

A Study On Psalms

Life Group Curriculum

A Study On Psalms

The Psalms name more than seven authors, including five individuals and two families (who wrote psalms over the centuries).

David Wrote These Psalms:

Psalms 3–9
Psalms 11–41
Psalms 51–65
Psalms 68–70
Psalm 86
Psalm 101
Psalm 103
Psalms 108–110
Psalm 122
Psalm 124
Psalm 131
Psalm 133
Psalms 138–145

The family of Asaph wrote 12 psalms:

Psalms 50
Psalms 73–83

The sons of Korah wrote 11 psalms:

Psalms 42
Psalms 44–49
Psalms 84–85
Psalms 87–88

Heman the Ezrahite coauthored Psalm 88 with the sons of Korah.

Solomon wrote two psalms:

Psalms 72
Psalm 127

Moses wrote Psalm 90.

Ethan the Ezrahite wrote Psalm 89.

The Psalter consists of five divisions, or books, analogous to the first five books of the Old Testament. As there are five books of Moses, the Torah or Law, so there are five books of Psalms, perhaps in poetic response to the Torah:

Five Books Of Psalms

Book I Ps 1-41
Book II Ps 42-72
Book III Ps 73-89
Book IV Ps 90-106
Book V Ps 107-150

A Classification Of The Psalms

Royal Psalms

2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 144

Wisdom Psalms

1, 32, 37, 49, 73, 78, 112

General Hymns

29, 33, 68, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 114, 115,
117, 135, 139, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150

Lament Psalms & Individual Psalms

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9-10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 22,
25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39
40, 42-43, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61,
62, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 77, 86, 88, 94
102, 109, 140, 141, 142 143

Lament Community Psalms

12, 14, 44, 53, 58, 60, 74, 79,
80, 83, 85, 90, 106, 108, 137

Thanksgiving Psalms

30, 34, 41, 66, 92, 116, 118, 138

Community Psalms

67, 75, 107, 136

Zion Psalms

46, 48, 76, 84, 87

Creation Psalms

8, 19, 65, 104, 148

Entrance Liturgies

15, 24

Hymns with Prophetic Warnings

50, 81, 82

Trust Psalms

23, 91

Enthronement Psalms

47, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99

Footnotes In The Psalms

SELAH-

Seventy-one times in the Psalms, three times in Habakkuk.

From selah, "rest." A music mark denoting a pause, during which the singers ceased to sing and only the instruments were heard. It is a call to calm reflection on the preceding words. Hence, in Ps 9:16 it follows higgaiion (OT:1902, "meditation") The selah reminds us that the psalm requires a peaceful and meditative soul which can apprehend what the Holy Spirit propounds.

MUSIC-

Shiggaion (plural, Shigionoth), a part of the Hebrew heading of Ps 7 probably referred to an erratic, enthusiastic ode or to a psalm of lamentation.

Higgaion- (Ps 9:16) refers to a solemn sound and may indicate soft music.

Shoshannim, a Hebrew word which means "lilies," occurs in the titles of Ps 45 and 69 and in Ps 80 as Shoshannim Eduth, "Lilies of testimony" and in Ps 60 as Shushan Eduth, "Lily of the testimony." These expressions may have indicated the melody to which these songs were to be sung.

The heading Shir-hammaloth ("A Song of Ascents")

Ps. 120-134 has several interpretations. The most common are: (1) These 15 psalms were sung by Levites standing on the 15 steps between the court of the women and the court of the Israelites; and (2) These 15 psalms were sung at three pilgrimage festivals.

Lesson One

Psalm One

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 1:1

The word *הַיֵּשׁׁת* haish is emphatic, “that man”; that one among a thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created him. - Adam Clarke, 1844.

Another Way To Drink

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” Ps. 1:2,3

“His leaf also shall not wither.” The Lord's trees are all evergreens. No winter's cold can destroy their verdure; and yet, unlike evergreens in our country, they are all fruit bearers. - C. H. S.

Spiritual drinking is at the heart of our spiritual life. The written word plays a key role in this aspect of our Christian walk. Jesus is called the Word of God in the Bible, the reformers called Him the Fountain of Gardens. Here is where we connect the dots. Today's verse describes the blessed man as the man who delights in the word of God. The Psalmist says that this man is like a tree planted by rivers of water. What the scripture is saying is this, Christ - the Word of God - is our source of life. He is the fountain from where all life springs. These waters of life, described by David, are Christ Himself. As we search and feast on the scripture, we are drinking in this water of life. Here is how Erasmus described it. "What will be the result? If he has done all this, this teacher of mine, says the psalm, "will be like a tree planted beside streams of water, because he will give in his season the fruit" of salutary (a beneficial effect, health) doctrine. He will be a tree that will not bend to the buffets of fortune, a living tree, a tree watered by the abundant stream of heavenly grace, forever standing by the sacred river of Scripture. Ezekiel entered this river long ago and was amazed to find that it could not be crossed; it is immeasurably deep, and no human being can reach to the bottom. You must be satisfied to drink from it as much is permitted.”

“He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he museth upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with

promises out of the same book. "The law of the Lord" is the daily bread of the true believer."
SPURGEON

The Word of God is like a bottomless river. It is a flowing, clear stream of revelation, healing, restoration, and guidance. Studying the scripture is where we begin to draw this life into ourselves. Reading the Bible is far different from reading other books. Those books can give us wisdom and insight; this book is life itself. So go ahead and have a big drink today. This book can satisfy our deepest thirst and meet our deepest needs. As you develop a lifestyle of reading the Bible, it will become the greatest joy of your life.

Discussion:

1. What is your favorite bible reading plan? May we suggest one that has you read through the Bible in a year? Youversion has some great plans. Try not to get bogged down into the Old Testament and never get familiar with the New Testament particularly the Pauline Epistles.
2. What are ways that you can improve the desire to read and study? Attending Life groups, reading commentaries (biblehub.com is an excellent free website) and going to bethcollege.net taking online courses. Attending church services -note taking. Bible memorization.
3. Time management -how much time do you devote to the study of his word? Putting aside tv, social media, gaming devices, sleep, sports, and hobbies. All of these are not sinful but they never replace the WORD OF GOD.

"They do not diminish in their delights, the river deepens as they wade into it. They are blessed when the first ray of heavenly light streams on their eyeballs, they are blessed when their eyes are opened wider still, to see more of the love of Christ, they are blessed the more their experience widens, their knowledge deepens, and their love increases. They are blessed in their hour of death, and best of all, their blessedness increases to eternal blessedness." SPURGEON

Living By The River Brings Fruit

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

What is prosperity or fruitfulness anyway? Jesus said that bearing fruit is the mark of a disciple. He said it like this, John 15:8 - "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples". David said it came from being planted by the river, Jesus said it came from abiding in the vine. Could it be that this is just two different ways of saying the same thing? Planted by the River would mean living my life in a dependency of the Holy Spirit. Drinking in His presence every day. Abiding in Christ is the same thing, looking to Jesus and allowing the life of the Spirit to flow from Him into me. Luther talked about this kind of fruitfulness. He said it was spiritual and not carnal. Check this out.

