

How to Get a Good Night's Sleep

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Date: 03 August 2025

Preacher: Dov Cohen

[0 : 00] You are the head of the church. You are creator of the world. You are wise and you are satisfying to know. Lord, please bless the preaching of your word now so we can treasure you more dearly and more rightly as you deserve.

And may that reflect throughout everything that we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Please take your seats. Amen. And like I said earlier, for the benefit of our guests, my name is Dove Cohen.

I'm a pastor here at Providence and I have the absolute privilege of opening up God's word this morning. And isn't it a privilege that we have God's word and we hear from the God of the universe and understand his heart for us.

So, glad you're here with us this morning. We're going to be looking at Psalm 4. Psalm 4 and the title of today's message is How to Get a Good Night's Sleep.

How to Get a Good Night's Sleep. And the main idea for today is that God's goodness moves us from distress to rest. God's goodness moves us from distress to rest.

[1 : 48] Now, have you ever had trouble falling asleep? You lie in your bed, tossing and turning, thinking about the day that just passed, your heart burning a little bit, as you think about maybe the constructive feedback that a co-worker gave you, about an idea that you were super happy about and proud of, or the conversation with your spouse about the purchase that may or may not have been in the budget, or the talk with your child, who's not really a child anymore, they're becoming a teen, and they're talking a little bit stronger than they're used to.

And so you lie in bed, and you toss and you turn, and your heart burns, and you think about what was said to you, and you think about what you said back, and you're not proud of, and you just can't fall asleep.

But you're not alone. According to the American Psychological Association's Sleep in America study, 43% of Americans have reported having trouble falling asleep due to stress in the past month.

So sleep, sleep is important. Sleep is vital. Sleep helps. You don't get sleep. You don't get sleep, and the next day, maybe you're a little groggy in those meetings at work, or maybe you're a little snippy with your spouse, or maybe things just seem a little bleaker than they actually are.

Sleep's important. Sleep's vital. Sleep helps. This morning, I want to help you get a better night's sleep tonight, or tomorrow, or the next time you're struggling to fall asleep on your bed.

[3 : 41] And obviously, this sermon is about more than just falling asleep, but I think you get my point. God wants us to rest in Him.

He's given us Psalm 4 to help us with that. Psalm 4 is in Holy Scripture, which is breathed out by God and helpful for training and correcting in righteousness and equipping us for every good work, like falling asleep at night.

And God loves us dearly. He doesn't want us to be in distress, to lose sleep over adverse circumstances. He desires for us to rest and particularly to rest in Him.

So he inspired David to write this Psalm. He preserved this Psalm. God Almighty, Lord of the universe, who Josh talked about as being this great God over all the universe.

He cares about us, even down to our ability to fall asleep. what a good Heavenly Father.

[4 : 57] With that being said, I want to take us on a journey this morning, an emotional, spiritual journey with King David. we're going to trace this spiritual trek from a place of rest, or sorry, from a place of distress to a place of rest.

And we're going to see that he travels through a number of stops throughout this journey from distress to rest. And he's going to travel into different phases, but ultimately he will end up in a place of rest.

He will fall asleep. Let's read it together. Let's explore David's journey from distress to rest. Psalm 4.

To the choir master, with stringing instruments, a psalm of David. David. Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness.

You've given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer. O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?

[6 : 07] How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah. But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself.

The Lord hears when I call to him. be angry and do not sin. Ponder in your own hearts on your beds and be silent.

Selah. Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord. There are many who say who will show us some good.

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord. You put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I'll both lie down and sleep.

For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. God, almighty God, and the God who loves us, would you bless the preaching of your word.

[7 : 18] All right, so let's begin our journey with Psalm 4 by looking at the context of the psalm. For what occasion and why was Psalm 4 written?

