

# Moving from Despair to Action

7.16.2023

Message 3 From A-Z God is Good.

Psalm 119:25–32 (CSB)

† ***Daleth***

<sup>25</sup> My life is down in the dust;  
give me life through your word.

<sup>26</sup> I told you about my life,  
and you answered me;  
teach me your statutes.

<sup>27</sup> Help me understand  
the meaning of your precepts  
so that I can meditate on your wonders.

<sup>28</sup> I am weary from grief;  
strengthen me through your word.

<sup>29</sup> Keep me from the way of deceit  
and graciously give me your instruction.

<sup>30</sup> I have chosen the way of truth;  
I have set your ordinances before me.

<sup>31</sup> I cling to your decrees;  
Lord, do not put me to shame.

<sup>32</sup> I pursue (I will RUN, ESV) the way of your commands,  
for you broaden my understanding.

## 1. The Psalmist is moving from despair toward action.

A. He named his condition (my life is in the dust, I'm weary from grief).

1. He has asked for help from God through God's Word.
2. Now, we see several statements of action.

B. The Psalmist writes, "I have chosen, I have set, I cling, I pursue/run."

1. The writer has asked God to do what only God can do.
2. "Give me life through your word."
3. "Teach me your statutes."
4. "Help me understand."
5. "Keep me from deceit."

C. And now it is the Psalmist's turn.

1. Life on Earth will have trouble and pain.
  - a. Jesus said, "In this world, you will have trouble."
  - b. The Good News is that Jesus has overcome the world.
  - c. What that means is that, for the believer, pain and trouble are checkpoints, not destinations.
2. The Good News means that we do not have to stay in places of despair, pain, and hurt.
  - a. We cannot prevent all pain and trouble, but it does not have to define us because of what Jesus has done.
  - b. How do we move from despair to action?

## How do we move from despair to action?

A. Believe that life, truth, and faithfulness are only found in God.

1. As long as we hold out hope that life or truth or faithfulness can be found elsewhere, we are not fully faithful to God.

a. For example, The other day, I was asked if it was ok to pay 99% of our tithes.

b. I asked them if it was ok for their spouse to be faithful only 99% of the time.

2. By holding even a glimmer of hope of finding salvation and life anywhere except from Christ alone, we are not being completely faithful.

B. But despair, sorrow, and pain can have clarifying functions.

1. There is something about hitting rock bottom and having everything else stripped away that can lead us to life in Christ alone.

2. Because pain is never neutral, pain will drive us toward God or away from God.

C. The Psalmist has confessed time and again that life is only found in God alone.

1. With that confession, he is committed to God and His Word for life.

2. It is worth our time to reflect upon where we believe life comes from.

D. We too often place our hope and faith in places that were never meant to be the source of real life.

1. Even good places like our spouse or kids.

2. They can be life-giving, but they are not the source of our life and strength.

3. To begin moving from despair to action, we must declare that Jesus is our only source and strength.

2. We must believe that God is Good.

A. We do not trust what we do not believe is good.

1. If the tires on your car are bad, you may still drive on them but you don't trust them.
2. If a family member has stolen from you often, you don't trust them because they are not a good person.
3. We will never fully trust in a God that we do not believe is good.

B. We must be convinced that God is good.

1. 1 Chronicles 16:34 (CSB) <sup>34</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever.
2. Psalm 34:8 (CSB) <sup>8</sup>Taste and see that the LORD is good. How happy is the person who takes refuge in him!
3. Mark 10:18 (ESV) <sup>18</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."<sup>i</sup>

C. This means that God is good, even when I don't think so.

1. When we are at our lowest, this has to remain in front of us.
2. I may feel like God is not fair or good.
3. What I see with my eyes and think with my mind may lead me to question God's goodness.
4. But, like the Psalmist, these are moments when I have established God's goodness as "fact".

D. We cannot move from despair into life if I don't trust the Giver of Life.

1. Even when I feel like I'm in the dust, God is still good.
2. Even when I'm surrounded by all that is evil, God is still good.
3. With this foundation, I am able to leave despair and move toward action.

### 3. We must invest ourselves in God's Word and God's presence.

A. How do we choose, set, cling, and pursue when that part of our will seems broken, exhausted, and done?

1. Because God is good, trustworthy, and faithful, I can move forward with what little strength and will I have left.

2. It may not be much, it may be a mustard seed, but if that is all we can bring to the relationship, God provides the rest.

B. How often have we asked a small child to take hold of our hand before crossing a street or walking into a busy place like Silver Dollar City.

1. Are we asking that little kid to provide the strength necessary to not run in front of a car or not to be taken by a stranger?

2. NO.

**3. When we tell a child to "hold my hand," we are asking for their trust and proximity.**

a. But the STRENGTH is provided by the Adult.

b. It is my strength and my reaction time and my awareness that is keep the kid safe.

c. Their hand in mine is their permission to keep them safe.

C. Oh, dear child of God, **God isn't asking for you to provide supernatural strength.**

**1. He is asking you to give Him your hand.**

2. Give Him our permission for Him to exercise His strength and power.

a. Yes, cling with whatever you have left.

b. Yes, run with what you have.

c. Yes, set your mind upon God with your meditation.

d. We do have a part to play, but path forward is not for you to become super-human but to trust God and to set you mind upon Him.

D. When we trust in Jesus, we can believe that He will not put us to shame.

Apply: Put your life in Jesus' hands.

A. I remind us, pain is a checkpoint not a destination.

1. We do not have to deny our present position to be a person of faith.

2. But instead, we trust in God and His goodness.

a. We put our hand in His hand.

b. Not that we have the strength to hang on but because He has the strength to pull us through.

3. We do what we can, however much or feeble that feels, and God who is faithful and just provides the rest.

B. Today, for all who are weary, tired, exhausted, depleted, done, and finished, let us move from despair to action.

1. Let us call upon Jesus.

2. Let us focus upon His Word.

3. Let us do what we can, and trust God for the rest.

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<sup>i</sup> Here are 23 verses about God's goodness.

<https://www.davidjeremiah.org/knowgod/23-verses-about-the-goodness-of-god>