"And with regard to this "prospering," take heed that thou understands not a carnal prosperity. This prosperity is hidden prosperity, and lies entirely secret in spirit; and therefore if thou hast not this prosperity that is by faith, thou shouldest rather judge thy prosperity to be the greatest adversity. For as the devil bitterly hates this leaf and the word of God, so does he also those who

teach and hear it, and he persecutes such, aided by all the powers of the world. Therefore thou hearest of a miracle the greatest of all miracles, when thou hearest that all things prosper which a blessed man doeth.”

Jesus said this fruitfulness would glorify the Lord. The reason it brings glory to the Lord is because it points everyone and everything back to the Lord. By ourselves we can do nothing, planted by the river suddenly all things become possible. *We are no longer limited by our limitations; we are limited only by the Lord's limitations.*

Of course, He is all powerful and can do anything, in other words, abiding in Him breaks us into the supernatural arena. This fruitfulness effects every part of us; our work life, our family life, and our ministry life. Suddenly it is Christ working through us. Our part is to stay planted and let the River flow through us.

Discussion:

1. Spiritual Prosperity -How is it attained and continued in our lives?
2. How does the supernatural fit into our everyday lives?
3. Give some examples of when the Word of God spoke to you?

Hence Augustine has, in his translation, "chatter"; and a beautiful metaphor it is - as chattering is the employment of birds, so a continual conversing in the law of the Lord (for talking is peculiar to man), ought to be the employment of man.

Lesson Two

Psalm 2

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?”

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

Nations Raging

David said the nations are ‘raging’. 3000 years have come and gone since David, yet the raging continues. What is the noise all about? The world does not like to be told how to live their lives. At the end of the day, it is all about authority. ‘Who gives God the right to tell me what to do and maybe you aren’t interpreting it right. Or maybe the other gods have as much to say as the Christian God.’ The other routine is ‘the world is evolving, culture is evolving, people long ago just weren’t as advanced as we are today’. You get the drift? The world does not like the revelation of God given in the Word of God and wants to reinvent the rules and rewrite our history.

Luther said they were also raging in his day. Here are his thoughts on today’s verse.

“Why does the world call the gospel a “yoke,” why, “chains,” and refuse to tolerate it? I answer: It does not wish to give up its own righteousness. It does not wish its own wisdom to be obscured. It does not even wish to abandon its own glory and power. And, if I may put it into one word, it does not wish, nor is it able, to keep the First Commandment, but struggles against it with all the powers of the will, intellect, and possessions. It ought to love and prefer God above all things, but it loves itself and its own things. It ought to extol the righteousness of God and trust in it, but it values its own righteousness so highly that it absolutely does not care about the righteousness of God. For just as a monkey loves its own offspring, so the world loves only those things which belong to it. It rejoices in them, is proud, puffed up; but all other things, which are outside itself and rest only on faith, it proudly neglects and treads on them as though on an unknown treasure.”

Luther knew all about the raging of the religious world, after all, he was in the middle of the storm with his teaching of justification by grace alone, through faith alone. Let the world rage on, our God sits in the heavens and laughs.

Discussion:

1. Why is authority so important in our lives?

Laughing At The Enemy

Ps. 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

I often think of some of the incredible services I have been blessed to be a part of over the years. This joy is supernatural, this is what Nehemiah called the 'joy of the Lord'. Not only that, God Himself sits on His throne and laughs.

In today's verse the Lord is actually laughing at His enemies. He is laughing at the enemies' threats and lies. One of those lies is about your sins. The accuser of the church says that you will never stand before God because you are a sinner. What does the Lord say, 'Your sins are forgiven for the sake of My Son'. Here is how Luther sees this verse.

"We must firmly believe that all the persecution, even that spiritual persecution which through Satan takes place in our hearts, occurs for the sake of Christ. For to believe in the forgiveness of sins through Christ is the highest article of our faith. And it is true that whoever believes this article has the forgiveness of sins. Therefore Satan tries so greatly to tear this faith from us. That man sins who listens to the thoughts with which Satan plagues us, that one should throw away the hope of the remission of sins. Let us, therefore, not follow the thoughts of our heart accusing us of sin and holding that the hope of the forgiveness of sins does not extend to us. But we should oppose him with great spirit and say: "You shall not sadden and frighten me at peace. I shall, therefore, laugh and not wail, as you wish it, as though I were alone and without a helper."

So, what is my response to the enemies' lies? I think I will just join in the laughter. My sins are forgiven, the devil is a liar, Christ is my Mediator, and the Father sits on the throne and laughs.

Discussion:

1. Is this something you struggle with -God's forgiveness? Or just the opposite that we can all the more sin so grace abounds?

The Joy Of Heaven

Ps. 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision

When writing this Psalm David was like a man in a storm, who hears only the roaring of the tempest, or sees nothing but the raging billows threatening destruction on every side of him. And yet his faith enabled him to say, "The people imagine a vain thing." They cannot succeed. They

cannot defeat the counsels of heaven. They cannot injure the Lord's Anointed. - David Pitcairn, 1851.

I am convinced that heaven is an exceedingly happy place. As a matter of fact, there is no sorrow at all, only joy found in that place we call heaven. Paul told us that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a foretaste of heaven, experiencing the power of His presence is the most joyful experience anyone can taste in this life. In other words, the more full of the Spirit you become, the happier you will be. In His presence is absolute fullness of joy. I am convinced that the last thing the devil heard when he was banished from heaven was God's holy laughter. If God sits in the heavens and laughs at His enemies it only makes sense that He is laughing at the devil. No wonder the enemy hates joy and does his best to spread depression and misery. Here are some thoughts from Jonathan Edwards on the joyful worship in heaven.

"This doctrine may give us an idea of the glorious and happy state of the saints in heaven. It shows how joyfully and gloriously they spend their time. Joy is a great ingredient in praise. There is an exultation of spirit in fervent praise. Praise is the most joyful work in the world. And how joyful a society are they that join together, so many thousands and millions of them, with one heart and one soul, to sing a new song before the throne, that fill heaven with their glorious melody! How joyful they are in their work, appears in the text, by their fervency in it, so that their voices resounded as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder. What ineffable joy was there, is those harpers whom John heard harping with their harps!"

