

EHC Week 2
“Go Up”
Psalm 62

Introduction

Tim. Pastor. **Memorial Day + Cookout.** **Psalm 62 + 63.** **Pray.**

RECAP.

Last week we kicked off our summer series - *The Emotionally Healthy Church* with this idea - **It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.**

That in order to grow more and more into spiritual maturity - which to put it simply is responding to God's love for us with deeper love for Him and love for others - that requires emotional maturity.

- If you're consistently unrighteously angry, ready to lash out at any second to anyone who does anything against you - that does not lead to love for others.
- If you're consistently anxious, always spinning your mind in circles about the future, about what's to come - that's going to get in the way of your love for God and your nearness to Him.

And we said what tends to happen as we consider our emotional lives is we do one of two unhelpful things:

- Either we **suppress** our emotions, ignore them, stuff them down, only ever try to feel the “good” ones.
- OR, we **obey** our emotions and let them rule and run our lives - dictating everything.

But instead of these two options, the goal was to allow God to begin to shape and renew us such that we **go forward into emotional maturity.**

Which we defined as having the right emotion, at the right time, with the right amount, for the right duration, because of the right reason - namely, love.

Four Movements of Emotional Health

That leads us to where we're headed over the first chunk of this series. Over the next 4 weeks I want to put before you a pathway for this emotional maturity and renewal based around **four essential movements** that I think we see in the Scriptures.

Four things we must do to go forward into emotional health:

1. **Go In** - We must learn to be honest with ourselves and others and God about the ways we try to hide, pretend, and fake what is actually broken within us. “Hard work of heart work”
2. **Go Back** - We have to deal with our history and our past and our family of origin to see how the ways we've been shaped by what we've been taught and experienced and how all of that leads to emotional dysfunction and unhealth.
3. **Go Out** - Meaning emotional maturity, like all aspects of discipleship to Jesus, is a community project. Our emotions lie to us and cause us to live in a state of unreality, so we need others to ground us back in the Lord.

And what we're going to address today: **Go Up to Go Forward.**

We must take our emotional life and our feelings up to God. We must bring our feelings and emotions - the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the righteous and the unrighteous, the meaningful and the meaningless - all of our emotions and feelings we must bring up to God in order to go forward into emotional health and maturity.

We All Go Somewhere with Our Emotions

But before we talk about Psalm 62 and taking our emotions to the Lord, I want us to all agree on something first, and that is this → **We all run somewhere with our emotions.**

Whether you suppress your emotions or obey, whether you are aware or if it or not - we all run somewhere with our emotions. We all take our emotions to somewhere, someone, or something.

Harper + Fear. I've been watching this play out first hand in the life of my toddler. Harper learned the emotion of fear recently. It's really quite cute - she'll curl up her fists and make this face and goes "I SCARED".

So the other day, you know how we've been having these crazy storms? Well I was in our living room, and she was in the playroom kind of doing her thing, and there was a big thunder clap. Like a real good one, you know - "BOOM." And I hear the little pitter patter of toddler feet as she comes sprinting into the living room - "DADA I SCARED. I SCARED. THUNDER GO BOOM!"

Harper doesn't really know anything about thunder or storms or the fear she's feeling or why she's afraid. But she knows when I'm scared I run to mom or dad.

She does this with a whole host of other emotions - sad, runs to us. Happy, runs to us. Angry, runs away from us. (But she still runs somewhere!)

And the thing is as adults, we never stop running places with our emotions, particularly the negative ones.

Tangible Items

So for some of us, when we're experiencing negative emotions we run to things that are tangible.

- We run to **food** (there's literally a type of food called comfort food) or **alcohol**.
- We run to social media, video games, or tv → **distractions**.
- We run to **music** - something that helps us sort of sit in the feeling.

People

For others of us → We run to people. Something bad happens in our lives, we get angry/upset - we call our best friend. We call our mom. We call our sibling. We call our CG leader. Immediately - I'm feeling this bad emotion, I go talk to someone.

Ourselves

Still others of us, we run to ourselves. We turn inward, which is still going somewhere. We shut down, we try to just ignore it or squash it. We process it and turn it around in our heads over and over and over again.

