

引言 INTRODUCTION

Nocturne is derived from a French word that means “of the night.” We say that owls, raccoons and bats are nocturnal animals, since they are active at night. In its original setting, nocturnes are music that are played after 11 p.m. Nocturnes usually have a soft and dreamy melody. They trigger people’s thoughts and imagination. Well-known examples are Chopin’s nocturnes. People who are not in bed late at night are perhaps working their shift, partying or streaming drama series. But there are others who have not slept because they are not able to fall asleep. Something is bothering their mind. Remember a time when you woke up from a dream? What were you thinking before you fell back to sleep? Was it your schedule for the next day, some ongoing problems or anxiety about the future? Your brain was active even when your body was still. The writer of Psalm 13 was not sleepless. He was restless. He expressed his troubles with his pen. We know that God is the standard answer to every problem. But it is easier to say than to do when giving away our driver-seat to God. The precious part about this psalm is the soul-searching journey the author went through. After all the mental struggles, he decided to let God take control. That is something we can learn from this psalm. The writer teaches us that prayer is to present a transparent heart to a transcendent God.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 歎息的禱告 Prayer of Exclamation

We can break down this psalm into three prayers. First, we find a prayer of exclamation. The psalmist exclaims over his hardship. He asks God four times “How long?” he has to suffer in verses 1 and 2. His agony is three-fold. First, it seems that God is not paying attention. He uses a set of parallel statements in verse 1 to express it. He feels that God has forgotten him and God has hidden His face from him. They convey the same idea. God did not seem to be aware of the psalmist’s situation. That was why He had yet to offer help. Second, the writer must shoulder all the pain himself since he thinks that God has abandoned him. The phrase “take counsel in my soul” is rendered as “wrestle with my thoughts” in another translation. Third, he questions how long his enemy will keep harassing him. He does not elaborate the nature of the damage. It could be a real attack, property loss, ridicule or all the above. Perhaps the writer was bombarded with physical, emotional and spiritual problems. Keep in mind that this is not a diary that documents self-reflection. It is a prayer. The writer poured out his heart before God. He had not given up on his faith yet, or else he would not have prayed! God was his anchor in the storm or a rope he held onto while hanging over a cliff. God was not a last resort. He was the only hope. The psalmist believed that God was still there, even though He seemed to be away, silent and unresponsive. His faith rose rather than fell while he was waiting on God. We need to admit that we are impatient people. We wish God’s reply is like Jimmy John’s delivery – the food will be at the door the moment you finished ordering! Very often, our experience is closer to calling customer service for help. You press the respective numbers for the option you are looking for. Then you are put on-hold with some repeated music in the background. It makes you feel more antsy than

calm. Waiting for God's answer can be like waiting in line. He does not work by our schedule. He wants to increase our faith while we are expecting an answer. Granted, waiting can be unbearable. We can identify with the psalmist as he asked God: "How long?" What are you struggling today? Who or what causes your problem? It can be a chronic disease, a non-ideal work environment, or tension with family members who are not Christians. The trouble keeps coming at you. You have two choices. You either give up on God or give in to Him. The fact is that you will not pray if you do not trust God. You will not cry out to Him either if you think that you can handle the situation. For example, you will not ask God for help with a huge medical bill if you have a fat bank account. You do not need God's instructions to fix your car if you are a mechanic. Surely, God gives us wisdom and provides experts to assist us. The point is that God wants to be our spiritual counsel and not just a problem-solver. Prayer is more about building relationship with God than getting results from Him. Therefore, when we pray, we should not be going through a to-do list. We should not say to God: "Lord, I need this and that, my way and next-day delivery, amen!" Your relationship with family members or friends will be in trouble if you talk to them that way! Instead, we see God as a loving Father and Master of our lives. Say to Him: "Lord, I need your guidance. You know that I am low in faith. You understand my worries and my fear. Help me see that You are always with me." There is no need to hide our true feelings, since God knows everything about us anyway. We cast our burdens, frustration and longing, and wait for His answer. That is exactly what the psalmist does next.

