

## **Season 5, Episode 7: Longings of the Heart (113-144)**

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**Felicity:** This podcast is sponsored by 10ofthose.com. 10ofthose.com hand pick the best Christian books that point to Jesus and sell them at discounted prices. This week, I've enjoyed a book called Tears and Tossings by Sarah Walton. And what she does is takes the image of all our tears being kept in a jar that we see in the Psalms and she walks back through real life suffering. And for her, she has walked through a huge amount of suffering in her life. And as she holds out that image from the sun, she holds out for God, who sees our suffering and comforts us in our suffering. And as she holds up, it's God, she encourages the Christian. But also, it would be a great book to give away to those who are wondering about where is God in this suffering. Highly recommend. It authentic, well written, great to give away.

**Sarah:** Welcome to two sisters & a cup of tea. My name is Sarah and I live in the UK. This is my sister Felicity and she lives in the States.

**Felicity:** Hello.

**Sarah:** And today we're looking forward to getting stuck into our next set of stanzas from Psalm 119. We're going to be looking at verses 113 to 144, but before we get there, Felicity, tell us what's in your cup today.

**Felicity:** Well, actually, I'm going to just deflect that question because you've been talking about without telling me what's in your cup for a little while now. So I need to hear what's in your cup, really, today I've got a.

**Sarah:** Brilliant cup of tea. I've got a beetroot with ginger and orange tea. And let me tell you, my son helped me make it just before I came in here. And he was like, oh, it smells good, male. And I was like, yes. Yes, it does. And it tastes even better than it smells, which is quite something for a herbal tea, I find. Absolutely win.

**Felicity:** When you say beetroot, are you tasting that kind of like earthy beetroot on the pack here?

**Sarah:** It says 39% beetry. I can taste more orange than beetry, but I can sense it. It's purple, the tea, but it's not overly rooty.

**Felicity:** Okay, well, actually sounds good. Your description sounds better than the label. I'm actually more excited about my biscuit today. It's a humble biscuit, but it's a winner. It's a party ring, you know, the ones you lighting on. And I actually took a packet of these to a playdate yesterday with my children and there was just delight amongst everyone because none of the American kids had ever experienced no.

**Sarah:** Have you ever tried making them? I've tried making them once, actually. Surprisingly hard to get the hole in the middle well, and then put the icing on with the different patterns. Rather put like photo photos on me because it's actually quite hard to make them. Well done for just buying them.

**Felicity:** Yes, I think I will keep buying them. I don't often have the inspiration to go and try and make them.

**Sarah:** Maybe we should more, I don't know, next season, tell us everything. So we've kind of quite a way to disarm now what's it been like for you opening this up with other people in your church community around where you live. Have you been doing that? How's it been going?

**Felicity:** Yeah, good question. I think because we were talking about let's try and get open with other people, aren't we? And Psalm 119, to be fair, is not really the go to. It hasn't previously been my goto in terms of let me get the Bible, the longest psalm in the whole book. It's a little bit confusing, all that stuff. But what I have found is that as I've been soaking in the psalm then it's just been quite natural to take people to places in the psalm that are encouraging me or reminding me particularly. I really think the perspective we get on suffering here and the way that God is very much in the suffering and the way the psalmist is wrestling with the suffering and talking to God very directly about that, I think

that's been where I've been able to most bring it in. And I have found my husband would say that I'm obsessed. I just can't not take people to telling him just Sam 119, where it's at. What about you, Sarah?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I mean, I've been sitting with my debuggers and the grief church, so that's been really great to just have more voices and input other than just you and me chatting away. It's been really nice to hear their thoughts as me go through. And then I just picked up this morning with a friend as well and we just reflected on what we'd be doing with the group but generally we didn't like just kind of get stuck into one particular stands or anything. We were just kind of generally reflecting. But it was just really great. It was just great to just kind of walk through what verses have been helpful for this particular conversation or this problem or this situation and just to be able to find it in the psalm and kind of pray that through them together, it was just a joy. It was really good. So yeah. Enjoying it?

