

1 **Discuss the following quote by Mark Vroegop.** “Trust is believing what you know to be true even though the facts of suffering might call that belief into question.”

 Look at Psalm 13:1-6 and pray or sing a song of trust.

2 **What’s your story of pain or sorrow?** What difficult events in your life have shaped your soul and even your understanding of God?

 What are some of the questions and struggles you frequently have to fight when you’re dealing with pain?

3 **Why is complaint a central element of lament?**

 What are some reasons Christians are probably reluctant to voice their complaints to God in prayer?

 When is complaint sinful and wrong? How can it be biblical and spiritual?

 Is there a complaint you need to humbly offer to the Lord today?

4 **The English poet, William Cowper (1731-1800), struggled with debilitating bouts of depression which landed him in an insane asylum for a time.** Most of his life he wrestled with how to turn his sorrow into trust. Among other hymns like “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood” or “O for a Closer Walk with God,” Cowper wrote one believed to be his last, entitled “God Moves in a Mysterious Way.”

 Take a moment to reflect on the lyrics. Which stand out to you and why? “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform; He plants his footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable mines, Of never-failing skill, He treasures up his bright designs, And works his sovereign will. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take, The clouds ye so much dread, Are big with mercy, and shall break, In blessings on your head! Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace: Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face.”

 For Cowper, pain became a platform for trust and worship. In his pain he found his voice for praise. How can you take your situation of sorrow or sadness and turn it into an opportunity to trust and worship God?

5 **500 years ago the great Reformer, John Calvin wrote, “The reason why so many examples of the grace of God contribute nothing to our profit, and fail in edifying our faith, is, that as soon as we have begun to make them the subjects of our consideration, our inconstancy draws us away to something else, and thus, at the very commencement, our minds soon lose sight of them.”**

 In times of trouble how can we do a better job of remembering God’s redemptive works?

 How can we let them dwell in our minds for long periods of time, not just fleeting moments?

 Develop a list of “go-to” testimonies of God’s great redemptive works in your life.

6 **Lamenting is a historic practice that gives you permission to vocalize your pain as it moves you toward God-centered worship and trust.** It is how you live between the poles of a hard life and a good God. It’s how you grieve in faith. What is God teaching you about biblical lamentation from Psalm 77?

 When you’ve had to help a friend or loved one through the pain of suffering, what are some things you’ve found helpful and unhelpful?

7 **J. R. R. Tolkien, the famous author of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, had an amazing knack for language – in fact that’s what he studied at the University of Oxford.** He coined various new words, one of which was “eucatastrophe.” He described it as a sudden happy turn in a story which pierces you with a joy that brings you to tears. He used “eucatastrophes” in many of his storylines. But maybe he modeled his movement from sorrow to rejoicing by tracing the steps of lament found in Psalms like this one.

 How can your situation of sorrow be transformed into a “eucatastrophe?”