Now frankly, the occasion for Psalm 4 is not incredibly clear from the text. If you look at it, you know, in the psalm, sometimes it'll have the psalm title, Psalm 4, Psalm 5, and then the subtext, it'll tell you a little bit about when the psalm was written.

Psalm 4 doesn't have that. Psalm 4 doesn't say exactly when it was written. But many commentators see that Psalm 4 comes after Psalm 3, logically.

And that Psalm 3 is fairly similar to Psalm 4 where Psalm 3, David's in distress and he's in distress over adverse circumstances that are similar to Psalm 4. So a lot of people connect Psalm 3 and Psalm 4 together.

And Psalm 3, Psalm 3 is about Absalom's rebellion when Absalom was stealing the hearts of the men of Israel from King David and he was acting as if he were the judge and the right judge of the nation of Israel and David was forced to flee from Jerusalem because of that.

[8 : 32] A lot of people connect Psalm 3 and Psalm 4 with that where David's in distress and obviously from Psalm 4, David is in some form of distress. He's crying out to the Lord and he's asking for help from God.

So the occasion may be about Absalom's rebellion, may be about something else, but clearly David is in distress. Now second, Psalm 4 is regarded as an evening psalm.

I think it's pretty clear from the text why that is. It speaks of lying down, going to sleep, and resting. So just imagine King David writing this psalm as he's tossing and turning on his bed.

Maybe he's pacing back and forth and he's in turmoil and he's troubled. So while Psalm 4 is in Holy Scripture, let's not forget that Scripture is deeply connected to real daily life.

That David is experiencing real things in life and that while the trials he's going through may be on a grander scale, like he's talking about losing a kingdom potentially to his son, at the same time, the emotions he's feeling, the turmoil he's feeling, the tossing and turning on the bed, the burning of his heart as he recounts conversations from the day or from the time, it's not all that different from some of the emotions that I think we can sometimes feel.

[10 : 02] And so, let's place ourselves in David's heart and mind and soul as we think about this psalm, as we consider this psalm. But not really all that different.

What he's going through is not really all that different from what we can experience on a daily or weekly basis. So, now that we place ourselves in David's position, in his mind and heart and soul, and we kind of get a feel for what he's feeling, let's see, let's trace out how he moves from distress to rest.

So, he'll take six stops on his journey today. We've got six stops on the journey. First, David will be in distress. Second, he'll lament.

Third, he'll express faith. Fourth, he'll counsel and care for his enemies. Fifth, he'll find contentment in the Lord.

And then sixth, finally, he will go to sleep and rest. Let's explore David's stops on this journey.

[11 : 15] All right, so first, stop one, distress. Clearly, David's in distress as he starts out this psalm. Look at verse one. Answer me when I call, O God, in my righteousness.

You give me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me. And hear my prayer. All right, so in verse one, David is calling out to God, crying out to the Lord.

And we can see this in two ways specifically I want to call out. First, look at the strength of this language. He's saying, answer me.

Be gracious to me. Hear my prayer. This is strong language. Second, notice that there are exclamation points in this.

Two of the first three lines have exclamation points. And I don't know about you guys, but I don't see a lot of exclamation points in the Bible. English translators don't, they use exclamation points fairly sparingly.

[12 : 16] You know, I think of like Isaiah 6, where Isaiah is seeing the angels worship the Lord. and there's an exclamation point there. And I think of John 1, where, you know, John the Baptist sees Jesus coming towards him at the Jordan.

The English translators use exclamation points to express that language. So clearly, clearly, by using the exclamation points in the beginning of this psalm, David is in real distress.

That's what I'm trying to emphasize. David's distress. But, what does David do in the first verse? Being in distress?

Well, David moves towards God. David moves towards the Lord. He says, answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness. And this God of my righteousness is a very personal address.

O God of my righteousness. But consider, when you're in distress, is your first inclination to move towards the Lord?

[13 : 28] Is your first inclination to move towards God? Now, praise God if it is. Praise God if it is. But, consider, isn't it easy sometimes to just focus on the distress?