2. 期望的禱告 Prayer of Expectation

The psalmist uttered a prayer of exclamation. He revealed his feelings without reservation. Even though he felt helpless but he was not hopeless. He switches to a prayer of expectation in verses 3 and 4. He is hoping for responses from God. The ESV Bible captures those requests with three "lest." Those three expectations correspond to the pain he shares earlier. First, he asks God to consider him and answer him. Those are related to the feeling of neglect by God he mentions in verse 1. Second, he hopes that God will rescue him so that the enemy will not prevail over him. That matches with what he says in verse 2 that the enemy exalts over him. Third, he prays for God's help so that his enemy will not rejoice when he is shaken. That contrasts the description of sorrow in verse 2. In essence, the writer is expecting God to reverse his circumstance. He is looking for God's attention and not abandonment, making him a victor and not a victim and replacing his sadness with gladness. On the surface, it may look like that psalmist only cared about his problems. But God's reputation was at stake implicitly. The writer put his trust in God despite not getting any instant response. If the enemy prevailed, it would show that God was not able to protect His servant. Let me refer you to another similar prayer in Psalm 42:9-10 – **9 I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" 10 As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"** Here, the psalmist expresses the same sentiment of being ignored by God. Not only does he feel that way, even his enemies ask: "Where is your God?" It was as if they were saying: "If your God is as powerful as you describe, where is He when you suffer? If He can solve your problems, then why hasn't He done so by now? Does He really exist? If so, does He care?" Have you ever heard similar questions from non-believers? The fact is that we can never fully comprehend God's plans. However, our limited understanding does not cancel out God's love for His children. The psalmist expects to hear from God. He knows that God cares about His people as much as His glory. His reply may not come

immediately. That is why we need faith. How does that kind of faith live out in today's world? Many of you heard of the stories of Nick Vujicic. He was born with a rare genetic disease. As a result, he does not have arm or leg. Nick's mother refused to see or hold him at birth. The parents left the hospital out of grief and confusion. But they later decided to raise Nick by focusing on the bright side of life. He was bullied at school when growing up. Hence, he struggled with depression and loneliness. Nick questioned if there is a purpose in life. At one time, he tried to drown himself in a bathtub. Fortunately, he was saved. God later saved his soul too. God changed his life completely. Beginning from age 19, Nick uses his testimony as a tool to witness for Jesus. Since then, he travels around the world and appears on TV, in churches, stadiums, prisons, etc. He has led many people to Jesus. Later, he founded his ministry. He set a goal to reach one billion people with the gospel by 2028. Nick once testified, "God won't allow anything to happen in your life if it's not for your good. If I can trust in God with my circumstances, then you can trust in God with your circumstances." God can use a disabled person like Nick Vujicic, whom the world may label as a mistake or a burden. God can display His glory in your life too! Next time you bring your problems to God, do not just pray for a quick solution. You can also pray that people around you will be able to see God working in your life. They find no other explanation but to attribute that kind of faith, courage, persistence and hope to come from God.

3. 讚美的禱告 Prayer of Exaltation

We see a gloomy picture so far. The psalmist made a prayer of exclamation and a prayer expectation. God has yet to intervene. But as we come to the last two verses, the writer switches to a prayer of exaltation. He rejoices in God. What caused the complete change of mood? What are the first two words in verse 5? "But I" What the psalmist says is this: "Despite my negative emotions, despite the lingering bad situation and the uncertainties of when and how God will answer my prayer, BUT I will keep on trusting Him." After all, who needs faith when the problems are all gone? Faith is like a flash-light that illuminates our path at night. It helps you see the few steps in front of you. Faith does not come out from a vacuum. We find two reasons for the writer's decision. He says in verse 5 that he relies on God's steadfast love. If you have been paying attention to this series, you should know by now that the word "love" in the Old Testament is related to God's covenant. Since God took the initiative and established an eternal relationship with His people, He would continue to bless them. Thank God that His love does not vary with our faith toward Him. Even when we are disobedient or have doubts, God is still trustworthy. The second reason why the psalmist decided to trust God is found in the second half of verse 6. He testifies that God "has dealt bountifully" with him. The tense indicates a past action. In other words, God has been showing kindness up to this point. He has a perfect track record. Due to God's unchanging character, He will continue to watch over His people. On the one hand, the psalmist highlights God's covenantal love, which is an objective truth. On the other hand, he recalls how God treated him before, which is a subjective experience. Because of both evidence, the writer concludes that God is reliable. That is why he could rejoice in exaltation to God. He uttered words of thanksgiving even before God solved his problems. We quoted Psalm 42 earlier. The author bursts out in praise after he recommits himself to God. He repeats the same wordings in verses 5 and 11 like a chorus in a song: **Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.** He reminds himself: "Chill! Don't just look at the problem. Look to God, and sing to