**Felicity:** Yeah. So I guess we'd say give it a go. Everybody give it a go.

**Sarah:** Yeah, let's do it. So we're going to read from verses 113. So shall I read the first two? You read the next?

**Felicity:** Sure thing.

**Sarah:** Okay, let's go. I hate doubleminded people, but I love your law. You are my refuge and my shield. I have put my hope in your word away from me, you evil doers, that I may keep the commands of my God. Sustain me, my God, according to your promise, and I shall live. Do not let my hopes be dashed. Uphold me and I shall be delivered. I shall always have regard for your decrees you reject all history from your decrees, for their delusions come to nothing. All the wicked of the earth you discard like Dross. Therefore, I love your statutes. My flesh trembles in fear of you. I stand in awe of Your laws. I have done what is righteous and just. Do not leave me to my oppressants. Ensure your servants well being. Do not let the arrogant oppress me. My eyes fail looking for Your salvation, looking for Your righteous promise. Deal with Your servant according to Your love and teach me Your decrees. I am your servant. Give me discernment that I may understand Your statutes. It is time for you to act, Lord. Your law is being broken because I love Your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, and because I consider all Your precepts right, I hate every wrong path.

**Felicity:** Your statutes are wonderful, therefore I obey them. The unfolding of Your words gives light, it gives understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pants longing for Your commands. Turn to me and have mercy on me as you always do to those who love Your name. Direct my footsteps according to your word. Let no sin rule over me. Redeem me from human oppression that I may obey Your precepts. Make Your face shine on Your servant and teach me Your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for Your law is not obeyed. You are righteous, Lord, and Your laws are right. The statutes you have laid down are righteous, they are fully trustworthy. My zeal wears me out for my enemies. Ignore your words. Your promises have been thoroughly tested and Your servant loves them. Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget Your precepts. Your righteousness is everlasting and Your law is true. Trouble and distress have come upon me, but Your commands give me delight. Your statutes are always righteous. Give me understanding that I may live.

**Sarah:** Thank you. Well, it feels like we're at crossroads in this section, doesn't it? So we've come out of that kind of dark pit last time we kind of saw that journey, didn't we, from darkness to light, as he kind of climbed out of the pit and the Word was his kind of ladder in that. And here it seems like this kind of changed tone of it and he's starting to kind of look up and look out to the world around him.

**Felicity:** Yes. So I think we have much more of the outside world and in the sense that we have a contrast here between the psalmist who is delighting in the Word, who is loving the Word, who just is longing for more of the Lord and then the unbeliever who is very starkly in a very different place. I mean, it's quite that verse 119 all the wicked of the earth you discard like Dross. That's a very sobering and stark image, isn't it? It seems that he's very aware of those who are not like him and not like him in the sense of those who are not striving to love the Lord and to live out his commands. And I think that in that is this sense of it's really clear that there's a contrast, but also a relief that he's able to say verse 114, you are my refuge.

**Sarah:** And she yeah, I think we just kind of pick up something from each stanza, that first one that is so clear, isn't it? He's so dependent on God's grace because as he sees the brokenness around him, he sees that he's there, he's with them, but by the grace of God. And it's that kind of sustained me, my God, according to your promise, and I shall live. Like, that's the only way he's going to live, isn't it? And he's like trembling. It was fear, trembling in awe because of the reality of brokenness and sin and injustice.

**Felicity:** And that's quite something that he's trembling with awe at God and at what God righteously does to those who don't follow Him. But also he's able to say, my God, my God, like the intimacy of that relationship, there's such confidence that he is secure and safe in the Lord.

**Sarah:** And it is amazing that my refuge, my shield, my hope, my God, my God, within two sentences there's like five mice and it's just like, oh, yes, absolutely.