To be distress-focused. To be distress-aimed. Rather than God-focused and God-aimed. It's like, remember the rainstorm a couple, like a week or two ago where we had just ultimately flooding, even in here in the gym?

It's like you're walking out in the rain and you've got raindrops all coming down around. You've got wind going and you forget that you've got an umbrella in your hand that can protect you from the rain.

You forget the solution. That's what being distress-focused is like. But David, David's example is helpful and instructive.

David's a godly man. A man after God's own heart. And I think that part of being a godly man and being a man after God's own heart is the fact that when he's in distress, when things are troubling him, he moves towards the Lord.

[14 : 43] He looks towards the Lord. He looks straight, the Lord straight in the eye, straight in the face, and he says, Lord, I'm in distress. I think that's good.

I think that's godly. I think it's healthy. And so, stop one, on our journey from distress to rest, we see David moving toward the Lord because he is in distress.

But David doesn't stop there. He doesn't just stop in distress, rather he continues his trek and he steps forward and he moves to a place of lament.

Look at verse 2. Oh men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Tell us.

David, in this verse, is lamenting about how he's being treated. How is he being treated? Well, he's being dishonored.

[15 : 48] He's being shamed. People are talking about him behind his back. They're saying lies and vain words about this guy. And what does he do? Well, consider what David could do.

David could exact revenge. He could get a bunch of mighty men and go take out these guys. He could seek revenge upon them. Or, he could stuff his feelings and act like nothing bad is happening and act like nothing wrong is going on.

He could just stuff his feelings. But instead, he doesn't do any of this. As a godly man, he acknowledges what's going on. He feels the emotions.

He feels the dishonor. And he experiences the shock and discouragement and expresses it verbally. He laments. So consider what Mark Rogo has to say about lament.

He writes, Lament is how you live between the poles of a hard life and trusting in God's sovereignty. It's how we bring our sorrow to God.

[17 : 05] Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust. Lament is a prayer in pain that leads to trust.

Brothers and sisters, God is a good father. God loves us dearly. He doesn't just not mind our laments.

He doesn't just not mind. He invites us to bring them to him. He wants us to give our calls of grief to him. He invites us to express our laments to him.

So when things are hard, when things aren't right, when we're suffering, when something's wrong, maybe in the marriage, or something's wrong with the parenting, or maybe you got a tough diagnosis from the doctor, or financially things are tough, God cares.

And we can come to our heavenly father and we can cry out to him. That's what David did, and we can follow his example in this. Sometimes, on the journey from distress to rest, sometimes we just need to stop.

[18 : 17] We need to acknowledge how we're feeling, and in faith bring them to our heavenly father. To lament. While David, he stops in lament for a brief moment, he then journeys on to a place of faith.

Look at verse 3. But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. The Lord hears when I call to him.

David in verse 3 reminds himself of some key truths that soak the fire of faith in his soul. First, he remembers that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself, that the Lord cares particularly for him.

If you look at it, it says that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself. You can think this is a psalm, you know, and this would be a congregational singing, congregational chant, but if you look at the Hebrew, closer to the Hebrew, godly here is singular.

It's referring to, it can be translated as the godly one. In this, David is acknowledging that God has a specific, personal, particular care for individuals, not just this general crowd, but that God cares for you, specifically, particularly.

[19 : 51] And this sparks David's faith, and it can spark ours. Remember that God cares for us and knows us personally. Second, he remembers that the Lord hears when he cries out to him.

He remembers that God hears his prayers. Think about it. My daughter, Annalise, isn't she precious?

She is precious. And Christine is a great mom, great parent. And Annalise, so Christine can be making dinner or doing some laundry or preparing for a music lesson or whatever, and Annalise, she can start crying in her crib or in her playpen.

And that just sets something off in Christine's heart. Where she just wants to go and care for Annalise and comfort her and be with her.

