5. Read Psalm 138:3. God did not remove all of David’s difficulties even though he cried out for God to do so. What did God do for David instead of removing all troubles from his life? What does this teach you so that you can move forward boldly in the disquieting times of your own life?

**Bringing it Home**

1. God answers our prayers, but that does not mean our problems will go away. Pick one troubled area in your life right now. How is God answering you?
   a. By taking me through the trouble (i.e. enduring it).
   b. By giving me help in the midst of the trouble (i.e. bringing others with me, to help and encourage me).
   c. By keeping me from the trouble (i.e. sparing me).

2. Pastor Jeremiah also said, “...we must never forget that when we’re in the midst of deep trouble, God is still busy at work in us...perfecting us.” Describe the part of your life that feels like “deep trouble.” How might God be using this trouble to continue His work of perfecting you?

3. Re-read Philippians 1:3-6. God loves you and is completing His work in you. How does this truth shift your perspective regarding your struggles? What thoughts/feelings are fading? What thoughts/feelings are rising up in you? What might you do to stay connected to God (and others) during this time of discomfort, pain, challenge, or sorrow?

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**Sermon Notes**

Even though David was a man after God’s own heart, his life was one long procession of problems. The particular events that surround Psalm 138 are not certain, but most scholars believe that David wrote this at the time when his own son, Absalom, rebelled, forcing David to escape from Jerusalem for his own safety (2 Samuel 15-18).

I. The Reality of Trouble in the Believer’s Life - Psalm 138:7-8
   - A. In Times of Trouble We Experience the Lord’s Protecting Hand
      Psalm 138:7, Isaiah 43:2-3
   - B. In Times of Trouble We Experience the Lord’s Perfecting Hand
      Psalm 138:8, Philippians 1:6

We must never forget that when we’re in the midst of deep trouble, God is still busy at work in us. He is transforming us.

II. The Response to Trouble in the Believer’s Life - Psalm 138:1-3, 6
   - The word David uses for “praise” could also be translated this way: “I will give thanks to You.”
     - A. Be Contagiously Thankful - Psalm 138:1a
       In the midst of his trouble, David worships the Lord with his whole heart. He threw his entire heart and soul into praise and thanksgiving to God.
     - B. Be Courageously Thankful - Psalm 138:1b-2a
       David says he will praise God before all the pagan gods (idols) and the rulers who worship them. David was not ashamed of his God.
     - C. Be Correctly Thankful - Psalm 138:2b-3, 6
       1. Give Thanks for God’s Mercy and Truth - Psalm 138:2b
          The word translated “lovingkindness” is the Hebrew word for mercy. God is perfectly balanced in mercy and in truth. When you come to Him, His truth is tempered by mercy and His mercy is illuminated by truth. He does not ignore the truth of our troubles, and neither does He forsake His mercy toward us in the midst of them.
2. Give Thanks for God’s Magnified Word - Psalm 138:2c
   God values His integrity above everything else. Above everything else, He wants us to believe and trust His Word.

3. Give Thanks for God’s Mighty Provision - Psalm 138:3
   In the day that we cry out, God answers and makes us bold with strength!

4. Give Thanks for God’s Message of Hope - Psalm 138:6
   When we are in the midst of trouble, we are unlikely to be proud. And that is why God deals with us so often in those circumstances. When we are hurting, we are humbled, and God draws near to us.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Getting Started
1. Describe someone you know who has faced some really hard times in his/her life. What types of difficulties has he/she faced?

2. When you watch someone face a particularly challenging time, what thoughts do you think? What emotions do you feel? How about when that person is close to you?

Digging Deeper
1. Read Psalm 138:7. Pastor Jeremiah said, “The Christian life is not a quiet escape to a garden where we can walk and talk uninterruptedly with our Lord…” How have you observed this truth in your life? In what ways does your life get “interrupted?” Describe the trials of being a Christian while living in the real world.

2. When times of trouble come, our thoughts and emotions go somewhere. Where do yours go? Do you find that the quality of your thoughts go up, down, or stay the same? How about your emotions? Do you find that you feel better, worse, or neutral when life gets tough?

3. When we go through times of distress, we can be tempted to lose our perspective and think, “God has forgotten us.” Read the following verses and discuss where God is (and what He is doing) during the good and bad seasons of our lives.
   - Psalm 3:3-6
   - Psalm 20:6-8
   - Psalm 46:1-3, 7, 10-11
   - Isaiah 12:2, 3
   - Habakkuk 3:17-19
   - Philippians 1:3-6

4. Read Psalm 138:1. Thankfulness helps us keep a God-focused perspective in challenging times. In what way does facing our challenges with a mentality of thankfulness (i.e. all that God has done, is doing, and will do in our lives) help us face the hard times? What might this look like in your life? How would you counter a negative circumstance by being thankful to God?