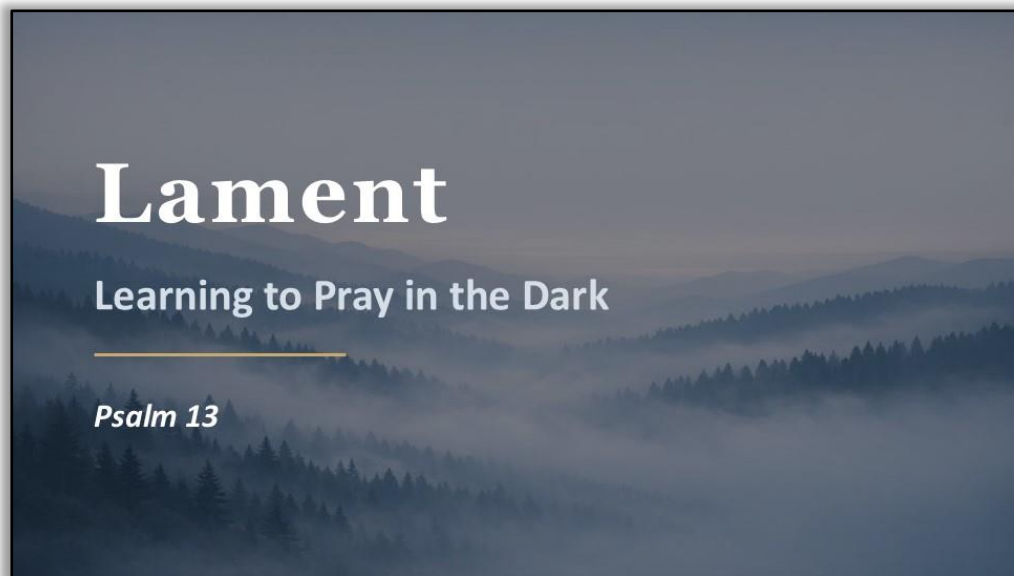


Reflection on Sunday 28 June 2026 by Adrian Walter, Lay Leader of Worship

Readings: Psalm 13 & Matthew 10. 40-42



Learning to Pray in the Dark

I remember my first job interview. It was at the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School in Hereford (incidentally, where our ex-Archdeacon Trevor Jones was teaching at the time!). I was the first of six candidates to be interviewed and the interviews were all around 45 minutes with a 15-minute break in between each candidate. After the last interview there was an hour's deliberation before the head of department appeared in the staff room and said, "Mr Williams, the Head would like to see you now." At that point, the five of us who remained in the room knew we had been unsuccessful. In a way, I was relieved as we were both living in Enfield at the time and a week later I landed a job in Enfield so we could get married knowing I had a job to start after the summer.

Sometimes, life feels like sitting in a waiting room, not knowing how long it will be before, or even if, your name will be called. Time drags, your thoughts wander, and you start to feel unsettled. Psalm 13 understands that feeling. It is a prayer for people who are waiting and wondering how long.

That is why Psalm 13 speaks so powerfully. It gives words to that waiting-room feeling — sitting with questions, carrying a heavy heart, and not knowing how long it will last. It is a short psalm, but it says something many of us have felt. It is a prayer for times when life feels heavy, when God seems far away, and when we are not sure what to say. That is what lament is. It is coming to God with what is real — not pretending, not tidying things up, just bringing our sadness, confusion, and pain to him honestly.



When Life Feels Like a Waiting Room

- **Psalm 13 speaks into that experience**
- **Some periods of our lives feel uncertain, slow, and heavy**
- **We do not know how long the waiting will last**

“How long, Lord?” Psalm 13 begins with this question repeated four times in two verses. That resonates with us straight away, because it feels so familiar. How long is this going to last? How long am I going to feel like this? How long will God seem silent? David even says, “Will you forget me forever?” Those are strong words, but they are honest words. And maybe that is one of the biggest things this psalm teaches us: God can handle our honesty, so bring what is real to Him.

“How Long, Lord?”

- Psalm 13 begins with a cry of pain and delay
- David speaks honestly about feeling forgotten
- Lament means bringing what is real to God

David then talks about what is going on inside him. He speaks about sorrow in his heart and thoughts that keep circling in his mind. That feels very close to real life. Sometimes the hardest part of a difficult period is what it does inside us. We can look fine on the outside and still feel anxious, worn down, or overwhelmed within. Psalm 13 gives us permission to name that. It reminds us that faith does not mean we never struggle. It means we do not have to struggle alone.