And as great of a parent as Christine is, God is infinitely more caring, infinitely more of a great parent than Christine or myself.

[21 : 13] and we are infinitely more precious to God than Annalise even is to Christine or to myself.

So let that comfort your heart. And know that in verse 3, as he remembers that God himself, the Lord, L-O-R-D, capital L-O-R-D, when you see the text, the Lord, Yahweh, hears him when he calls out to him in prayer.

It's the same Lord who heard the Israelite cry in Egypt. It's the same Lord who heard Hannah's cry for a child. It's the same Lord who heard Samuel's cry against the Philistines.

It's the same God who hears our cries and who heard David's cry. And that gives David faith.

So today, are you in distress? Are you being opposed by someone or do things just not make sense to you and you need faith and comfort? Well, cry out to the Lord.

[22 : 28] Pray to him. It doesn't have to be some profound loquacious prayer. It could be simply, God, help. God, help.

And no, but like Christine would hear Annalise crying and go and want to comfort her, the Lord hears our cries. The Lord cares about our cries.

And the Lord will comfort us and care for us. Be confident of that. Let that warm your heart. Good morning. Now, from this place of faith, because David is now in faith, he moves on, he continues his journey, now arriving in such a place of confidence in the Lord, such hope in him, that he can counsel, and he can give advice even to his enemies.

Look at verses 4 and 5. be angry and do not sin. Honor your own hearts on your beds and be silent. Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord.

On these verses, David has a word, a word for those who are dishonoring him, shaming him, talking about him, behind his back, lying about him. And what's his counsel?

[23 : 56] Well, verse 4 is very familiar to us. And if you've read Ephesians recently, it'll be familiar to you. Paul talks about it in Ephesians 4.

Be angry and do not sin. It's a familiar one. When you look at the Hebrew, the Hebrew is complex. It can mean be angry, it can mean be perturbed or agitated, even tremble.

The heart of David's counsel that he's giving to his enemies is to feel your anger, to feel your agitation, and to work through it before the face of God.

So David, he's counseling his enemies, and he's giving them advice to work through their anger, potentially even at him, but to do it in a way that's not going to sin against the Lord.

To feel it, to deal with it, to work with it, and ultimately get a place where you trust in the Lord again, and you've turned back to the Lord. What I want to highlight here is that David, David is in a place where he's got enemies, but he's counseled them truly.

[25 : 07] He's counseled them rightly. He's counseling them even kindly. I think this is a supernatural response. Think about it, like if you're a doctor, a doctor, right?

And you've got this patient who is just blasting you over social media, and that you're still willing to diagnose life-saving antibiotics that are going to help this patient to live.

David is tender-hearted towards his enemies. David cares so much about his enemies' souls, and about God's glory, he's willing to still counsel them and care for them.

He's not bitter. He's ready to forgive and even care for his enemies. May we have a kind of heart for those who oppose us or stand against us.

All right, we've seen David's journey from distress to lament to faith to counseling his enemies. We've got two more stops, and they are just glorious.

[26 : 15] The stop five on the journey from distress to rest, contentment. Look at verses six and seven. There are many who say, who will show us some good?

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord. You put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. Even after David's counsel to his enemies, there are still some people who are doubting God.

We're not listening. They're wondering if God's going to act for their good. These people may be the same people that he counseled before. They may be a different group of people, the commentators, they vary.

What I think is most important to pay attention to is David's response to them. David turns Godward. David takes his eyes off the people's response, and he looks to the Lord.

Lord. So, think back to number six. Be careful for a second, and think about the blessing that God gives to Moses for Aaron to bless the people of Israel with, for God to shine his face upon the nation.

[27 : 30] And now consider, we've got a lot of sun right now. It's nice, it's sunny out, but think back to like mid December, to like mid February, maybe early March in Kansas City.

It is gray. It is dark, it can be dreary, it can be cold. It's kind of like what the nation of Israel, David is interpreting the nation of Israel as feeling at this moment.

