



# CONNECT GROUP NOTES

## Sunday 10.03.2024

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### “Cave Moments”

#### **Preacher**

Ps. Josh Plumb

#### **Scripture**

“1 Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me,  
for in you I take refuge.

I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings  
until the disaster has passed.

2 I cry out to God Most High,  
to God, who vindicates me.

3 He sends from heaven and saves me,  
rebuking those who hotly pursue me—[c]  
God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

4 I am in the midst of lions;  
I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—  
men whose teeth are spears and arrows,  
whose tongues are sharp swords.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.

6 They spread a net for my feet—  
I was bowed down in distress.  
They dug a pit in my path—  
but they have fallen into it themselves.



7 My heart, O God, is steadfast,  
my heart is steadfast;  
I will sing and make music.

8 Awake, my soul!  
Awake, harp and lyre!  
I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;  
I will sing of you among the peoples.

10 For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;  
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.”

Psalm 57

### **Thought**

As we read the words of the Psalmist, one thing becomes clear; that God's joy can flow even in the midst of trials, hardships and suffering. David, who had been promised the kingdom, was on the run from a murderous King Saul whose jealous fury sought to kill anyone who might threaten his power. Now, instead of leading the nation from a kingly throne, David finds himself outcast, and cowering in a cave, alone.

Fast forward a few thousand years, and we may feel that we can relate. We might not be living with our very lives under threat, but we all find ourselves, as we journey through the pattern of life, in 'cave moments'. Those dark and lonely times when what we thought our lives would look like, falls short. Times when the promises of God feel distant, when our inner world is swirling and we're hemmed in by life's pressures. When we want to run and hide and only reappear when life is somehow better.

David, in his figurative and literal cave moment, pours out his heart in this Psalm. His honesty regarding his situation reveals something important; Christian joy is not denial, nor is it sugar-coating. It's actually choosing to be real when things are tough, and to be honest about our need for help.



Our prayers don't have to be moderated and muted, we can be free to wrap the anguish of our cave moments into language and present it to God. We can feel it, we can own it, we can let our deepest emotions and needs rise to the surface and in doing so, allow Christ to step into it.

Yet David, who would have felt a world away from the promise of one day being king, doesn't just stay in the place of lament, he goes on to pen the words "My heart is steadfast". David actively chooses to find his refuge in Christ, even in the midst of a messy world. Christ is his safe place.

This type of trust can only come from closeness with God. It's only when we draw close to Christ, that we learn the nature of his eternal and steadfast character. The choice to come close leads to the choice to trust.

Finally, David chooses to praise. To praise in the midst of heartbreak, to praise in the midst of disillusion, to lift up a song to the God who holds him, even in the darkest of times and places.

And so it is with us. In the midst of whatever life brings, we can choose to be open and vulnerable to God, to choose to lean into Christ and find our refuge in Him, and to lift up a song of praise, even when we can't see the light at the end of the tunnel.

### **Discussion Points**

1. If it's not constant comfort and favourable circumstances, what does God's goodness look like?
2. How can we be sure of God's faithfulness in our lives?

## Becoming Christlike

### **BEING, THINKING, AND DOING**

#### **Characteristic of a Disciple: Resilient**

*Anchoring to hope and trust in God during times of suffering*

#### **Thought**

If we're honest, it seems as if suffering is either coming, has come, or is here now. and coming into a relationship with Christ does not allow us to escape from experiencing it. We can deny it by putting our heads in the sand or by masking it with the many distractions the world has on offer. But as we grow into Christlikeness, the way we move through seasons of suffering begins to shift. We move from self-sufficiency and control (in its many forms) to a deep reliance on God. As we learn to trust and anchor in Him we become resilient in hope and joy that is found in God and God alone.

#### **Practice**

Step 1: Sit for a moment and identify an area of suffering or difficulty that you are still trying to control in your own strength.

Step 2: If self-sufficiency is a 0 and total reliance on God is a 10, where would you place yourself in this area/season?

From a place of vulnerability (to the degree you're willing and able) name this area to one another.

If you need to lament this area, lament to God in prayer together. If confession is needed, confess. If healing is needed, pray and ask for healing.

Step 3: What is something practical you could do this week that would bring you closer to reliance on God in this area?



## **Prayer**

Dear Lord,

You know me completely. You know my successes and failures, you know my hopes and my struggles. You see me in my cave moments. Teach my heart to be open to You, to find refuge in You in hard times, and to praise You always, even when life is hard and hope seems distant.

Amen