



# PSALMS:

Ancient Songs, Modern Messages

crystal & david colp

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Crystal and David Colp



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*Psalms: Ancient Songs, Modern Messages*  
Written by Crystal and David Colp

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## A Letter of Introduction

We realize we have only skimmed the surface of the Book of Psalms. There is so much more to be gleaned from this beautifully written book in the Old Testament. Our prayer, however, is for God to do a unique work in your life—just as He did in ours and in the lives of our church family.

God convicted us, healed us, encouraged us, and grew us as we studied these particular chapters in Psalms. We are thankful for the way He spoke and will forever be changed by the specific revelations He provided for us during a difficult time in the life of our church body.

This study came slowly. Every time we thought we could finish it, the enemy threw another obstacle in our path. I believe he wanted it to go unfinished. I believe he worked overtime in our ministry life to keep us busy and distracted so this study would not be completed.

But, God! He provided much needed revelation and time near the end so it could in fact be finished. The difficulty with which this study was finalized leads me to believe there is significant work to be done in the lives of those who will walk the journey through this study with an open, honest, willing heart.

Surrender your preconceived notions of where you are with God, and let Him do something new in you as you study this with us. Revival is on the other side of surrender, and it happens one heart at a time! Let it begin in you!

These ancient songs have a relevant, modern-day message just for you! Are you ready?

Believing revival is on the horizon,

Crystal & David Colp



# Lesson 1: A Community Lament

## Psalm 85

While there is some debate over who actually penned Psalm 85, one could say this is a community lament that spans time and speaks even to the lament of a present day world in turmoil. The Israelites had just returned home from a season of captivity in Babylon to find their homeland in ruins; however, this psalm also speaks to the place we return to after the bondage of sin. Whether you look at this song in the literal or the figurative nature, the message is the same. Restoration is possible in the care of a loving God. As we walk this journey through the psalms, we will place ourselves squarely in the shoes of the people we read about, relating to their circumstances, but also pausing and listening to how the psalms can speak to us today.

**Read Psalm 85 and write down your initial thoughts.**

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Psalm 85 was written following a time of exile for God's people. The Israelites had rebelled against the Lord. They had become an adulterous nation, giving themselves to false gods and forsaking their covenant with the Lord. They had completely turned their backs on God. Due to their disobedience, they had been defeated by their enemies, uprooted from their homes, and carried off into slavery. Finally, their exile had ended and some had returned to Jerusalem. But they returned only to see their homes destroyed, their city in shambles, and their temple reduced to a pile of rubble.

As a community, they are deeply traumatized, hurt, and full of sorrow, not knowing which way to turn. They know they have messed up. They recognize their ruined lives are due to their own rebellion, and they want to start over. So, they come together—a community of broken people—seeking the Lord's face again. What we see is not hopelessness, not a spirit of defeat. Instead, we see hope in their hearts—that they might see God move among them like He did in the past, bringing revival and restoration.

**Read Psalm 85:1–3 again and write down the verbs you see in these three verses.**

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The people are standing in the ruin of their present circumstances, but they are remembering the past mercies of God. They recall the restoration of the past. They clearly understand they are standing in the midst of rubble, which is the physical manifestation of their disobedience to God. Their present circumstances underscore their sin and rebellion, and yet they know they have a loving, restoring God who has walked beside them time and time again. God is faithfully restoring them, forgiving them, blotting out their sin, withdrawing His wrath, and turning from His anger to grant them favor once again. You can clearly see they hope He will do it again.

Often times we find ourselves standing hopeless in the ruin of our own present circumstances. Sin, rebellion, and disobedience underscore the rubble of our lives and the world around us.

**Are you or someone you love experiencing a circumstance that seems or seemed hopeless? If so, write down your experience here.**

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For the Israelites, the rubble of their disobedience and resulting bondage was vast. The temple was destroyed, their city reduced to crushed stone, and their homes in shambles. Sin can also leave our lives strewn with the rubble of its aftermath.

**Describe the “rubble” that has come from sin in your life or the life of someone close to you.**

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The temptation to stand in the rubble and look out over the landscape of our lives without hope is enormous. In fact, sometimes the heap of garbage left behind from our sin can seem too big, too vast to overcome, and hopelessness takes over.

Hopelessness is a place of bondage to our present circumstances, and one way to break those chains is to remember the faithfulness of God in the past. The Jewish nation remembered the mercies of God in their past, and we must do the same.

**How did God show His mercy in the past, either to you or someone you know?**

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Even though the Jewish people knew God had shown mercy in the past, they had returned home to the ruins of their city and the destruction of the walls surrounding it. The sight of the ruins left them feeling vulnerable, afraid, and lost. If we were honest, we would all say we have experienced the same feelings in some form or fashion at some point in our lives. Vulnerable. A little lost. Stalled in our fear. We could probably add some other feelings in the mix: hurt, betrayed, confused, and the list could go on.

**What are some of the feelings you or someone you love have experienced in the rubble of sin?**

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Often, we dwell in that place of pain. But what we see in the psalmist is an honest seeking of God’s restoration. We find a submissive, humble heart, searching for God’s favor in present circumstances.