Him!” Singing is more than moving our mouths. Our voice must be connected to our hearts. It is like no one will believe in you when you say “I love you” with a poker-face and a cold voice. When do you sing to God? It is an expression of faith when you can praise God even with a heavy heart. We can encourage each other when we gather in worship. We present a group prayer to God when we sing together. Our voices should arise from hearts of conviction. It is a collective proclamation of our trust in God. God is who He says He is, and He has done and will continue to do what He promised in the Bible. When we pray, whether privately or publicly, our faith is rooted in God’s Word and His works. God’s Word tells us His character. He is sovereign, powerful and loving. Our faith is reinforced when we recall God’s truths as we pray. For example, you can say to God: “Lord, I thank You because You are my Shepherd. You will provide for my needs and You will lead me to the right path when I follow You. And You said those who wait on You shall renew their strength. Please strengthen me with Your power now.” At the same time, we can recall past experience as we pray. We tell God: “Lord, thank You for getting me through such and such obstacle. I trust that You will open a way for me this time. Give me faith to deal with the current problem.”

結論 CONCLUSION

Prayer is to present a transparent heart to a transcendent God. We tell God plainly that we are fearful, doubtful and hurting. The Lord of lords leans His ear toward us. The Bible says God knows what we need even before we utter our prayer. But He desires for us to come to Him like a little child holding onto his/her father, trusting that he can get things done. Likewise, we should cling onto God because He will not let go of us. The song “Yet” is a soul-searching journey. The composers share a heart-felt plea to God, asking Him not to give up on them. Part of the lyrics read: “And God, don’t leave me here alone. I know I need to grow, still. And I’m trying. But don’t leave me here alone. I know I’ve come so far but got so far to go. And with these brand-new scars and this broken heart, it’s hard to really know. If there’s a reason and if I’ll ever see it. But I want to believe it. So don’t give up on me yet.” God will never give up on those who put their trust in Him. Once I sent a card to a member in my former church who was going through some tough time. I picked the perfect card from a store. There is a neat poem on the cover and an encouraging Bible verse inside. The designer included everything I wanted to say. That explains why those cards are so expensive. All I needed was to add the recipient’s name, date and sign it. But I wrote 3 short lines – He cares, He knows, He can. This is the God we believe in. He cares about you when you are hurting. He knows exactly how you feel because Jesus Christ became a man. He experienced sorrow, betrayal, abandonment, shame, pain and even death. God alone can help you. Offer your problems to Him and put your trust in Him.

引言 INTRODUCTION

小夜曲這個字原來是法文，意思是「屬於夜晚的」。我們說貓頭鷹、浣熊和蝙蝠是夜間的動物，因為牠們是在晚上活動的。小夜曲原先是在晚上 11 點之後演奏的音樂。小夜曲通常是柔和而且帶有夢幻色彩。它們引發人們的思維和想像。著名的例子是蕭邦的小夜曲。深夜不睡覺的人可能正在輪班、開派對或看連續劇。但也有一些人仍未睡覺是因為無法入睡。有些事情困擾著他們。我們都有從夢中醒來的經歷。你在還沒有睡著之前會想什麼？明天要做的事情、一些持續的問題還是對未來的憂慮？雖然你的身體在休息，但是你的腦袋依然活躍。詩篇 13 篇的作者並沒有失眠，他只是煩躁不安。他用文字表達他的苦惱。我們知道神是所有問題的標準答案。但當我們要把駕駛座交給神時，說起來容易做起來難。這首詩的寶貴地方是作者反思的過程。經過一番內心掙扎之後，他決定讓神來掌管。這是我們可以從這首詩中學到的。作者教導我們，禱告就是向超越的神獻上一顆透明的心。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 歎息的禱告 Prayer of Exclamation