**Felicity:** If you stuck with just the trembling bit, you'd think, well, that's kind of right in a sort of like you got the right view of God, but actually to have a right view of what God has done for us. And we were talking earlier just how much more confident we can be as we look back on the cross and know to what degree we shelter under the cross of Christ.

**Sarah:** Yeah, he's so shielded by his salvation, isn't it, that then he can call out in the second stanza, he can cry out in verse 126, it is time for you to act, Lord, your laws be broken. That is such a bold thing to say, isn't it? To plead with the Lord and to cry to saying, it's time, come on, act because of what I see around me. And you just think, wow, how can he go from trembling to boldly proclaiming, but the cross is the means. Yeah, he's totally shielded. His assurance is completely rooted in his salvation promised.

**Felicity:** That's exactly, isn't it? Because as he calls out for action, I mean, if he was not sheltering in the cross or in the promises of the Lord, then that action would also fall upon him, which he's very aware of his sin, isn't he? I feel that the psalmist is very aware that he's falling short and as he sees that, but then he is then absolutely secure, as you say, his assurance is sure. That doesn't really work.

**Sarah:** Yes, I think also we see that with the in the circumstances, the word servant is repeated three times. And I think that just again, is another reminder that his identity is rooted in who he is as a servant of God, as a servant of the covenant promise. I think those little clues just help us to see that actually he's completely wrapped up in the arms of this covenant promise and as we know that to be fulfilled at the cross. Yeah. That is his means of being able to then cry out.

**Felicity:** Yeah. And in that, then if we move on to the next Dan to say, then 130, turn to me and have mercy on me as you always do to those who love your name. And we have the lived out reality, I think, of what it is to be sheltering in the cross, so that to have the Lord as your hope and your refuge means that you expect mercy and expect him to the requests. Here, his desire is for more of God, and there's an expectation that God is going to give him more of himself, open up the word more to him, help him understand it more and more. And I think we've seen that all the way through the sun. Like it's nothing new, but it seems that there's a certainty in this section that maybe it has grown since the last one, because in many ways his circumstances haven't changed, but nothing in him has.

**Sarah:** Yeah. No, I think you're right. We've kind of seen that journey. I think what really struck me in this stance was the fact that last line of streams of tears flow from his eyes for your laws not obeyed. Like he's so burdened and grieved for what he's seeing around him, but actually, like it starts with his own heart, like he's wanting the Lord to work in his own heart first, isn't he? He's concerned for his own Godliness and he's not sitting in judgment at this point. He's saying, Lord, work in me, direct my footsteps, let no sin rule over me, whilst he sees the brokenness around him. And he kind of grieves for that. He's also, like persistently pursuing his own Godliness and not letting that slip, which I think is extraordinary, isn't it, in perspective?

**Felicity:** Yeah, I love that. That's such a good note there in terms of just seeing both of those things, because it would be tempting to sort of jump either which way, wouldn't it? But actually to hold both of them and therefore to respond. And I guess there's a challenge there to us on both of those parts, isn't there? How do we view our own hearts? And how tempted are we to then forget us and forget that we're tempted that way? But also, do I

really cry about what I see around me? Am I pained by those who are not following Jesus? I like it. That's not how I respond.

**Sarah:** And what we see is that here, where do we see at the end of the second stance, there's like this kind of cyclical thing going on. He loves God's commands and because he considers all his ways right, he hates every wrong path. And as he hates every wrong path, he therefore runs to the Lord and loves God's commands. And it's all involved in getting the Word open for ourselves, isn't it? And as he does that, he's seeing the world more clearly from the Lord's eyes and therefore he's hating what's going on and the injustice he's seeing and the law being breaking and says, we're running for the Lord again. And, yeah, I'm just kind of struck with that actually. The more I'm in the Word, the more that I will grieve for what's going on in the world because I'll see it from the Lord's viewpoint. I need to be in the world myself to do that, don't I? And he's very much doing that. He's not just kind of proclaiming judgment on sin and lawlessness, he's actually his heart is focused on being there.

