

fear*less

3. MY CLOSEST FRIEND HVC, May 10, 2020 Psalm 88 (NIV)

What was your reaction upon hearing this psalm, whether it was again or for the first time? Why?

Why do you think lament is so little valued in our culture?

Psalm 88:1 (NIV)

*LORD, you are the **God who saves me;**
day and night I cry out to you.*

What can you tell about the writer's spiritual life?

Psalm 88:2 (NIV)

*May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.*

Does this seem a bit odd? Why might approaching God this way be a good idea?

Psalm 88:3 (NIV)

*I am **overwhelmed** with troubles
and my life draws near to death.*

When have you been like this psalmist describes?

What might you do or how might you respond in circumstances like this?

Psalm 88:5 (NIV)

*I am **set apart with the dead,**
like the slain who lie in the grave,
whom you **remember no more,**
who are **cut off from your care.***

What do you think he means "remember no more"?

Psalm 88:6 (NIV)

***You** have put me in the **lowest** pit,
in the **darkest** depths.*

What's the darkest, lowest time you've ever had?

Psalm 88:7 (NIV)

***Your** wrath lies heavily on me;
YOU have overwhelmed me with all **YOUR** waves.*

What difference does it make seeing the "waves" as GOD'S waves?

If this is true, why do you think he keeps praying?

What waves might God be sending you right now?

Psalm 88:8 (NIV)

You have taken from me my closest friends

and have made me repulsive to them.

I am confined and cannot escape;

Why do you think his friends found him “repulsive”?”

Have you ever had to take care of someone who was difficult or unpleasant to deal with? What is the most frightening illness (in someone else) that you’ve had to face?

What would be the worst thing about being abandoned by your friends in a crisis?

Psalm 88:10-12

Do you show your wonders to the dead?

Do their spirits rise up and praise you?

**Is your love declared in the grave,
your faithfulness in Destruction?**

**Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?**

How would you paraphrase this argument? What is the psalmist trying to say?

Psalm 88:13-16 (NIV)

But I cry to you for help, LORD;

in the morning my prayer comes before you.

Why, LORD, do you reject me

and hide your face from me?

From my youth I have suffered & been close to death;

I have borne your terrors and am in despair.

Your wrath has swept over me;

your terrors have destroyed me.

What do you think God’s “wrath” means here? What helps make sense of this verse for you?

Psalm 88:17 (NIV)

All day long they surround me like a flood;

they have completely engulfed me.

Have you ever been in a flood? What was it like?

Psalm 88:18 (NIV)

You have taken from me friend and neighbor —

darkness is my closest friend.

Why do you think Heman wrote this psalm?

Why do you think God included it in the Bible?

When did you come to the realization that life can’t be “fixed” with our own resources and wisdom?

How realistic do you think your view of the universe is? Where do you tend to see “brokenness” the most?

[SERENDIPITY] Can a committed Christian be both a realist and an optimist? Why?

When you have been in darkness, what has helped you the most? [HINT: You *could* pray this psalm!]

How does it help not having to be cheerful and positive all the time?

What difference does it make knowing that Heman wrote this psalm?