

## A Psalmist's Lament and Meditation Regarding God's Relationship to His Suffering

Psalm 102 — Rick Brownell — November 12, 2023

1. Introduction: Lament psalms give us three permissions:
  - to express our honest concerns about our circumstances
  - to express our confusion about the dark side of faith
  - to express how that confusion disorients us from God
2. Affliction can seem other-worldly ...
  - even arresting and stunningly curious
  - a 'mysterium tremendum et fascinans' experience
3. Pouring out his trouble is the result of meditating on his affliction
  - His meditation commands God's attention (1-2)
  - He begs God not to hide His face from him
4. His meditation tells him something is wrong (3-7)
  - his life is failing
  - food doesn't taste good anymore
  - he feels overwhelmed and in danger
  - he's retreating into loneliness and isolation
5. His meditation can't ignore God's sovereign ordering of his affliction
  - 'your affliction has blighted me' (4)
  - your indignation and Your wrath have cast me away (8-11)
  - your providence and power have weakened me (23-24)
6. The only reasonable attitude toward misfortune: recognize ...
  - the limitations of your human understanding
  - there is no meaningless affliction or suffering
  - God is simply beyond the reach of our human comprehension
  - and embrace an attitude of wondering adoration
7. Finding the way back to 'normal' (12, 24-27)
  - remember that God is eternal ...
  - and so are His covenant promises to His children
  - therefore: choose a life filled with deep love and wonder
8. God's promise is fulfilled in the person of Emmanuel (19-22)
  - the author leaves praising God to us
  - the author gives us a foretaste of Zachariah's prophesy
  - Jesus has come "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way"