Often, the sound of laughter fills our church when the Lord is pouring out His Spirit. If you do not watch out this will offend you! When this first began to happen several years ago, I remember the distinct impression I had as I listened to the sound of joy. I felt as if I was hearing the very sounds of heaven breaking out among us. If heaven is as happy as I suspect, I cannot wait to get there. I can't wait to get to that place of no more sorrow, no more pain, but only the beautiful sounds of joy.

"The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The world disowns his authority, but I own it; I have set him, I have "given him to be head over all things to the church." His particular kingdom over which he rules; it is over "my holy hill of Zion" - an eminent type of the gospel church." Stephen Charnode

Discussion:

1. Throughout the Bible joy in God brings him glory. Why do we struggle to maintain this joy?
2. What are some of the reasons we lose this precious joy?
3. How can one re-dig the wells of salvation so to speak?

Only Begotten Son

Ps. 2:7 I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

Do you like a good mystery? There is something about the unknown that calls for our attention. Especially the mystery David spoke about in today's verse. This is literally the greatest of all

mysteries; the mystery of deity and humanity, the hard to believe story of the redemption of fallen man. How could Jesus live from eternity? We know He became a man through the virgin birth through Mary. But that's not what today's verse is talking about. This scripture is talking about something way before Mary or Bethlehem, this is talking about the only begotten Son of God. You see Jesus became a son of man, but He has always been the Son of God. This whole concept of begetting is speaking of something that predates creation and predates time itself. Christ is the eternally begotten Son of God. Here is how Martin Luther describes this mystery.

“But is it enough to know this about the King? By no means. He is also the Son of God, begotten from eternity. This could not be discerned with the eyes, so the King Himself teaches it. It is a matter of faith. In order not to distort the text, one must weigh the words: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” God is outside time, a spiritual being. Therefore He cannot beget something temporal, something physical, but brings forth something like Himself, that is, eternal and spiritual. Since He speaks these words to that person set on Zion, however, that He should be a king in a physical and visible place, what follows from this? Is it not this, that this man born in time of the Virgin Mary existed before He was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit, indeed from eternity? For ‘today’ in the case of God, has no beginning and no end. Thus the present text joins together the divine and the human so that they are one, so that you may correctly say: This man is God.”

The Apostle John wrote about this in his gospel.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

This mystery is beyond comprehension. Think about it, the Father and Son have always existed, they have always had this relationship of love, we are just now being brought into it.

Discussion:

1. Discuss the beauty of the Trinity and the relationship each has with each other.

Lesson Three

Joy And Fear- Inseparable Twins

"Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling." Ps.2:11

"And the gracious Spirit does all this for our comfort and consolation, that we may not faint under temptation, but lift up our heads with the most certain hope; because" he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:37. - Martin.Luther.

What a strong contradiction of feelings; joy and fear at the same moment. I guess the bottom line of fear and joy is the whole issue with sin. The root of all our fear is that we are sinners. Adam became afraid of God after he had sinned, he actually hid himself because of his sin. Joy is our response when we first realize that our sins are forgiven. In a born-again Christian we have both emotions, fear and joy. We are still afraid (and we should be) because of our obvious imperfections but our hearts are bursting with joy because of His great mercy that He has shown us. What about the sinner? There is no fear of God (and therefore never any real joy) because the sinner does not realize he is a sinner. Only the grace of God opens our eyes to our own sins.

"If we act like we never sin or make excuses about our sinful behavior, we will never experience the fear of God or the joy that only the forgiven can taste. Instead, we wander around in a numb state, never able to ever really enjoy anything to the fullest. We are covered with a coating of sin and religious excuses. Joy and the fear of God are inseparable twins in our celestial journey."
Henry Ainsworth

Rejoice With Trembling

"The fear of God promotes spiritual joy; it is the morning star which ushers in the sunlight of comfort. "Walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." God mingles joy with fear, that fear may not be slavish" - Thomas Watson, 1660^[SEP]

It seems like everything in the kingdom of God is backwards. You know; the first will be last, the last will be first, you have to lose your life to find it, it is by giving that we receive. It just does not make sense to the human intellect. Take today's verse for example, 'Rejoice with trembling', really? Fear and joy seem to be opposites on the range of human emotion, but that's what the Bible says, 'Rejoice with trembling'. The truth is this, this verse can never make sense until.... Until you experience the powerful presence of the Lord for yourself, then you will understand. When the Lord reveals Himself in His manifested glory those are the two simultaneous responses. The joy from being in the presence of the happiest of all beings and fear because of His awesome greatness. There is simply no one or anything like Him. Here are some thoughts from Martin Luther on today's verse.

"So we should fear God in a way that doesn't entirely exclude joy. It should be a genuine joy—a joy that can't be kept bottled up in our hearts. When we truly believe that we have been reconciled to God because of Christ, we will have a smile on our face, a twinkle in our eyes, and a song of praise on our lips. The Holy Spirit tells us to serve our heavenly King with inward and outward joy, combined with reverence. If we don't, we'll become overconfident. We'll start

acting like animals and sink into lustful human pleasures. In fact, he's offended by sadness and demands joy. That's why people who were in mourning were not allowed to bring God sacrifices, and why the offerings in Malachi were unacceptable to God (Malachi 2:13)."

I guess I always knew it would be terrifying to experience the greatness of God, it was the joy that caught me by surprise. If you really think about it that had to be true. God created joy, He has to be the most joyful of all beings. If you get close to Him get ready to be surprised by life changing joy.

"Christ towards us acts as a king, but towards his Father as a priest. All he speaks to God is by prayer and intercession. So the saints, the promise makes them kings over their lusts, conquerors over their enemies; but it makes them priests towards God, by prayer humbly to sue out those great things given in the promise." - William Gurnall, 1617-1679

Discussion:

1. What are your thoughts on fear mingled with joy?
2. How do we live this out in our lives?

Kiss The Son

Ps. 2:12 "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

"In the Christian church, and in the visitation of a Christian soul, he hath invited us, enabled us to kiss him, for he is presently amongst us. This leads us to give an earnest persuasion and exhortation to kiss the Son, with all those affections, which we shall there find to be expressed in the Scriptures, in that testimony of true love, a holy kiss. But then lest that persuasion by love should not be effectual and powerful enough to us, we shall descend from that duty, to the danger, from love, to fear, "lest he be angry;" and therein see first, that God, who is love, can be angry; and then, that this God who is angry here, is the Son of God, he that hath done so much for us, and therefore in justice may be angry; he that is our Judge, and therefore in reason we are to fear his anger: and then, in a third branch, we shall see how easily this anger departs - a kiss removes it." -Spurgeon

Our church changed quite dramatically back in the mid 1990's. The preaching changed, the worship changed, we changed. The Lord was calling us to a new place of intimacy. Some people could not handle the change. For some, it was the intimidation caused by spiritual intimacy. I guess the part that got to people was the kisses part. Kissing the Lord was just a little too much for some. It's funny because back in the 1600's they were dealing with some of the same issues.

