over revenge

**Key Verse:** *"Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil." — Psalm 37:8 (ESV)*

1. The imprecatory psalms are rage brought to God rather than acted upon. It's the biblical alternative to **bitterness**.
2. Anger expressed to God is anger surrendered to God. Joseph's restraint toward his brothers was the fruit of anger properly dealt with before God.

### VI. God Meant It for Good — *Psalms of Trust and Praise (Psalm 100, 126, 145, 150)*

**Joseph:** Genesis 45; 50:20 — Reconciliation: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

**Key Verse:** *"Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!" — Psalm 126:5 (ESV)*