Sorrow in the Heart

- Hard times affect us deeply inside
- Anxiety, exhaustion, and overwhelm can be hidden
- Faith does not remove struggle, but it means we do not struggle alone



Then David does something very simple and very important: he asks for help. He says, “Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes.” In today’s language, it is almost like saying, “Lord, please see me. Please respond. Please give me strength.” It is such a moving prayer because it is so human. It is also exceptionally simple – often the simplest prayers are the most powerful. When life feels dark, what we often long for most is the sense that God sees us and has not left us on our own.

“Look on Me and Answer”

David asks God to see him and respond

“Give light to my eyes” is a prayer for strength

Sometimes the simplest prayers are the most powerful

Then the tone of the psalm begins to shift, and shift remarkably. David says, "But I trust in your unfailing love." It does not sound as though everything has suddenly been fixed, and indeed we know that whatever situation David was in at the time certainly hadn't miraculously improved. The struggle may still be there, and the questions may still be there. But David chooses to remember who God is. He remembers that God's love is steady, even when life feels anything but steady. And that is where hope begins to return.

But I Trust in Your Unfailing Love

**Circumstances
may not have
changed yet**

**But David
remembers
who God is**

**Hope begins to
return through
trust**

That is why Psalm 13 is so helpful for us – it shows us that honesty and faith are not enemies – they can sit side by side. It tells us that if all we have is a simple prayer like, "How long, Lord?", then that is enough to begin with. We do not need impressive words. We do not need to pretend we are doing better than we are. We can come to God exactly as we are.

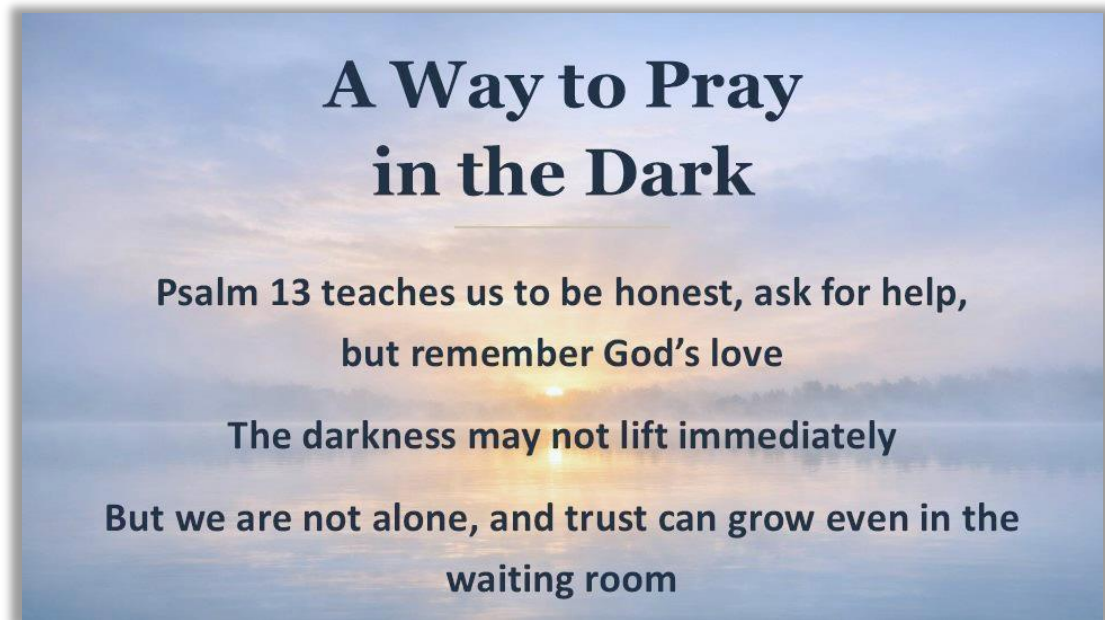


In a moment we're going to sing the hymn ***Just as I am*** – the second verse of which reads, "**Just as I am, though tossed about, with many a conflict, many a doubt. fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come**". And so, honest lament does not have to be an expression of doubt, it can live alongside and be an expression of real faith.

And finally, Psalm 13 shapes the way we care for one another. If this psalm is in the Bible, then sorrow has a place in the life of faith. Not everyone is in a joyful place right now. Some people are carrying things we know nothing about. So, Psalm 13 teaches us to be gentle, to listen well, and not to rush people towards easy answers. Sometimes the kindest thing we can do is simply help someone hold on to hope.

So maybe that is the gift of Psalm 13. It gives us a way to pray when life feels dark. It teaches us to be honest, to ask for help, to remember God's love, and to hold on to hope. That does not

make the darkness disappear straight away. But it does remind us that we are not alone. And sometimes that is where healing begins. A cry of "How long?" becomes, slowly and gently, a quiet song of trust so that, even in the waiting room, we find that God is still with us.



I'm just going to end with an extract of a prayer written by the monk Thomas Merton, which I think applies to all of us at one time or another. So let us pray:

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end... but I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone." Amen