Here is some insight from the Sermons of John Donne, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's, 1621–1631 from today's verse.

"That is, embrace him, depend upon him all these ways: as thy kinsman, as thy sovereign; at thy going, at thy coming; at thy reconciliation, in the truth of religion in thyself, in a peaceable unity with the church, in a reverent estimation of those men, and those means, whom he sends. Kiss

him and be not ashamed of kissing him; it is that which the spouse desired, "I would kiss thee, and not be despised." SOS 7:1. If thou be despised for loving Christ in his Gospel, remember that when David was thought base, for dancing before the ark, his way was to be more base. If thou be thought frivolous for thrusting in at service, in the forenoon, be more frivolous, and come again in the afternoon: The more thou troublest thyself, or art troubled by others for Christ, the more peace thou hast in Christ. "Kiss the Son," and he will not be angry;"

I love this quote, "kiss Him and be not ashamed of kissing Him". Intimacy and freedom always cause a stir. Dancing before Him, shouting His praises, laying prostrate in His presence or a simple kiss; all these are responses to His love. These things are the signs of true worship.

"Kiss the Son,": and he will not be angry; if he be, kiss the rod, and he will be angry no longer - love him lest he be; fear him when he is angry: the preservative is easy, and so is the restorative too: the balsam of this kiss is all, to suck spiritual milk out of the left breast, as well as out of the right, to find mercy in his judgments, reparation in his ruins, feasts in his lents, joy in his anger. - From Sermons of John Donne, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's, 1621-1631.

Discussion:

1. How do we live out this principle in "Kissing the Son!"
2. How does Paul's thought on abounding and abasing come into play with "Kissing the Son?"

Lesson Four

Psalm 3

"A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his Son"

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.
Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.
But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me.
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.
Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone;
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.
Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

Sleep Tight

Ps.3:5 - I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me.

“The second strophe (Psalm 3:3-4) is the utterance of faith, based on experience, laying hold of Jehovah as defense. By an effort of will the psalmist rises from the contemplation of surrounding enemies to that of the encircling Jehovah. In the thickest of danger and dread there is a power of choice left a man as to what shall be the object of thought, whether the stormy sea or the outstretched hand of the Christ. This harassed man flings himself out of the coil of troubles round about him and looks up to God. He sees in Him precisely what he needs most at the moment, for in that infinite nature is fulness corresponding to all emptiness of ours. "A shield around me," as He had promised to be to Abraham in his peril; "my glory," at a time when calumny and shame were wrapping him about and his kingdom seemed gone; "the lifter up of my head," sunk as it is both in sadness and calamity, since Jehovah can both cheer his spirit and restore his dignity. And how comes this sudden burst of confidence to lighten the complaining soul? Psalm 3:4 tells. Experience has taught him that as often as he cries to Jehovah he is heard.”
Expository Bible

There is nothing fun about sleepless nights. Sometimes sleeplessness comes from stress, not sure of what tomorrow holds for you. Today’s verse is a tremendous promise, a promise that you too can sleep well tonight. David’s life was full of stress; lions, giants, backslidden king, betrayal by friends and sons, yet David said he was going to lay down and sleep. What was David’s secret? It lies in the word ‘sustains’ David could rest because he was literally resting in the Lord. The Lord was sustaining him. Here is how Dick Mills describes this promise.

“The big word here is sustained. It is a word that speaks volumes. The Hebrew word is SAMAK. It has a wide range of meanings like, to lean upon, to prop up, to bear up, to uphold. God sustains and upholds His people. The verb translated ‘sustained’ means to provide security and safety, to protect, support and uphold. When he wakes up the next morning, he discovers that nothing has bothered or threatened him during the night.”

Here are some ways Bible translators translate this verse:

God's Word Translation

I lie down and sleep. I wake up again because the LORD continues to support me.

The Message

I stretch myself out. I sleep. Then I'm up again—rested, tall and steady,

New Living Translation

I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the LORD was watching over me.

The Bible in Basic English

I took my rest in sleep, and then again I was awake; for the Lord was my support.

Septuagint

I lay down and slept; I woke again, because the Lord will support me.

I love the different flavors found in Bible translations. From God's Word Translation I am reminded that the Lord is my support. The Message Bible reminds me that I can find my rest in the Lord. The NLT reminds me that I literally have a Watchman watching over me when I sleep, what an incredible benefit.

What is keeping you up at night? I have a feeling if you will reach out to the God of David, the One Who never slumbers, you too will find sweet rest. Ps.121:3 - "He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber."

I have a word from the Lord for you "SLEEP TIGHT"

The tenses in Psalm 3:4 express a habitual act and a constant result. Not once or twice, but as his wont, he prays, and Jehovah answers. The normal relation between him and Jehovah is that of frank communion; and since it has long been so and is so now, even the pressure of present disaster does not make faith falter. It is hard to begin to trust when in the grip of calamity, but feet accustomed to the road to God can find it in the dark. There may be an allusion to David's absence from sanctuary and ark in Psalm 3:4. The expectation of being answered "from His holy hill" gains in pathetic force when the lovely scene of submissive sacrifice in which he sent back the Ark is recalled. {2 Samuel 15:25} Though he be far from the place of prayer, and feeling the pain of absence, the singer's faith is not so tied to form as to falter in the assurance that his prayer is heard. Jehovah is shield, glory, and strengthener to the man who cries to Him, and it is by means of such crying that the heart wins the certitude that He is all these. Again the instruments sound and the singer pauses.

Discussion:

1. Let's think about the amount of stress we put upon ourselves. Is it something that we have done to ourselves or is it out of our control?

2. How important is sleep? How important is taking care of ourselves?
3. Do we really trust in Jehovah; that he does all things well.

Psalm 4

"To the chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David."

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Set Apart

"There is as much difference between heavenly comforts and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall" - Thomas Watson.

Psa. 4:3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

The world we live in is not random, it is well planned and orchestrated to accomplish the plans of the designer. He orders all things for His pleasure and glory; the best part of this is that He sets apart His own people to be participants in His great plan. This verse uses a phrase "set apart." I did not set myself apart, I have been set apart by the Lord and for the Lord. It is not my plans that are at the center of my life anymore, I have been set apart for the Lord to be used in bringing about His plans. The amazing thing about this is that somehow my testimony is critical in all this. Actually, it is not my testimony at all but the testimony of Jesus being displayed in me. Like all of us, I was rescued from my own misery brought about by my bad choices. He redeemed me and has set my life on display. That is what being set apart is all about, He displays His sons and daughters as examples of His love and power.