**Now read Psalm 85:4–7 again. What does the psalmist ask God for?**

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The interesting thing here in verses 4 through 7 is the change in tone. The psalmist makes a subtle switch from remembering the mercies of the past to asking for God’s new mercies in the Israelites’ present circumstances. He cries for God to restore them, to fix what is broken. He asks questions like, “Will you be angry with us forever?” and “Will you not revive us again?” These questions are laced with grief and desperation—crying out for God to have mercy.

**What are some of the questions you have asked God in the middle of your circumstances?**

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Satan would love nothing more than for us dwell in our desperation, to set up camp in our shame, grief, and hurt. He would love for us to believe God is angry with us and will stay angry forever.

**Read John 10:10. What does this scripture say about why Jesus came?**

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The Word tells us that God is a life-giving God. He sent Jesus so we could have life. And, not just any life. ABUNDANT LIFE! You can be certain, our God is not a God who gives up on His people. He loves you, and He wants abundant life for you. He will restore and revive you and your heart. Find hope in your present circumstances by claiming the abundant life He offers.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What does this scripture say about new life in Christ?**

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God is the giver of new life, of renewed life, of hope, freedom, restoration, abundance, and so much more. We know this, or at least we should know this, and the children of Israel knew it as well.

**Read Psalm 85:8–9. What does God promise to His people?**

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**Read Psalm 85:8 again. What action is taken here by the writer of this psalm?**

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In verse 8 there is an intentional posture change. This shift in attitude and heart puts the writer of Psalm 85 in a place to hear from God. The psalmist is listening for God’s voice in the chaos—that is where the peace comes from—the stillness, the humility, the admitted need for God.

Verse 9 also says if we fear God, salvation is near. This is not fear in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, this is referring to a healthy reverence of God or the attitude of being awestruck by our God. He is standing with us ready, willing, and able to save us if we will just listen, humble ourselves, put down our own agendas, and let Him do His good work. Peace comes when we recognize who God is and who we are not. I think the Jewish people had a strong understanding of this fact in the first few moments of gazing over the horizon of their lost homes and ruined city. They realized that only God could restore it. Only God could calm their fears and make them whole again.

There is a lesson here for us as well. God is still on the throne, but is He on the throne of our lives? Is He in charge? Can we let go of what we think the restoration process should look like and submit to His perfect plan? The process of humbling ourselves and letting go of our expectations for our lives is not accidental. We, too, must have an intentional posture change—a posture that puts us in a place to hear from Him. Our hearts and attitudes should move to a place of awe, a place of listening to our God.

Often our prayers are full of our own words. What if we silenced our mouths, our minds, our own desires, and opened our hearts to what God has to say? I am convinced that God is speaking even now, and I think He has much to say about how we can find our way through the debris of our own sinful lives to a place of restoration.

**Take a few minutes and sit in silence. Ask the Lord to speak to you in your present circumstances, then be silent and listen. As you listen, simply write down some of the thoughts that come to mind in the space provided.**

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**Now look at the end of Psalm 85:9. What will be the result if we listen to and live in awe of God?**

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When we change our posture and become humble, attentive seekers of God, He will dwell in our land. The psalmist makes a bold claim here. It's almost a proclamation. He states with boldness: "God, I know if I fear You—if I stand in humble reverence before You, if I lean in and listen, willing to learn from You—then I know You will dwell with me." The word I love most in the verse is the word "dwell." By definition, the word "dwell" means to live in or stay as a permanent resident.

God will dwell. Not pass through. Not breeze by from a distance. He will dwell. He will stay. Again, there is action needed on our part. Just as the psalmist wrote: God's dwelling place is in the hearts of a humble seeker, a heart that is listening and looking for Him.

The enemy would love nothing more than for us to lock our gaze on the hurt, betrayal, and pain of the sin and brokenness in our lives. But God tells us to change our perspective. God says, "Focus on me so that I can dwell with you."

## What is keeping you from focusing on God?

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**Now read Psalm 85:10–13. What we see in this portion of the psalm are the results of God’s glory dwelling in the land. Make a list of those results.**

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The benefits of submission are innumerable. These last four verses are prophetic words of hope—a modern message of hope for all of us who are standing in the rubble of our own sin or in the rubble of the sin of another. We will see a new faith in God well up within us. We will experience a transformed, humble heart bound to the heart of God. The Lord will give what is good, and we will see an increase of peace, trust, and joy. God will make a way for us through the rubble of this moment. This is His Word. This is a proclamation for personal and communal revival.

The hopelessness of a war-ravaged people was replaced with the hope of a God-fearing community. The fear of looking out over the crumbled remnants of their city was replaced by the freedom that came as revival in the hearts of a people listening intently to their God.

**Where are you today? Are you grasping the hope, forgiveness, and restoration that comes from listening to the heart of God? Or are you shackled to the shame of sin and the rubble it has left behind in your life?**

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In the last few moments we have together in Psalm 85, write down and proclaim where you believe God can take you as He restores what hell has stolen from you. Write your own prophecy of hope, your own personal, modern message inspired by this ancient song!

**Want to study more? Look up the history behind the sons of Korah who penned Psalm 85. Write down what you learn about the authors of this particular psalm.**

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