

Praise and Pain

Scripture Reading — Psalm 77

I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.

Psalm 77:1 —

A couple of years ago a friend in our church designed a worship service around three stories of pain shared by members of our congregation. The stories became the sermon as the people telling them spoke of struggle and of God's goodness in the middle of it.

Some people believe that Sunday is supposed to be filled only with happy things: praise songs and upbeat messages. But Sunday is also a day to be real with one another and with God about the pain in our lives. After all, Scripture itself is frank about our brokenness! It contains more psalms of lament than psalms of praise.

After that worship service people could be heard sharing their own stories of struggle. No one was talking about the latest road construction project, how well the local basketball team did over the weekend, vacation plans, computer problems, or the best way to can peaches. It was as if those three stories had given everyone permission to be real with one another about the hard things in their own lives.

May you be led into genuine praise today. And may that praise be infused with an honesty about the brokenness in your own life and in the life of our world.

God reigns over all things—let the earth be glad!

Prayer

Father, hear our praises as well as our cries for help. We know you love us and can carry all our burdens. Strengthen us for praise-filled, peace-filled life in this broken world. Amen.

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