Here is a word study by Dick Mills on set apart:

"This phrase set apart is a mind-boggling phrase. It includes things that are extraordinary, marvelous, full of wonder and awe, supernatural in origin and result. Set apart is the Hebrew word palah. It is defined as, to make wonderful, to be distinguished, to be favored, to be selected, to make a difference. It is a word akin to pala, meaning a wonder, a marvel, a miracle. It's a name for Jesus the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6, the Wonderful One.

Being set apart does not make us better than anyone else; it just makes us better than we used to be. Before the Second Coming of the Lord, the Holy Spirit is at work in the Lord's body of

believers. Jesus is being magnified, glorified, and exalted in His people. In John 15:16 He tells all of us, "You did not choose Me but I chose you." You are set apart and destined for great things."

"Commune with your own hearts upon your bed, and be still." Commune with your own hearts; when ye have none to speak with, talk to yourselves. Ask yourselves for what end ye were made, what lives ye have led, what times ye have lost, what love ye have abused, what wrath ye have deserved. Call yourselves to a reckoning, how ye have improved your talents, how true or false ye have been to your trust, what provision ye have laid in for an hour of death, what preparation ye have, made for a great day of account." George Swinnock

God's plans for you are bigger than you can imagine. The only thing that you have to be willing to do, give the glory for your transformation to the Lord. He will give you the joy of belonging to Him, He just wants the glory for all He does.

"It is said of the husbandman, that having cast his seed into the ground, he sleeps and riseth day and night, and the seed springs and grows he knoweth not how. Mark 4:26, Mark 4:27. So a good man having by faith and prayer cast his care upon God, he resteth night and day, and is very easy, leaving it to his God to perform all things for him according to his holy will." - Matthew Henry.

Being set apart does not make us better than anyone else; it just makes us better than we used to be. Before the Second Coming of the Lord, the Holy Spirit is at work in the Lord's body of believers. Jesus is being magnified, glorified, and exalted in His people. In John 15:16 He tells all of us, "You did not choose Me but I chose you." You are set apart and destined for great things."

"Take counsel of your own good sense." - Albert Barnes

Discussion:

1. How does being chosen by Him affect your outlook?
2. Discuss what it means to commune with your own heart and be still. Take inventory.
3. Discuss the meaning of palah?

Lesson Five

Brightness Not Everyone Can See

Psa. 8:1 O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

"How excellent is thy name in all the earth!" How illustrious is the name of Jesus throughout the world! His incarnation, birth, humble, and obscure life, preaching, miracles, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, are celebrated through the whole world. His religion, the gifts and graces of his Spirit, his people - Christians, his gospel, and the preachers of it, are everywhere spoken of. No name is so universal, no power and influence so generally felt, as those of the Saviour of mankind. Amen." - Adam Clarke.

It's easy for a Christian to forget just how blind they were before their conversion. We could never really read the Bible; it had no interest to us. If you attended church, it was only out of duty, the shorter the service the better. As far as living a life free from sinful behavior, the trend was to get as close as we deemed it would be acceptable from our personal convictions. All of that changed suddenly at our conversion but sometimes we just cannot remember how blind we were. The people we are around every day are often totally, spiritually blind. God's glory is all around in creation, but they cannot see it. Jesus is living and speaking through His written word but not having ears to hear they cannot hear. The testimony of their friends who were converted is right under their noses, but they cannot catch a whiff of the sweetness of Christ.

"If we believe that God is the Lord, we must avouch and acknowledge him to be ours. He is ours, for he made us, protects us, and takes special care of us. He must be ours, for we are bound to obey him and submit to him; we must own the relation, not only when we come to pray to God, as a plea with him to show us mercy, but when we come to praise him, as an argument with ourselves to give him glory: and we shall never think we can do that with affection enough if we consider... How brightly God's glory shines even in this lower world: How excellent is his name in all the earth! The works of creation and Providence evince and proclaim to all the world that there is an infinite Being, the fountain of all being, power, and perfection, the sovereign ruler, powerful protector, and bountiful benefactor of all the creatures. How great, how illustrious, how magnificent, is his name in all the earth! The light of it shines in men's faces every where; if they shut their eyes against it, that is their fault." MATTHEW HENRY

Even for Christians, partial blindness has a tendency to set in. Our ears can become dull to His voice, our eyes become glossed over to His brilliance, and our hearts become cold to His wooing. What is our solution? Recognize spiritual apathy for what it is; call out to the Lord and seek Him in worship, His word, and in His church.

Gods Library

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens." Ps.8:11

I learned an amazing fact the other day about beetles. God must have loved beetles because they ended up being the largest variety of species on the earth. There are 400,000 different kinds of beetles that have been classified, and scientists are still finding more of them. Tell me, how does one make 400,000 different kinds of beetles? In fact, one could be so bold to say, that without beetles the earth would be in big trouble. The ecosystem would become unbalanced. From bringing pollen to flowers, breaking down dung to masquerading as ants, beetles rock in my world.

Joseph Caryl, the English Puritan Bible commentator, proclaimed that **“All creatures have a teaching voice, they read us divinity Lectures of Divine Providence.”** He taught that every particular beast, or every single creature is able to give instruction . . . the least as well as the greatest, the Mouse as well as the Elephant or the Lyon; the Shrimp as well as Leviathan; the Hysop on the wall, as well as the Cedar in Lebanon; the Grasses of the field, as well as the oaks of Bashan.

John Flavell’s reflections on “spiritual husbandry” resembled Francis of Assisi when he affirmed, **“It’s an excellent Art to discourse with Birds, Beasts and Fishes, about sublime and spiritual Subjects, and make them answer to our questions.”** **“Believe me,” he said, thou shalt find more in the Woods than in a [library] corner; Stones and Trees will teach thee what thou shalt not hear from learned Doctors. (OBVIOUSLY WE DON’T WORSHIP NOR LITERALLY TALK TO TREES BUT SOME OF US TALK TO OUR PETS....PUN INTENDED)**

“Our five senses are so many Doors whereby . . . External Objects are conveyed to us, and the Soul is to take notice of them.” We hear God speaking in each of these. “From the Sun, to the Stone; from the Cedar, to the Violet; every creature hath a voice to teach us something of God. This whole World is a School of man. All the Creatures spell this to us. . . .” John Bailey of Connecticut spoke of everything in creation as constituting a part of “God’s library,” a vast resource from which people could “read their fill.” From the beauty of open fields to the hard-working faithfulness of a good horse, the natural world provided entry to the mystery of God’s glory. For the person of discerning spirit, the tiniest creature witnesses to the source of its amazing life in God’s providential care. But don’t stop with the creature, he said, go on to the source. “The Fountain must needs have more than the Stream.”

