



Rhododendron, waiting for spring

HOW LONG LORD?

February 2014

*How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
Look on me and answer, LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.*

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*I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.*

Psalm 13

A friend pointed me to this psalm at a time I was experiencing a long deep depression that didn't want to lift. Aren't many depressions like that? They seem to last forever and we find it hard to believe we'll ever feel good again. Do you feel that way now? If you do, this might be a good time to spend some time with Psalm 13. It helped me through some very bad times. Maybe it will do the same for you.

What a relief it is for us to hear David cry out to God: *"How long Lord? Will you forget me forever?"* The words remind me that we're not alone with our own deep feelings. Even David, the man close to God's heart, had dark emotions like we do. I gain comfort from that and I expect all of us suffering from depression would be comforted.

King David shows his honesty, feeling like the pain will last forever, crying out to God, weeping. He shows that asking God some tough, seemingly disrespectful, questions is a most normal response to suffering. When we do that, we're presenting ourselves to God as human beings.

As you'll see in many of his psalms, David teaches us to follow our expressions of pain with positive reflections about who God is. In the last verses David encourages us to have faith: *"But I trust in your unfailing love . . ."*

When we have wept a while, it's time to take the focus off ourselves and turn it onto God. It's time to remember what He has done for us and to sing His praises. *" . . . for he has been good to [us]"*

What comfort to know that a cold dark winter never lasts forever. Spring *will* come again. The picture of the rhododendron proves it.

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