我們可以將這首詩分成三個禱告。首先，我們看到一個歎息的禱告。詩人為自己的苦難而歎息。在第 1 節和第 2 節中他四次問神「要到幾時呢？」。他不知道什麼時候才會解決問題。他的愁苦有三個原因。首先，神似乎沒有注意到他的需要。他在第一節中使用一組平行句子來表達。他覺得神忘記了他，而且神向他掩面。兩個形容表達同樣的意思。神好像並沒有意識到詩人的處境，以致祂還沒有提供幫助。其次，作者必須承擔所有的痛苦，因為他覺得神離棄他。「我心裡籌算」可以理解為「與我的思想搏鬥」。第三，他不曉得敵人還會持續騷擾他多久。他沒有說明他面對的問題。可能是實際的攻擊、損失財物或是被嘲笑。也許作者受到身體、情緒和靈裡面的打擊。請記住，這不是一篇日記。這是一個禱告。作者在神面前傾心吐意。他還沒有放棄神，否則他也不會禱告！神是他在風浪中的錨，是他在懸崖上抓住的繩索。神不是最後的辦法，而是他是唯一的希望。詩人相信神仍然在那裡，儘管祂似乎遠離，沉默並且毫無回應。當他等候神的時候，他的信心沒有減少，反而增加了。我們必須承認，我們是缺乏耐性的人。我們希望神的回答就像訂外賣一樣快速。當你打完電話

後，食物就馬上送到門口！很多時候，我們的經驗比較接近客戶服務中心。你在電話上按適合的選項，然後你便聽到一些重複的音樂。它讓你覺得煩躁而不是平靜。等待神的答案就像在排隊一樣。神不會按照我們的時間表工作。當我們還在等待之時，祂希望增加我們的信心。當然，等待是難以忍受的。我們可以認同詩人問神的問題：「要到幾時呢？」。今天有什麼東西困擾著你？誰或是什麼事情引起你的問題？可能是慢性疾病、不理想的工作環境，或是與非信徒家人的緊張關係。煩惱一直沒有停止。你有兩個選擇。你可以放棄神，或要順服於祂。事實上，如果你不信靠神，你就不會禱告。如果你覺得自己可以處理問題，你也不會向神呼求。例如，如果你銀行帳戶有充足的存款，你就不會向神尋求幫助付醫療帳單。如果你是工程師，你不需要神告訴你如何修理汽車。當然，神賜給我們智慧和提供專家來幫助我們。重點是神希望成為我們的屬靈顧問，而不只是解決問題的幫手。禱告是在於與神建立關係，而不只是從祂那裡得到結果。因此，當我們禱告時，我們不應該列出購物的清單。我們不應該對神說：「主啊，我需要這個、那個、按照我的喜好和請祢明天的送貨，阿們！」如果你以這種方式向家人或朋友要求，你們的關係將會出現問題！我們要記住神是慈愛的天父和我們生命的主。我們可以跟祂說：「主啊，我需要祢的指引。祢知道我的信心不足。祢了解我的憂慮和恐懼。幫助我看見祢一直與我同在。」我們不必隱藏真實的感受，因為神知道我們的一切。我們把重擔、沮喪和渴望交給祂，並等候祂的答案。這正是詩人接下來所做的。