John Flavell of Dartmouth urged his congregation to **“Make a ladder out of earthly materials,” using matter— even cattle and corn fields—to ascend to God. He described “the World below [as] a Glass to discover the World above; Seculum est speculum.”**

I pray you take the time to examine God’s library. Take out the God glasses and see, lean forward with your ears and he just might have something to say to you.

Discussion:

1. Think about your lifestyle? Is it healthy? Are you taking the time to further your walk with God?

2. Are you always indoors with the tv on, curtains closed, never going outside? Eating fast food?
Take inventory of your life and how maybe you should adjust things.
3. How can we use God's library for his glory?

Lesson Six

Psalm 16

Michtam of David

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

O my soul, you have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You."

As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.

O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;

Yes, I have a good inheritance.

I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;

At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore, and see, lean forward with your ears and he just might have something to say to you.

Goodness

Ps. 16:5 - Lord, I have chosen you alone as my inheritance. You are my prize, my pleasure, and my portion. I leave my destiny and its timing in your hands.

This is the language of someone with eyes wide open. It is impossible to see the inheritance we have in Christ until we are born again. To the lost person, the Lord represents a certain lifestyle or behavior that is not at all attractive to the unredeemed. This lost person only knows the pleasures of the world, to see Christ as a treasure or pleasurable just does not compute. This ability to perceive the loveliness of the Lord is what made David a songwriter and worshiper. All He was doing with His songs is responding to the magnificence right in front of Him. Jonathan Edwards was the same way. His messages were permeated with the enjoyment of God. Here is a glimpse from the nineteen year old Jonathan Edwards.

"The redeemed have all their objective good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their Life, their dwelling-place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honor and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the "river of the water of life " that runs, and "the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the

paradise of God." The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will forever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast."

Edwards had a grasp of the eternal world. The reason he did, was that he lived in that realm so often while here on earth. He tasted the pleasures of God at his conversion, from that day on he was caught up in the pursuit of God. If enjoying God is foreign to you, maybe it's time for a change. Maybe it's time to seek Him in your private time and to seek Him in the congregation. One taste and you will say like David, "You are my prize, my pleasure, and my portion".

Discussion:

1. What adjustments can we make in our lives to understand our real inheritance?
2. What did Christ say about this?

Total And Perpetual Joy

Ps. 16:11 - You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

David spoke of the resurrection of Christ and its ensuing joy 1000 years before it happened. Death, man's greatest and final enemy, would be swallowed up in the joy Christ enjoyed at His Father's right hand. The great mystery that is unfolded here is this; Jesus stepped into this heavenly joy as a man on our behalf. Think about it, He had always enjoyed this heavenly life and privilege as the Son of God. Now it was His by purchase as the Son of Man. He entered into this life of joy for us; now that place at the Father's right hand is ours. Here is how Charles Spurgeon describes it. "Christ being raised from the dead ascended into glory, to dwell in constant nearness to God, where joy is at its full for ever: the foresight of this urged him onward in his glorious but grievous toil. To bring his chosen to eternal happiness was the high ambition which inspired him, and made him wade through a sea of blood. O God, when a worldling's mirth has all expired, forever with Jesus may we dwell "at thy right hand," where "there are pleasures for evermore;" and meanwhile, may we have an earnest by tasting thy love below. Trappe's note on the heavenly verse which closes the Psalm is a sweet morsel, which may serve for a contemplation, and yield a foretaste of our inheritance. He writes, "Here is as much said as can be, but words are too weak to utter it. For quality there is in heaven joy and pleasures; for quantity, a fullness, a torrent whereat they drink without let or loathing; for constancy, it is at God's right hand, who is stronger than all, neither can any take us out of his hand; it is a constant happiness without intermission: and for perpetuity it is for evermore. Heaven's joys are without measure, mixture, or end."

I love Trappe's comments, "heaven's joys are without measure, mixture, or end". That is absolutely unthinkable. David saw this by prophecy, Peter and the followers of Jesus tasted the edge of it on the Day of Pentecost. Peter was saying in his sermon that the outpouring of the Spirit is the beginning of this supernatural joy. We can now experience this joy for ourselves.

Christian Hedonist

Psa. 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

C. S. Lewis, John Piper, and Jonathan Edwards have helped convert me to Christian hedonism. You might not like that term at first but if you stay open and evaluate the facts you too may be converted. First let's look at the definition of the word hedonism from Webster's Dictionary:

“the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life”

If hedonism is a philosophy of life that our chief purpose is the pursuit of happiness in this life, a Christian hedonist is someone whose main goal in life is to pursue pleasure in Christ alone. I guess the reason that this sounds strange to many people, including Christians, is that they have not discovered the pleasure that is available to them in Christ. To know Him intimately is a taste of heavenly joy, nothing in this life even comes close. We can taste this joy for ourselves most powerfully in two ways. First we taste this joy in reading the Bible. The Psalmist may have said it best, in Ps.119:103, “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Secondly, we find ourselves caught up in His presence of joy when we press into His presence through worship. Again we look to the Psalmist for springs of joy, in Psa. 63:3 “Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You”. Here are some thoughts from John Piper on Christian hedonism.

“God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in him. That's the shortest summary of what we mean by Christian Hedonism. If that is true, then there is no conflict between your greatest exhilaration and God's greatest glorification. In fact, not only is there no conflict between your happiness and God's glory, but his glory shines in your happiness, when your happiness is in him. And since God is the source of greatest happiness, and since he is the greatest treasure in the world, and since his glory is the most satisfying gift he could possibly give us, therefore it is the kindest, most loving thing he could possibly do—to reveal himself, and magnify himself and vindicate himself for our everlasting enjoyment.”

So that's where I am after all these years, enjoying this treasure I have discovered in Christ and using all means possible to share with others this liberating power of joy found only in the Lord. Open your Bible, draw near to the Lord in worship, maybe you too will become a Christian hedonist.

Discussion:

1. Psalm is repeatedly preaching to us on the heavenly joys and it's fullness now in this life. Is your life overflowing with joy? What takes your joy in Christ away?
2. Take a joy break in your meeting. Drink of his goodness! Think about and exclaim about all he has done!

