

# Poems, Prayers & Promises



# Psalm 88



**Faith  
Hope  
Strength  
Rescue**



A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah. For the director of music. According to mahalath leannoah. A maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.

- 1 Lord, you are the God who saves me;  
day and night I cry out to you.
- 2 May my prayer come before you;  
turn your ear to my cry.
- 3 I am overwhelmed with troubles  
and my life draws near to death.

<sup>4</sup> I am counted among those who go down to the pit;

I am like one without strength.

<sup>5</sup> I 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.

<sup>6</sup> You have put me in the lowest pit,  
in the darkest depths.

I am confined and cannot escape;

7 Your wrath lies heavily on me;  
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.

8 You have taken from me my closest friends  
and have made me repulsive to them.

9 my eyes are dim with grief.

I call to you, Lord, every day;

I spread out my hands to you.

10 Do you show your wonders to the dead?

Do their spirits rise up and praise you?

11 Is your love declared in the grave,  
your faithfulness in Destruction?

12 Are your wonders known in the place of darkness,  
or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?

13 But I cry to you for help, Lord;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.

14 Why, Lord, do you reject me  
and hide your face from me?

15 From my youth I have suffered and been close to death;  
I have borne your terrors and am in despair.

16 Your wrath has swept over me;  
your terrors have destroyed me.

17 All day long they surround me like a flood;  
they have completely engulfed me.

18 You have taken from me friend and neighbor—  
darkness is my closest friend.



# Can Despair Be Praise?

“<sup>18</sup> You have taken from me friend and neighbor -  
darkness is my closest friend.” *Psalms 88:18*

“<sup>13</sup> Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again  
Before I depart and am no more.” *Psalms 39:13*

# Faith and Psalm 88



# A Letter To Jesus

“Lord, my God, who am I that You should forsake me? The Child of your Love. And now become as the most hated one, the one You have thrown away as unwanted, unloved. I call, I cling, I want, and there is no One to answer, no One on Whom I can cling. No, no one. Even deep down, there is nothing but emptiness & darkness. My God, how painful is this unknown pain. I have no faith – I dare not utter the words & thoughts that crowd in my heart – and make me suffer untold agony.”

# A Letter To Jesus

“So many unanswered questions live within me I am afraid to uncover them, because of the blasphemy. If there be God, please forgive me. When I try to raise my thoughts to Heaven there is such convicting emptiness that those very thoughts return like sharp knives & hurt my very soul. I am told God loves me, and yet the reality of darkness & coldness & emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul. Did I make a mistake in surrendering blindly to the Call of the Sacred Heart?” Mother Teresa, Kolkata, India (1910 - 1997)

# Faith and Psalm 88



# Mother Teresa's Letter To An Agnostic

"Dear Malcolm, Your longing for God is so deep and yet He keeps Himself away from you. He must be forcing Himself to do so, because He loves you so much. The personal love Christ has for you is infinite. The small difficulty you have with His Church is finite. Overcome the finite with the Infinite."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" From childhood, he answered. <sup>22</sup> "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." <sup>23</sup> "If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

<sup>24</sup> Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "**I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!**" *Mark 9:21-24*

# Psalm 88:1-2

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you are the God who saves me;  
day and night I cry out to you.

<sup>2</sup>May my prayer come before you;  
turn your ear to my cry.



# Hope and Psalm 88



# Strength and Psalm 88



<sup>4</sup>I am counted among those who go down  
to the pit; I am like one without strength.

<sup>5</sup>I 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.

<sup>6</sup>You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths.

<sup>7</sup>Your wrath lies heavily on me;  
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves.

*Psalm 88: 4-7*

# Psalm 88: 8 and 18

<sup>8</sup>You have taken from me my closest friends  
and have made me repulsive to them.

<sup>18</sup>You have taken from me friend and neighbor  
— darkness is my closest friend.”

# Strength and Psalm 88



# Psalm 88:5

<sup>5</sup>I 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.

# Strength and Psalm 88



# Rescue and Psalm 88





# Psalm 88:4-5

<sup>4</sup>I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength.

<sup>5</sup>I 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.

# Luke 22:42-44

<sup>42</sup>“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” <sup>43</sup>An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup>And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

<sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."

*Matthew 26:38*

<sup>3</sup> I am overwhelmed with troubles, my life draws near to death.

*Psalms 88:3*

# Rescue and Psalm 88



# Psalm 88: 8 and 18

<sup>10</sup>Do you show your wonders to the dead?  
Do their spirits rise up and praise you?

<sup>11</sup>Is your love declared in the grave,  
your faithfulness in destruction?

# Rescue and Psalm 88



# Applying the Word



The  
Table  
of  
Exchange

