

Wasn't that great? Did you know that our Praise Team leader Dale used to spend weekends playing with his band? When I asked Dale what kind of music he played, his face lit up when he started talking about Motown music. So that became the inspiration for our series we are calling "Motown Revival." The songs that we will listen to for five weeks can remind of God's love for us and help us reflect on what God says to us today.

I've asked the Praise Team to tell us their favorite Motown songs or groups.
Praise team answers:

We just heard the Four Tops song, "Reach Out, I'll be There" that begins:

*Now if you feel that you can't go on
Because all of your hope is gone
And your life is filled with much confusion
Until happiness is just an illusion
And your world around is crumbling down.*

Maybe you felt that way. It is easy to get down on yourself and down on life when it feels like your world is falling apart around you. Health crisis can lead us to ask, "Why me?" Will I ever feel better? Marriage and family problems can not only have a devastating effect on our "Happy Homes," but can also make us feel like giving up. The price of gas, food and just about everything else can stretch our finances to the breaking point. The news about mass shootings, the growing division in our country, and our inability to be do anything about these things doesn't help.

It is at times like these that we need to listen to God's invitation in Psalm 50:15. "Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory." This is a wonderful promise that God gives to us. He is always ready, willing and able to listen to and help us.

The lyrics of the Four Top's song reminds us of God's invitation to us.

*Reach out for me I'll be there with a love that will shelter you
I'll be there with a love that will see you through*

Despite how bad things may get, we are never alone. Jesus promises to always be with us. The Holy Spirit lives in us and helps to guide us through the tough times of life.

It is one thing to say that, another thing to see it. It is not always easy to spot God or see Him working in our lives. But just because we don't see Him, doesn't mean God is not right there with us. We are not the only ones who have ever lived through tough times. The Apostle Paul certainly faced tough times. Paul tells us that he was whipped, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and threatened by both the Jews and the Romans because of His faith in Jesus.

When it is not easy to spot God in our lives, we may want to give up. The Four Tops song remind us that we are not the only ones who can feel that way.

*When you feel lost and about to give up, 'Cause your best just ain't good enough
And your feel the world has grown cold And your drifting out all on your own
And you need a hand to hold*

Even if we can't see Him, God is with us. Paul's experiences taught him that. He tells us, **"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."** (Romans 8:38-39) The key word is "Nothing!" Trouble is unavoidable. But nothing is greater than God's love. Nothing can separate us from God's Love that lasts forever.

People have known and depended on God's love for a long time. This faith in tough times helped them see God even if other didn't.

Moses spotted God in a burning bush after running away from the authorities in Egypt.

Elijah spotted God on the side of a mountain after running away to save his life.

Bartimaeus was a blind man who spotted Jesus with the eyes of faith before he could see.

A centurion spotted Jesus hanging on the cross.

One of the thieves on a cross next to Him also spotted Jesus.

Good for them. But what about us? Do you ever get the feeling that God has gone into hiding or that He is avoiding you? Have you ever asked, "Where is God?" after getting bad news, when you've lost someone you love, when you can't stand to turn the news on one more time?

Even when we can't see God, He sees us. Jesus tells us that God knows when a bird falls to the ground, He knows when we feel like we've fallen and we can't get up. He always cares about us. Jesus said, **"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."** Jesus is with us, watching over us, even when don't know He is there. He tells us to bring all our cares and concerns to Him.

Listen to the words from the Four Tops as if they are the words of Jesus, because they could be.

*Reach out, just look over your shoulder I'll be there to give you all the love you need
And I'll be there you can always depend on me I'll be there*

God is always with us. We can depend on Him. He is like footprints in the sand.

One night I dreamed a dream. I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord.

When the last scene of my life shot before me I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

There was only one set of footprints. I realized that this was at the lowest and saddest times of my life. This always bothered me and I questioned the Lord about my dilemma.

"Lord, You told me when I decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way. But I'm aware that during the most troublesome times of my life there is only one set of footprints. I just don't understand why, when I need You most, You leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

When you get the feeling that you can't go on, reach out and Jesus will be there with a love to shelter you and see you through.