Why Do I Worship

Psa. 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Praise and worship is spontaneous, it is what we do when we see greatness. Take sporting events for example, great accomplishments are followed by exorbitant accolades. When I think of greatness, I think of Usain Bolt or Carl Lewis in the Olympics, or Secretariat winning the Belmont Stakes, and for New Orleanians nothing tops the Saints winning the Super Bowl. I will never forget that night, the city was in an uproar and I was receiving phone calls from Africa, Australia, and Asia within seconds of the victory. Greatness absolutely demands a response. The moment is completed in sharing our response to greatness with our friends. We want to share those special moments with others. That brings us back to worship. One moment in the greatness of God's presence absolutely demands a response. Seeing Him as He is causes us to magnify the greatest of all beings. That's how you know for certain that someone has the real thing, worship is the unquestionable characteristic of the redeemed. Here are some thoughts from C.S. Lewis on the subject of praise.

"But the most obvious fact about praise—whether of God or anything—strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. . . . The world rings with praise—lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game—praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians and scholars. My whole, more general difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of complement that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are, the delight is incomplete till it is expressed."

So when you see Him for yourself let it out. Responding to His love and mercy is what our praise is all about. No wonder Jesus said if you won't praise Him even the rocks will cry out.

Pleasure Seeker

Psa. 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

True religion has a way of sneaking up on you. What do I mean? You see the average person would never see spiritual things as the pursuit of pleasure. Most people would think that religion is the denial of pleasure. Actually it is exactly the opposite. The spiritual man can enjoy the natural pleasures of this world within their proper boundaries, he also has another whole source of pleasure seeking. Actually, the greatest of all pleasures is found in knowing and enjoying Jesus Christ. He is the highest form of pleasure, everything else falls miserably short. Jonathan

Edwards believed that the pleasures of God would overcome in our lives by replacing the excessive carnal pleasures of this world. Here are some of his own words about the pleasures found in religion. He said we must fight fire with fire.

"then, we come with double forces against the wicked, to persuade them to a godly life. The most common argument that is used to urge men to godliness is the pleasures of the life to come; but this has not its effect for the sinner [who] is in pursuit of the pleasures of this life. Now, therefore, we urge to you the pleasures of this [life]: therefore you can have nothing to say. The common argument is the profitableness of religion, but alas, the wicked man is not in pursuit of profit; 'tis pleasure he seeks. Now, then, we will fight with them with their own weapons, {for religion does not deny us outward delights and pleasures}. If it be so, that 'tis worth the while to be religious if it were only for the pleasantness of it, then how exceeding great is the reward of the godly. What a reward have they in the world to come; what joys {in another life}. But yet this is not all; no, they have a reward in this life."

Really this is quite shocking. How many people avoid Christianity because of their perception of losing out on all the fun? It is actually in Christ where the shame and burden of sin falls off and we begin to enter into the real pleasures of this life and the life to come. Try it out for yourself, it is much better than you think.

Discussion:

1. We cannot say enough praise and worship. Why is it so important to RESPOND TO CHRIST'S TOUCH?
2. Paul speaks of rejoicing and again rejoicing. To rejoice! To double up on your joy! Why does religion play such a big part in taking our joy away?
3. Endeavor this week to laugh more, praise more and thank more! Never lose sight of Christ!

Lesson Seven

Psalm 18

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:

I will love You, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.

The pangs of death surrounded me, And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.

In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry.

Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet.

And He rode upon a cherub, and flew;

He flew upon the wings of the wind.

He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters And thick clouds of the skies.

From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire.

The Lord thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire.

He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them.

Then the channels of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered. At Your rebuke, O Lord, At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters.

He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me, For they were too strong for me.

They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the Lord was my support.

He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.

The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands.

He has recompensed me.

For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not wickedly departed from my God.

For all His judgments were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me.

I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.

Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.

With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;

With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;

With the pure, you will show Yourself pure; And with the devious, You will show Yourself shrewd.
For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks.
For You will light my lamp; The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.
For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall.
As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.
For who is God, except the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?
It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect.
He makes my feet like the feet of deer, And sets me on my high places.
He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great.
You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip.
I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
I have wounded them, So that they could not rise; They have fallen under my feet.
For You have armed me with strength for the battle;
You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.
You have also given me the necks of my enemies, So that I destroyed those who hated me.
They cried out, but there was none to save; Even to the Lord, but He did not answer them.
Then I beat them as fine as the dust before the wind; I cast them out like dirt in the streets.
You have delivered me from the strivings of the people; You have made me the head of the nations; A people I have not known shall serve me.
As soon as they hear of me they obey me; The foreigners submit to me.
The foreigners fade away, And come frightened from their hideouts.
The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.
It is God who avenges me, And subdues the peoples under me;
He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man.
Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name.
Great deliverance He gives to His king, And shows mercy to His anointed, To David and his descendants forevermore.

Psalm 18:2

Jesus Our Everything

“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My shield and the horn of my salvation”.

Jesus is everything to us. David said that He was his fortress, deliverer, shield and horn of his salvation. In another Psalm, David said that the Lord was his light, his salvation, and the strength of his life. As a young Christian I didn't quite understand the depth and power of what David was saying. It seems like the tendency in our youthfulness is to trust in our own strength, talents, and

abilities. It takes a while of walking with the Lord to see His strength and our weakness. The longer I walk with the Lord, the more I realize just how much I need His help.

He is my light, He directs my path and keeps me from making foolish choices. He is my strength, He empowers me in all He has called me to do. He is my deliverer, He delivers me from the traps and snares in this world. He is my sustenance. I have learned to feast on Him to give me nourishment for my soul. Today's quote comes from Billy Graham's latest book. Listen to wisdom from a man who has walked with the Lord for many years.

"Jesus is not only the eternal Deliverer, but He is the eternal Sustainer. He provides for those who receive Him. Just as God had provided daily manna from Heaven to the children of Israel on their wilderness journey, so Jesus provides for the soul-hunger of people today. He was born in Bethlehem, which literally means "house of bread," and proclaimed, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (John 6:51).

Jesus is also the everlasting Guide. The Lord led the Israelites through the Sinai Desert during the day with a pillar of cloud, and He provided light at night with a pillar of fire. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (8:12). "Christianity is not a quick fix or seven steps to being a better you. It is a discovery of life itself (or should I say Himself). Walk with Him. Draw near to Him and feed on His faithfulness. Before long you will join with David's song, "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"

Discussion:

1. Is your life built upon the rock? Have your group discuss the difference of a sand built life versus living near the rock
2. Review verses in the New Testament that talk about "the rock".
3. Review verses in the Old Testament that use the rock as a symbol of Christ.

Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech nor language. Where their voice is not heard.

Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.

In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,

Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.
Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.
Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart. Be acceptable in Your sight,
O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Untouchable

Psa 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork”.