They feel distant from God, they don't feel, they feel maybe coldness or distance from the Lord. But then, think about what it feels like around Easter time, when the sun shines bright again and it's yellow and it's warm and the flowers start to bloom and the grass starts to grow again.

It's that blessing of the light of God's face shining upon the nation that David is praying for and asking for God to warm the hearts of the people of Israel.

And not only does David call for God to shine his face upon his people, but he then provides the climax and most beautiful verse of the psalm, verse 7.

[28 : 44] You put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. But David takes solace, more than that, David takes joy in the goodness of God.

He looks all around him and he sees people celebrating worldly things and grain and wine. And now, grain and wine, they're not bad things, right?

They're not bad things, but they're not the best thing. And they're not what David is seeking to fulfill his heart with. David is looking to the greater gift, the greater satisfaction, the source of all grain and wine and ultimately joy.

David looks to the Lord. Lord, and in his journey from distress to rest, remember that guy who was so upset in verse one, who was with exclamation points, exclaiming, crying out to the Lord?

Well, now, he's remembered that God is good in the most profound way that I could possibly express. He remembers that God is the strength of his heart and his portion forever.

[30 : 00] He remembers that the mercies of the Lord never fail, that they are new every morning, and great is his steadfast love. He remembers as Habakkuk would later recount, that the fig trees should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.

Yet, I will rejoice. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. But David finds rest and solace and contentment and joy in God.

Circumstances haven't changed, right? The guys are still talking bad about him, but he now has found contentment, rest, peace, joy in the Lord.

God that the same God who helped David to find rest and contentment and stability and peace and joy, same God for us today.

It's not different. It's the same God. And if we're going through something, he can comfort us in the same way. He is for us.

[31 : 19] He didn't spare his own son for us, but gave him up for us all so that he could care for us no matter what is going on. So in our distress, may we find the same comfort as David and truly root our joy in our hopes on the God of the universe who is our heavenly father who cares for us personally.

All right. Now, finally, we observe David's last stop on the spiritual journey. Where does David end his journey? He goes to sleep and rests in the Lord.

Hopefully none of you have done that yet this morning. All right. Look at verse 8. Just checking. Look at verse 8.

In peace, I will lie down and sleep. Be alone, O Lord. Make me dwell in safety. Now, David, in the face of opposition and heartache and trial, David, who was pacing back and forth next to his bed or tossing and turning on his pillow, well, he can now go to sleep.

He can rest. And how can he do this? Well, to relate with the irrational storm swirling around him, he again looks to God and God alone.

[32 : 48] For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. David is now in a place of true trust in the Lord. He's looking at his circumstances as much as favorable circumstances can be a blessing from God.

He's looking to his relationships as much as relational peace can be a blessing from the Lord. He's looking solely to the Lord and the safety and security that he finds in God.

What peace is David able to find? What blessing? And this peace and blessing available to us this morning as well.

And ultimately in this, he's able to go to sleep and rest. All right, now before closing up for today, I want to try to help us to apply Psalm 4, what we just talked about, to our lives specifically and personally.

So, for final application today, I want to talk to believers first, and then we'll talk to unbelievers, those who are not following Christ yet. Now for believers this morning, I've asked this a few times, is there anything in your life where you're experiencing distress?

[34 : 08] Fighting within the marriage, or distress with your kids, or health issues, or financial issues? Is there something in your life where you just feel this is not right?

Well, seek to resolve the circumstances first. Seek reconciliation in your marriage.

Seek to work with your kids and care for your kids. Do we need to provide for your finances or whatever? Don't ignore the practical. Don't ignore the circumstances. Don't over spiritualize.

But, at the same time, if you can get your heart in a place of rest in the Lord, content in Christ, you'll be so much more prepared and ready to deal with the practicals of what's going on in your life.