2. 期望的禱告 Prayer of Expectation

詩人發出歎息的禱告。他毫無保留地抒發自己的感受。雖然他感到無助，但他並不絕望。在第3節和第4節中，他轉向一個期望的禱告。他用三個「免得」來表達那些請求。這三個期望與他之前所經歷的痛苦相呼應。首先，他請求神轉向祂並應允祂。這與他在第一節提到被神忽視的感覺有關。第二，他希望神拯救他，使仇敵不能勝過他。這與他在第2節所說仇敵升高壓制他的相對。第三，他祈求神的幫助，使他的仇敵不會在他搖動時高興。這與第2節中的悲傷對比。總個來說，他尋求神的關注而不是被拋棄，使他成為勝利者而不是受害者，並用喜樂取代憂愁。從表面上看，這位詩人似乎只關心自己的問題。但是經文暗示，神的聲譽也受到威脅。縱然作者沒有得到立時的回應，但是他仍然相信神。如果仇敵得勝，表示神無法保護祂的僕人。我們可以參考詩篇 42:9-10 中的另一個類似的禱告：**9 我要對神我的磐石說：你為何忘記我呢？我為何因仇敵的欺壓時常哀痛呢？10 我的敵人辱罵我，好像打碎我的骨頭，不住的對我說：你的神在那裡呢？**在這裡，詩人同樣表達了被神忘記的情緒。不只他有這樣的感覺，就連他的敵人也在問：「你的神在哪裡呢？」他們彷彿在說：「如果你的神像你描述的那樣有能力，那麼當你受苦時祂在哪裡？如果祂能夠解決你

的問題，為什麼祂還沒有那樣做呢？祂真的存在嗎？祂關心你的處境嗎？」你聽過非信徒提出類似的問題嗎？事實上，我們無法完全明白神的計劃。然而，我們有限的理解並不能消除神對祂兒女的愛。詩人盼望聽到神的聲音。他知道神關心祂的子民和祂的榮耀。祂可能不會馬上回應我們的禱告，因此我們需要信心。我們如何在今天看到這份信心？很多人都聽過尼克·胡哲的故事。他患有罕見的遺傳疾病。他出生時沒有手臂或腿。尼克出生時，他的母親拒絕見他或抱他。父母帶著悲傷和困惑離開了醫院。但他們後來決定以正面的心態來養育尼克。他在學校時經常被人欺負。因此，他一直在憂鬱和孤獨中掙扎。尼克懷疑人生是否有目的。有一次，他嘗試在浴缸裡淹死自己，還好他沒有成功。後來神拯救了他的靈魂，並徹底改變了他的生命。從 19 歲開始，尼克用他的見證來傳福音。從那時起，他環遊世界，出現在電視、教會、運動場、監獄等地方。後來，他成立了自己的事工。他希望在 2028 年之前向 10 億人傳福音。尼克分享：「如果我能在我的遭遇中信靠神，你也能在你的情況下信靠神。」世界可能會把尼克·胡哲視為一個錯誤或包袱，但是神使用了他。神也可以透過你的生命彰顯祂的榮耀！下次當你向神傾訴問題時，不要只是祈求祂快速解決。你也可以祈求神讓周圍的人看到祂在你的生命的作為。使他們找不到其他合理的解釋，只能把這種信心、勇氣、堅持和盼望歸功於神。

3. 讚美的禱告 Prayer of Exaltation

到目前為止，我們看到一幅灰暗的景象。詩人發出歎息的禱告和期望的禱告。神仍然沒有干預。但當我們讀到最後兩節時，作者轉向了讚美的禱告。他因神而喜樂。是什麼導致他的情緒徹底改變？第 5 節的前兩個字是什麼？「但我」詩人的意思是：「雖然我有負面的情緒，儘管糟糕的情況還沒有過去，我也不知道神何時以及如何回應我的懇求，但我會繼續信靠祂。」畢竟，當問題已經解決時，誰還需要信心呢？信心就像一支手電筒，照亮我們夜晚的道路。它可以幫助你看到前面的幾步。信心不是憑空產生的。作者基於兩個原因決定信靠神。他在第 5 節說，他倚靠神的慈愛。如果你一直有留心聽這個講道系列，你應該記得舊約中「愛」這個字與神的約有關。既然神主動與祂的子民建立了永恆的關係，祂就會繼續祝福他們。感謝神，祂的愛並不會因我們對祂的信心而改變。就算我們不順服或有懷疑，神仍然是值得信賴的。詩人選擇信靠神的第二個原因可以在第 6 節的後半部找到。他說神用厚恩待他。這句話的時態是過去式的。換句話說，到目前為止，神一直表現出恩慈。有許多證據可以支持。由於神不變的屬性，祂將繼續看顧祂的子民。因此一方面，詩人強調神立約的愛，那是客觀的真理。另一方面，他回想起神以前是如何對待他的，那是主觀的經歷。由於這兩個因素，作者得出結論：神是可靠的。因此他以喜樂讚美神。就算在神解決他的問題之前，他能夠向神感恩。我們之前引用過詩篇 42