**Felicity:** Yeah, I think that is just such a good point. And that is, I think, what happens as you I think we manifest it by ourselves. So we evidence that the more we're in the words, the more we see things according to the way that God intends them to be seen and it prompts you to then want more of the best. I think that's one of the things we've seen throughout Psalm 19 is that the sheer goodness of God's ways and.

**Sarah:** Yeah, and then also that just makes the last answer. Like the repeated Word is righteousness all the way through. Actually, the more and more that you're in God's Word as he is, the more he's able to trust God's righteous ways, even though he doesn't understand the kind of extent of brokenness around Him. And I think that's so helpful for us, isn't it? Because yeah, we sit in a world that is thoroughly broken and yet can we pray these words with the psalmist that you are righteous, Lord, and your laws are right and they're fully trustworthy, they're thoroughly tested and they're true, like those kind of frames. Can we pray that with Him as we kind of trust the Lord for what we're seeing around?

**Felicity:** I think, yeah, I think you're right and that boldness in praying. It like, let's pray like this. That is, I think, what we're left thinking, isn't it? I have the same God, he is at work in the same way when he says the Lord is near, that is true for me as well. And so I can as I shelter in the cross, I can pray like this. And I love that. Verse 140 your promises have been thoroughly tested in your seven loves. And that just makes me that reminds me of just reading missionary biographies and just seeing that they have been thoroughly tested. As I look around me and see other Christians literally testing it well and.

**Sarah:** Ultimately in the Lord Jesus, right? Like, he's the one who thoroughly tests every part of the covenant promise and he fulfills it. He fleshes it out. Flesh it out. So actually we can come and we can lament in the way that this psalmist does with absolute confidence and hope. We can pray these words in Jesus name because he has thoroughly tested every part of the covenant promise. And I just love that. How wonderful that we can pray these words with confidence. We can boldly approach a throne of grace. So, so great. I can't believe times already god flip you. Pray.

**Felicity:** Pray for us now, Father. God, we praise you so much that we can pray with boldness, that we can come before you without fear because of the cross. We praise you for the Lord Jesus and how we look at Him and know that we can cry out with the psalmist. And so Father, we cry out about the world that we see around us. We pray that you'd give us your heart that we might long to proclaim you to that world that we see. But Father, we pray that you continue to be at work in our hearts.

**Sarah:** Please.

**Felicity:** Would you drive us back to yourself through your word? We pray for our hunger, for Your word. We pray that as we're in it, would you open up our eyes that we might see more of Your wonderful deeds? Father, we pray that you continue to do a deep work in us by Your grace and for Your glory. Amen.

**Sarah:** Amen. As we always say, this is really just the beginning of a conversation, isn't it? Why not pick up the conversation with a friend in your church family? I've also found I've just been reading maybe half a stanza at a time in my own quiet times, in my own Bible times, and just dwelling on the Word for myself at a slower pace. There's no way you can

do more time like we're doing right now, but just going at a slower pace as well. Just really kind of beds in what we're talking about. Do sign up to our newsletter if you haven't already. We send out a monthly newsletter at the beginning of every month. It just contains some things we're enjoying around the Internet that hopefully will encourage you. Well, this season they've been Stalm related. It contains a little piece of writing from one of us and just a few other bits and bobs. It's our way of connecting with you outside of these episodes and we'd love you to connect with us that way. So the link is in the show notes. Do sign up to that.

**Felicity:** Stay in the loop. That's our loop. I feel that's the loop. I mean, my question really at this point is, is the tea still good even though it's maybe a little tepid?

**Sarah:** Let me just quickly test oh, it's actually surprisingly good. I wouldn't want it like cold, but it's okay.

**Felicity:** Yeah, that is a compliment to the Sea. For sure.

**Sarah:** Big win, for sure. Great winning to go. So we'll see you next time.

**Felicity:** Thanks for listening.

**Sarah:** Bye. Bye bye.

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