The point still stands → **We all run somewhere with our emotions.**

Psalms 62+63 - Pour Out Your Heart To God

And David, here in Psalm 62+63, would invite us that as followers of Jesus that somewhere should be God. David lays before us the beautiful invitation we have to bring our emotions before the Lord.

He says in Psalm 62:8, the verse we have right here on these side banners - **8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.**

So let's dive into Psalm 62+63, and I want us to see the **necessity** and the **beauty** of bringing your emotions to God in order to move forward into emotional health. Here's why you should do this, here's why it matters, end with how this looks in our lives.

God is a Refuge

Psalm 62:1-7

1 For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. 2 He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. 3 How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? 4 They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

Now, we don't know exactly what's taking place here in the life of David for why he's writing this Psalm. Best guess from Biblical scholars is that he's on the run for his life from his son Absalom who is trying to kill him and take the throne. Which would make sense to why he would write some of these words. But we don't really know.

What we do know is things are not good and David is not happy. He's anxious. He's confused. He's hurting. But even from the beginning He's turning his gaze in the midst of the storm of his life onto God.

5 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. 7 On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

Three reasons we bring our emotions to God:

- 1. God is a refuge for His people.**

7 On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

"Refuge" - The imagery David uses here of a refuge would have been well understood in his time. In this time period, the landscape of civilization was one where there were cities, fortresses, spread out and separated by miles of country, land, often desert. To be out in the open, traveling from one city to another was quite dangerous - you were exposed to the elements, vulnerable to attack, being taken captive, beaten, robbed, killed. But cities were places of refuge. They had walls and were often built on top of or on the side of hills for added protection. To be in a city or shelter was to be safe.

And David, in Psalm 62 - says that is what God is like for His soul. Everyone is attacking me. Everyone is after me. In the swirl of his emotions - anxiety, grief, sorrow, fear - David needs a place to hide. He needs a place to run to and find rest, joy, comfort, peace.

That place is God.

And notice what David says in verse 6 - God is not only a place to run, He is THE place to run.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation.

Why do we bring our emotions to God? Because He is a refuge for us. But he's not just a refuge, he is the only TRUE refuge!

He's the only one who can actually comfort us, bring us peace, convict us, shape us, mold us, help us.

We will all run somewhere with our emotions.

All those other things I mentioned we run to earlier, most of those things aren't necessarily bad...

- It's not wrong to have a little ice cream if you're feeling sad. (I prefer half-baked by Ben & Jerry's, alright?)
- It's a good thing to call a friend or a family member if you're grieving (Jesus in Matthew 26 opens up to Peter, James, and John).
- It's not a bad thing to process/wrestle with the emotion internally.

The problem is that while so many of those other things are good and useful and helpful - **they cannot be the true refuge your soul needs. At some point they will let you down...**

- Our friend doesn't pick up the phone call.
- The ice cream carton goes empty.
- Our spouse turns out to be a sinner too.
- Work just takes and takes and takes some more.

There are a lot of things that promise or offer to be a refuge and will not and cannot ultimately deliver.

That's why David says later in **62:10 - 10 Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.**

When all other places of refuge fail (and they will - even the best ones), God does not.

God is the ONLY refuge who won't disappoint us, leave us, sin against us, or let us down.

God is the only true rock! He does not change like shifting shadows. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Always kind. Always true. Always working. Always powerful. Time tested and proven.

This is how Alasdair Groves and Winston Smith put it in their fantastic book *Untangling Emotions*.

"[Christian] hope is not in a system of strategies we can enact [to deal with negative emotions] but in a Savior and Shepherd and ever-present help in time of need who sees us, knows us, loves us, and actually has the power, right here and right now, to help us with the turmoil of our hearts.

God is the true, mighty, merciful refuge for His people.

God Redeems Our Emotions

But we don't just run to God because He is a refuge. He's also the one that can actually help redeem our emotions.

2. God redeems our emotions.

Look at this shift that takes place in David's heart as he works through the Psalm...