篇。當作者重新將自己委身於神之後，他發出讚美。他在第 5 節和第 11 節中重複了同樣的用詞，就像詩歌的副歌一樣：**我的心哪，你為何憂悶？為何在我裡面煩躁？應當仰望神，因他笑臉幫助我；我還要稱讚他。**彷彿他提醒自己：「冷靜下來！不要只看問題。要仰望神，向祂歌唱！」唱歌不只是動動我們的嘴巴。我們的聲音必須與我們的心一致。當你面無表情、用冰冷的聲音說「我愛你」時，誰會相信你？你什麼時候會向神高歌？如果你在心情沉重時也能讚美神，那就是信心的表現。當我們聚集敬拜時，我們可以互相鼓勵。當我們一起唱歌時，我們就像向神同心禱告。我們的聲音應該來自堅定的信念。那是我們信靠神的集體宣告。神就是聖經中所說的神，而且祂在過去、現在和將來會實行祂的應許。無論是個人或公開的禱告，我們的信心都是根據神的話語和祂的作為。神的話說明祂的品格。祂是至高無上的、強大的、充滿愛心的神。當我們在禱告時想到神的真理時，我們的信心就會增加。例如，你可以對神說：「主啊，我感謝祢，因為祢是我的牧者。當我跟隨祢之時，祢會供應我的需要，並且會引導我走在正確的道路上。祢說等候祢的人必重新得力。現在請祢加添我的力量。」同時，我們可以在禱告時回想過去的經歷。我們告訴神：「主啊，謝謝祢帶領我度過那一次難關。我相信這一次祢也會為我開路。請祢給我信心來解決當前的問題。」

結論 CONCLUSION

禱告就是向超越的神獻上一顆透明的心。我們坦誠地把自己的恐懼、懷疑和傷害告訴神。萬主之主側耳聆聽我們。聖經說，在我們發出禱告之前神早已知道我們的需要。但是祂渴望我們像小孩抱著父親一樣來到祂面前，相信祂能解決問題。同樣，我們應該緊緊抓住神，因為祂不會放棄我們。有一首標題叫「仍然」的詩歌。它記錄個人反思的心路歷程。作者向神發出衷心的懇求，請求神不要放棄他。歌詞的一部分寫道：「神啊！不要把我撇在這裡。我知道我仍然需要成長。我正在努力。但別把我撇在這裡。我知道我已經走了很遠，但還有很長的路。我有一些新的傷痕和破碎的心，我真不知道如何走下去。如果能夠解釋我的遭遇的話，如果我能看見的話，我願意相信。因此，請不要放棄我。」神從來不會放棄那些信靠祂的人。有一次，我寄一張卡片給一位正在經歷困難的弟兄。我從商店挑選了一張完美的卡片。它的封面上有一首簡短的詩，裡面有一節鼓勵的經文。設計卡片的人把我想說的都包括了。這就解釋了為什麼那些卡片那麼貴。我所需要的只是寫上對方的名字、日期和簽名。但我加了三句話：神關心、祂知道、祂能夠。這就是我們所相信的神。祂關心你的需要。祂知道你的感受，因為耶穌基督成為一個人。祂經歷過悲傷、背叛、遺棄、羞辱、痛苦甚至死亡。唯有神能夠幫助你。將你的問題交給祂並信靠祂。