Be in a much better position to address your enemies like David, or care for your spouse or kids, or figure out how you can provide more or better for your family. How do you do that?

[35 : 17] Well, the psalm gives us a pattern to follow. Number one, we can cry out to the Lord in our distress. We can lament and come before the Lord and express what's going on.

We can then come to a place of faith, remember that God cares for us personally and specifically and hears our prayers. prayers. We can then go and try to counsel and care for those who are against us, our enemies, or whomever.

We can find our contentment in the Lord and then ultimately we can go to sleep and rest in him, physically and truly.

Get your heart in a place where you can say with David, you put more joy in my heart and have where the grain and wine abound. And then out of that heart, you'll be able to be so much more prepared to deal with whatever is going on in your life.

Second, for unbelievers here, for listening, the truth is I can't hold out this hope to come forward to you this morning, this hope of peace and joy and rest in God.

[36 : 35] if you're outside of Christ, the hope and peace and rest of Christ, what is not for you?

Rather, after hearing the sermon, the Lord is calling you to repent from your sin and trust in Christ for salvation, to be reconciled to him so you can experience the peace and joy of a relationship with God.

Truly, right now, if you are not in Christ and he's not your righteousness, you stand condemned for him. And the guilt of all your sin sits on you like a lead vest, just suffocating.

the good news is that Christ can lift off that weight from your chest. That weight of guilt can come off of you and you can experience the joy and peace and rest of knowing Christ.

Your sins can be separated from you as far as the east is from the west because of what Christ has done for you. So, what should you do? Turn from your sin.

[37 : 49] Turn from your rebellion. Turn from your denial of the Lord and your fear of man or whatever and trust in Christ. Confess that you are a sinner and call on the Lord for salvation.

As we saw, he will hear you. He will forgive you. And he will adopt you into his family. So, if you're outside of Christ this morning, trust in Christ.

All right, to wrap things up, we're going on quite a journey together today. We've seen David trek from distress to lament to faith to counsel to contentment and ultimately to rest.

we've seen that while David's circumstances, they may have been on a grander scale than ours, but the kingdom at stake, they're not all that different from what causes us to turn in our beds or to repeat conversations in our head or to burn in our heart at night.

So, when faced with distress, there's an hour sometime in the future that we use the lessons of Psalm 4 that David exemplified God for us. May we journey from that distress to a place of renewed rest in the Lord.

[39 : 18] And ultimately, may we get a good night's sleep. All for God's glory and our joy. Let's pray. Jesus, we praise you because you are a good God.

God, you cherish us, you care for us, and you offer yourself to us. Lord, we thank you for the promises of Psalm 4, that even in our distress, we can travel from distress to rest, because of who you are and what you've done for us.

We pray that the words in this sermon would go deep into our hearts, that you would bear fruit through them, that if we're experiencing distress now or in the future, we remember that we can come to you, and we can move towards you, and we can have faith in you, and whatever we're facing.

Lord, we thank you, we love you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. For communion this morning, I want to draw your attention, ultimately, to the greater David, to the greater King, Jesus Christ, the one who faced the greatest distress we could ever imagine.

Let's look to him, the founder and perfecter of our faith, and for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand, seated now, listening to our prayers, at the right hand, the throne of God.

[40 : 56] And let's consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so you may not grow weary or faint-hearted. He is the greater one who called to the Lord for relief.

He is the greater one who was dishonored and shamed and lied about. He is the greater one who taught others so wisely. And he is the greater one who took joy in the Lord more than anyone.

Ultimately, he was the one whose body was broken, whose blood was shed, so we could be forgiven of our sins and adopted into God's family and comforted in our distress, no matter what is going on in our lives.

So come today, take communion, grateful and rejoicing that whatever is going on, and whatever may come, we can take heart that God is our God, that in Christ, God, the God of the universe, proves of us, and that he will walk with us through any trial that we may face.

So, in faith, this morning, come to the table. and