

Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passage.

Psalm 123

Passage Introduction:

“As a person grows and matures in the Christian way, it is necessary to acquire certain skills. One is service. The skill is so difficult to acquire and liable to so many misunderstandings that it is necessary to single it out for special attention from time to time. Psalm 123 is an instance of service. In this, as so often in the psalms, we are not instructed in what to do, we are provided an instance of what is done. A psalm is not a lecture; it is a song. In a psalm we have the observable evidence of what happens when a person of faith goes about the business of believing and loving and following God. We don't have a rule book defining the action, we have a snapshot of players playing the game. In Psalm 123 we observe that aspect of the life of discipleship that takes place under the form of servanthood.”

Eugene Peterson - *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Read the passage slowly 2 or 3x's.

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Psalm 123 - A Song of Ascents (NLT) - **1** I lift my eyes to you, O God, enthroned in heaven. **2** We keep looking to the LORD our God for his mercy, just as servants keep their eyes on their master, as a slave girl watches her mistress for the slightest signal. **3** Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy, for we have had our fill of contempt. **4** We have had more than our fill of the scoffing of the proud and the contempt of the arrogant.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What does it seem the Psalmist is looking for in this passage?
- What can we learn about how to approach God from vs. 2 and the analogy of the servant and their master?
- Look up Romans 12:1-2 - Romans 12-16 is the best commentary on Psalm 123. What does Romans 12 tell us about our daily service as Christians?

Psalm 123

Passage Summary - (From The ESV Transformation Bible)

Those faithful to God often feel the contempt of those who stand against God, and hence against them. So it is in this corporate psalm of lament. Those obeying God in their endeavor to come and worship at the temple in Jerusalem find themselves the objects of scorn and ridicule. The proud are mocking the humble, and those humble faithful feel the weight of the derision being heaped upon them (vv. 3–4).

But their hope is in the Lord! He is enthroned in the heavens as God over all (v. 1)! The images used in verse 2 are telling—they express the hope of those who are dependent entirely on the good will of the one in authority over them. The master must provide, or the servants surely lack; the mistress must show kindness, lest the maidservants despair. So here, those faithful to the Lord await the good that he, and only he, can give. To God and God alone they lift up their eyes (v. 1). There is good news proclaimed from God to his people, but this good news of grace and strength and salvation is found in only one place and through only one Lord. Only he who is enthroned in the heavens is worthy of our trust, and only he can deliver. Indeed, at the climax of all of history, God did indeed deliver—by sending his own Son so that sinners can be made right with God based on what Christ has done.

Key Takeaway:

As you read today's passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down that you want to take with you? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Close by turning today's Psalm into your own prayer. Here are some prayer prompts to help you get started:

- **vs 1** - I lift my eyes to you, O God, enthroned in heaven. *“God it's so easy to fix my gaze on the world around me and what's going either good or bad to be the gauge for how I'm doing. Help me to lift my eyes and set them upon you.”*
- **vs 2** - We keep looking to the LORD our God for his mercy, just as servants keep their eyes on their master, as a slave girl watches her mistress for the slightest signal. *“God, I have no where else to go for the mercy I need. My eyes are fixed, and waiting upon you in this area or season of life.”*
- **vs 3,4** - Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy, for we have had our fill of contempt. We have had more than our fill of the scoffing of the proud and the contempt of the arrogant. *“God, sometimes it feels like life is just laughing at me. Here are the places where I feel that to be true.... God, I need you in those places.”*