

THE PIT OF DESPAIR

PSALM 88

¹LORD, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
²May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.
³I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.
⁴I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am like one without strength.
⁵I am set apart with the dead,
like the slain who lie in the grave,
whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your care.
⁶You have put me in the lowest pit,
in the darkest depths.
⁷Your wrath lies heavily on me;
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.
⁸You have taken from me my closest friends
and have made me repulsive to them.
I am confined and cannot escape;
⁹ my eyes are dim with grief.
I call to you, LORD, every day;
I spread out my hands to you.
¹⁰Do you show your wonders to the dead?
Do their spirits rise up and praise you?
¹¹Is your love declared in the grave,
your faithfulness in Destruction?
¹²Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?
¹³But I cry to you for help, LORD;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
¹⁴Why, LORD, do you reject me
and hide your face from me?
¹⁵From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;
I have borne your terrors and am in despair.
¹⁶Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.
¹⁷All day long they surround me like a flood;
they have completely engulfed me.
¹⁸You have taken from me friend and neighbor—
darkness is my closest friend.

TRANSFORMED BY THE TRUTH

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. Read Psalm 88 in your Bible and in one paraphrase (such as The Message or The Living Bible). What do you find striking about this Psalm?
2. Why do you think Psalm 88 is in the Bible? What does the Spirit of God want to teach us through it?
3. Are there biblical characters that prayed prayers similar to Psalm 88? If so, what can we learn from their prayers?
4. Read Psalm 91. How do you reconcile Psalm 88 and Psalm 91?
5. When have you prayed most similarly to Psalm 88? Why do you think God allowed you to go through that season of darkness?