

# “The Crisis Line”

August 26, 2018

## OPEN

What crisis in the world today has made an impact on you? Why?

What is a personal crisis that you are facing right now?



The twelve praise songs penned by the sons of Korah are “*one of the riches veins in the Psalter.*” (Derek Kidner). To get a little more insight about the authors of these psalms (42-49, 84-84, 87-88), read I Chronicles 6:31-33.

In the Psalms we often find a lament – a cry of anguish and pain – Psalm 88 is a lament. Read carefully the petition to God and the way in which the author feels that his questions have gone unanswered.

## DIG

One way to divide this psalm is according to the three declarations about prayer – verses 1, 9, 13.

### ONE: Feelings of despair – vv. 1-9a

*“Day and night I cry out to you” (v. 1b)*

How does this first declaration of prayer set the tone for the entire psalm?

What phrases do you find in verses 1-9a that reveal the writer’s despair?

Consider the fact that because a Christian is free in Christ and secure in His grace, he or she can therefore fully feel the pain that life brings.

Look at two examples in the life of Jesus. He had experiences of despair even though He maintained vital relationship with His Father.

- Luke 22:39-44
- Matthew 27:46 (see also Psalm 22:1)

### TWO: Feelings like death – vv. 9b-12

*“I call to you, Lord, every day” (v.9b)*

In what ways does the author continue to express despair in these verses? Why does the author make references to death in verses 10, 11, and 12?

How does this level of honesty help the psalmist plead for rescue from his despair? Note the contrasting “But” in verse 13.

Where do you take your please and longings for rescue from despair?

What does Ephesians 1:18-21 present as the hope and power for our deliverance from despair?

### THREE: Feelings of darkness – vv. 13-18

*“I cry to you for help, Lord; in the morning.” (v.13)*

What occupies your first thoughts when you awake in the morning? Hope and trust? Or doubt and despair?

Despite the dedication that he was crying out to God, the writer of Psalm 88 experienced personal darkness. How did he describe his experience of darkness in verse 14-18?

How does seeking God despite personal darkness show a healthy dissatisfaction with the present order of this world? See Romans 8:22-25

## REFLECT

How is Psalm 88 like the Christian’s crisis line? Like a human help line, could it be that seeking God in prayer brings a *salve* to our hearts even if God does not immediately *solve* the problem? Here are three practical steps to take when dealing with feelings of despair, death, darkness...

### [1] Honesty is the only policy

Think about ways in which you can be more honest with others when you are facing a crisis. What is the importance of trust when it comes to sharing your feelings in times of crisis? Are you part of a home group where you can be honest and authentic about your spiritual journey?

### [2] Develop emotional health

Mature spirituality includes emotional health. Check out the resources that have been developed by Peter Scazzerro – [www.emotionallyhealthy.org](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org). There are many more excellent ministries like [Family Life Canada](http://FamilyLifeCanada.com) or [Focus on the Family](http://FocusontheFamily.com) which provide support and guidance for people in crisis.

### [3] Persist in prayer

Other ministries, like [The Mark Centre](http://TheMarkCentre.com) offer opportunities to retreat into quietness, solitude, and prayer. When in a crisis, the most important thing is to not stop seeking God even if you don’t hear His answer immediately – “*Day and night I cry out to you.*” How can you practice this kind of prayer in your life? How can we pray like this in our church family?