Psalm 62:2 - He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

Psalm 62:6 - He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

Biblical scholars agree - this is no inconsequential detail. As David is pouring his heart out to the Lord, at first he says I won't be greatly shaken. I won't move a lot. But now, he declares - I won't be shaken at all. No little tremor, no little murmur, no movement. His heart is growing more and more steadfast.

I'll give you another one:

Psalm 62:3-4 - 3 How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? 4 They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

When are these folks going to leave me alone? They keep attacking me, tearing me down.

Then look at verse 9:

9 Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

11 Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, 12 and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

What can man do to me? Those who are high are a breath, those who are low are a delusion. We're all temporary. We're just humans. God's in control. Steadfast love and power belong to Him. He'll repay. He's got me.

As David is pouring his heart out to God, as he's laying his emotions before Him → Here's my emotions. Here's my feelings. As he's telling his soul - wait on God. Rest in Him. Trust in Him → **God is changing David.**

The situation doesn't change from verse 4 to verse 9 - what changed? David's heart. God's renewing his evaluation. Same enemies, same circumstances → God is rooting David's heart further into Himself and His character - David's emotions are changing - I won't be shaken.

I said this last week, but so much of what God wants to do in the work of emotionally growing us up, is not to change our circumstances or our emotions, He wants to change us! And then by changing and renewing us, then our emotions change. This is an inside out, slow, redemptive work of renewal God is doing in us by His Spirit.

How? Through His mercy, His power, Him being a refuge for us. His Spirit. So we bring our emotions to Him.

God is the Point

(1) God is a refuge for His people.

(2) God redeems our emotions.

But there's one more thing you have to see that is absolutely essential to understand going up to God to go forward into emotional health. You miss this, everything else I said is just Christianized self-help. And I am uninterested in self-help with some Jesus sprinkled on top. That's not what I want to preach.

3. God gives us more of Himself.

Psalm 63:1-7

1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. 4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, 6 when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; 7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

One of the greatest dangers to us moving forward into emotional health is to focus too much on emotional health.

David says - My soul is satisfied in God. His love is better than life. I am satisfied as with rich food. I sing for joy.

The point of bringing our emotions up to God is not really for Him to change our emotions - although He does that. It's not really for us to get a new perspective - although that's true and good and necessary and needed. It's not so that we just feel "better" - whatever that might look like or mean.

The primary and central reason we bring our emotions up to God is to get more of God Himself.

That's the point. That's the point of all of this - More of God. I want to know Him more. I want to love Him more. I want to worship Him more. I want to be with Him more. I want to look more and more like Him.

1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you...

YOU.

Earnestly I seek you, not just the peace you want to give me.

Earnestly I seek YOU, not just happiness and joy.

Earnestly I seek YOU, not just an end to my depression.

We bring our emotions to God to get more of God!

Which is what He is trying to do first and foremost in your life as well – give you more of Himself.

SO let me offer this thought up to you then → What if the experience you're having and the emotion it's bringing is not simply something to be wrestled with until it goes away or changes, but actually a tool God might be using to bring your heart to Him?

Think about it. When we're in that emotionally down place, we laser focus onto the highest goal of no longer experiencing that bad emotion.

- I'm sad, the goal is for me to no longer be sad. Tell me from the Bible how to stop being sad.
- I'm anxious, the goal is for me to no longer feel anxious. Tell me how to stop being anxious.
- I'm angry, the goal is to no longer be angry. Tell me what I have to change to stop being angry.

And yet the highest goal of the Christian life is not to be free from bad feelings - the highest goal is to be known and loved by God and love Him in return.

Is there a possibility then that the God who knows all things, holds all things, controls all things - who works all things together for the good of those who love Him - might use those experiences leading to your bad and negative emotions to (1) draw you to Himself and (2) make you more like Jesus?

What if that became the target? What if that became the goal or the win in our emotional life?

Not - how do I escape this negative emotion as fast as possible, but how do I experience greater intimacy with God and become more like Jesus in the midst of and through this negative emotion??

Dan Allender, in the book we're doing for our first book club *The Cry of the Soul*, says it like this:

"If we view difficult emotions as problems to be solved, we will end up looking for answers that will work rather than pursuing relationship with God, regardless of immediate outcome."

