// Reflection or Discussion Guide: **Psalm 126** God's restoration. Katie Macturk (Storyhill Church)

Heart Emotion: Joy/Gladness and Sadness **Big Idea**: Becasue God has restored us before, we can ask him to restore us again.

God has restored us before (v. 1-3)

God had accomplished great things for Israel (ex: bringing them back to the promised land after exile) and these times of restoration brought them great joy! They even praised God in song because this restoration brought them so much joy. Other people also took note at what God had done in Israel's life…

We can ask God to restore us again (v. 4-6)

Looking back at the restoration that God has accomplished in the past gives us the confidence to ask God to restore us once more. The same God who has restored us before can restore us again! And that gives us hope. Two examples of restoration:

- The streams in the Negev (v. 4) – sudden, fast, doesn't involve our efforts
- Sowing seed and reaping crops (v. 5-6) – long, slow, involves hard work on our part

How does this Psalm relate to joy and sadness? We can express our sadness and our joy (and any other feeling) to God, using the language of the Psalms to guide us.
"Joy precedes and follows sorrow, and as often as not, joy exists alongside sorrow" (David Taylor in *Open and Unafraid*, pg. 100). We need to feel sadness (and every kind of emotion) in order to truly feel joy Psalm 126 displays the tension between celebrating and remembering what God has done before while also expressing our ache and pain to God. That tension is an important aspect of heart health because remembering who God is and what He has done is an anchor for us as different waves of emotions come.

Gospel Hope: The Greek verb used to translate the word "restore" is the same one used in the New Testament to describe turning toward Jesus. Turning toward Jesus (turning away from a life lived for ourselves and turning to Jesus by faith) and becoming his follower is the ultimate act of restoration! And God graciously offers each one of us the opportunity to have our relationship with God restored. Once God has restored us to Himself through Jesus, we are always able to look back and say, "the Lord has done great things for us."

Reflection questions:

1. How can Psalm 126 help you talk to God about both the sorrows and joys in your life?
2. How can you worship God for the restoration that He has already accomplished in your life while also asking Him to restore you once again? Or if the idea of God's restoration is new to you: what does it look like to ask God for restoration?
3. In what area(s) of your life do you feel the pain and lack of longing to see God's restoration? How can you share your sadness (or frustration, anger, etc.) with the Lord?
4. What in your life brings you joy right now? How can you praise God as the ultimate source of your joy?
5. What's one step you can take this week to process your emotions (joy, sadness, or otherwise) with the Lord?

Songs:

- "We will Feast in the House of Zion"
- "Psalm 126" by Bifrost Arts ft. Molly Parden