What would it look like for you, in your sadness, in your grief, in your worry, fear, anxiety, in your anger - to care more about being with God, than getting out of the circumstance or away from the emotion?

Then, guess what God does as you pursue more of Him? Changes your heart, redeems your emotions.

Practical Steps

So here's what this looks like practically. Two steps to take our emotions to God. They're right there in the passage.

1. Pour out your heart to God.

8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

The Hebrew here for the word "*pour*" can be translated as "*gushing*." Just let everything in your heart just gush out to God. Here's all of it.

This is the language of prayer. Go to God as the Father and Refuge He is to His people and gush out your heart to Him .

And we pour out two things in particular to Him:

Our Feelings. God here is what I'm feeling. I don't know if it's accurate or not. I don't want to be ruled by it, I also don't want to stuff it, I want to invite you into it here and now - here's what I'm feeling, and I need you. I'm angry, help me. I'm sad, help me. I'm tired, help me. I feel alone, help me. I'm anxious, help me. I'm full of joy, thank you.

Our Desires.

The good ones. The bad ones. The ambiguous idk ones...

- God, I would love to be married right now. It seems like everyone around me has someone but me and I'm lonely. I'm trying to be content, but this is my desire and it's hard. I'd love a spouse, but I'm giving this desire to you. Do with it what you will. Change me as you see fit.

- God, I want a different job. Is that ok? Can I want that? Can I desire that? I want to be content where I am but my boss is difficult and the pay is terrible and I'm sad, I'm bitter. I would love something different, here's my desire Lord, do what you will.
- God, that person hurt me so badly. I cannot believe they said that about me. I'm hurt and I'm going to be honest I don't want good for them. I want them to fall flat on their face and suffer. Most of my free brain space is used to have imaginary arguments where I yell at them in my mind. I know that's not right, but that's my desire. Help me Lord.

Groves + Smith again:

“All of us are easily presumptuous, blind to the privilege offered us in God’s call to pour out our hearts. Imagine, the Father himself cares what you think and invites you to earnest conversation with him at any time, for as long as you need.”

Imagine - the God who holds the universe together and yet knows the number of hairs on your head invites you to ***earnest conversation with him at any time for as long as you need as the one who can actually be our savior and help - our refuge in times of need.***

2. Wait on the Lord.

1 For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

Alright Lord, here's my heart. Now I'm going to wait on you. I'm not going to go run around in panic. I'm not going to pray then run to other things to give me peace.

I'm just going to wait on you. I'm going to trust your Word. I'm going to trust your character. I'm going to trust your promises.

I can't help but think of Jesus in the Garden. Matthew 26:39 where he prays - **39 “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”**

Not as I will, but as you will. Your will God. Jesus says - “Father, here's my desire. If there's any other way but the cross to accomplish this mission you've sent me on, let's do that one. BUT I've come to do your will, so I bring my desire to you, I don't hide it, but I submit it to Your providential care.”

What would it look like for you to trust God in this way?

Here's my feelings - I'm anxious, I'm stressed, I'm sad, I'm lonely, I'm hurt, I'm angry. Here's the desires that I have. I'm not hiding these from you. I'm laying myself open before you. I want to be honest with where I'm at.

But Lord - I want your will. I want what you want. I want to want what you want. Lord help me. Your will, not mine. I trust you.

Here's my heart Lord, but you're God and I'm not. You're king and I'm not. So do what you will.

Gospel Conclusion

Movement #1 towards emotional maturity - **Go up to Go Forward.**

What a fantastic privilege given to us in the gospel. Without the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, we cannot come in prayer to God. We were separated from Him. Because of our sin and God's holiness, we could not have intimacy with Him, relationship with Him, we could not pour our hearts out to Him.

And yet through the death and resurrection of Jesus - He has dealt with our sin, He has washed us clean, we are given His righteousness - and now we can draw near to the throne of grace in confidence. Blood-bought, grace-given, never-failing confidence that God loves us, calls us His own, and is a merciful and mighty refuge for His people.

Communion. Pray.