Sometimes we just can't help ourselves, everywhere we look we see His glory. We see His handiwork in the transformation of lives that have been devastated by sin and compromise, we see His love in the comfort of the hurting or distressed, we see His power in miracles, and we feel His nearness in corporate, congregational worship. David said that "the heavens were declaring the glory of God" and Paul said, "His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made".

Those that have drunk from the cup of His grace can't really see anything else. We see Him in the scripture, in the person of Jesus, in the preaching of the Word, and in the ministries of His church. He is literally everywhere we look.

Jonathan Edwards suffered with the same affliction, check out his description of his world. “When we are delighted with flowery meadows and gentle breezes of wind, we may consider that we see only the emanations of the sweet benevolence of Jesus Christ. When we behold the fragrant rose and lily, we see His love and purity. So the green trees and fields and singing of birds are the emanations of His infinite joy and kindness. The easiness and naturalness of trees and vines are shadows of His beauty and loveliness. The crystal rivers and murmuring streams are the footsteps of His favor, grace, and beauty. When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beautiful rainbow, we behold the adumbrations of His glory and goodness; and in the blue sky of His mildness and gentleness. There are also many things wherein we may behold His awful majesty, in the sun in His strength, in comets, in thunder, in the hovering thunder-clouds, in ragged rocks, and the brows of mountains. That beautiful light with which the world is filled in a clear day, is a lively shadow of His spotless holiness, and happiness and delight in communicating Himself.”

So how can you be delivered from the negativity that this world generates? Drink from a different cup, drink from the cup of Sovereign Grace. Drench yourself today in this grace by feasting on the scripture, bow down and drink deeply as you worship Him in Spirit and truth. Draw near to the throne of grace by His blood; before you know it, you too will see Him everywhere you look.

His Coming Like Clockwork

The universe is beyond amazing. Everything marches forward in perfect synchronization, all pointing to the great day that lies ahead. The dance of creation is called a groan by the Apostle Paul, the groan of anticipation of God's coming kingdom. What Paul called a groan David referred to as the voice that goes out through all the earth. This voice of the Lord opens the hearts of the hungry and calls them to a place of restoration and healing in God's glorious dance. You are not forgotten, you too are a part of His precise perfection.

Here are some comments from Jonathan Edwards on God's clock. "As in a clock, all the motions of the whole system of wheels and movements, tend to the striking of the hammer at the appointed time. All the revolutions and restless motions of the sun and other heavenly bodies, from day to day, from year to year, and from age to age, are continually tending hither; as all the many turnings of the wheels of a chariot, in a journey, tend to the appointed journey's end. The mighty struggles and conflicts of nations, and shakings of kingdoms, and those vast successive changes that are brought to pass, in the kingdoms and empires of the world, from one age to another, are as it were travail pangs of the creation, in order to bring forth this glorious event. And the Scriptures represent the last struggles and changes that shall immediately precede this event, as being the greatest of all; as the last pangs of a woman in travail are the most violent." ^[1]_[SEP]To glimpse God's glory in creation causes me to bow in awe before His majestic sovereignty. He rules all things. He is the God of well timed comets, solar flares, and eclipses. The mysteries of the universe are His. The mysteries of my life and your life are also hidden in Christ. Just as we passed through the moon's shadow last Monday, hide yourself in Him who has no shadow of turning.

Discussion:

1. How can we live out displaying the glory of God in our lives?
2. Define glory

Psalms 22

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel.

Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.
But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.
I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.
Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.
Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.
I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.
For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.
I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.
They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.
But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.
Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.
I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.
My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live forever.
All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.
All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.
A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.
They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

Horrible But Beautiful

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint” Psalms 22:14

It's impossible to understand the suffering of Christ without understanding what happened at Gethsemane. Jesus was facing suffering the next day, but He was facing much more than the horrific suffering associated with crucifixion. This form of capital punishment was incredibly

painful but Christ was facing something even more unthinkable. The cross for Jesus was not only about physical suffering, it was experiencing the wrath of His Father against man's sin that was the most troubling to Jesus. The prayer in Gethsemane was Jesus saying yes to that horrible fate with eyes wide open. At Gethsemane He saw the ramifications of His sacrificial death, that night He said yes to suffering beyond imagination. Charles Spurgeon explains a little of Christ's suffering in his comments on today's verse.

"In soul and body, our Lord felt himself to be weak as water poured upon the ground. The placing of the cross in its socket had shaken him with great violence, had strained all the ligaments, pained every nerve, and more or less dislocated all his bones. Burdened with his own weight, the august sufferer felt the strain increasing every moment of those six long hours. His sense of faintness and general weakness were overpowering; while to his own consciousness he became nothing but a mass of misery and swooning sickness. When Daniel saw the great vision, he thus describes his sensations, There remained no strength in me, for my vigor was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength: how much more faint must have been our greater Prophet when he saw the dread vision of the wrath of God, and felt it in his own soul! To us, sensations such as our Lord endured would have been insupportable, and kind unconsciousness would have come to our rescue; but in his case, he was wounded, and felt the sword; he drained the cup and tasted every drop."

Charles Spurgeon said "They shall come." Sovereign grace shall bring out from among men the bloodbought ones. Nothing shall thwart the divine purpose. The chosen shall come to life, to faith, to pardon, to heaven. In this the dying Savior finds a sacred satisfaction. Toiling servant of God, be glad at the thought that the eternal purpose of God shall suffer neither let nor hindrance. "And shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born." None of the people who shall be brought to God by the irresistible attractions of the cross shall be dumb, they shall be able to tell forth the righteousness of the Lord, so that future generations shall know the truth. Fathers shall teach their sons, who shall hand it down to their children; the burden of the story always being "that he hath done this," or, that "It is finished." Salvation's glorious work is done, there is peace on earth, and glory in the highest. "It is finished," these were the expiring words of the Lord Jesus, as they are the last words of this Psalm. May we by living faith be enabled to see our salvation finished by the death of Jesus!

Discussion:

Talk about redemption!!

Lesson Eight

"My cup runneth over." Or as it is in the Vulgate: And my inebriating chalice, how excellent it is! With this cup were the martyrs inebriated, when, going forth to their passion, they recognized not those that belonged to them; not their weeping wife, not their children, not their relations; while they gave thanks and said, "I will take the cup of salvation!" - Augustine.

Psalm 23

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever".

"Is it not, indeed, the bleating of Messiah's sheep, "I shall not want"? "shall not want," because the Lord is our Shepherd! Our Shepherd the All-sufficient! Nothing can unite itself to him; nothing mingle with him; nothing add to his satisfying nature; nothing diminish from his fulness. There is a peace and fulness of expression in this little sentence, known only to the sheep. The remainder of the Psalm is a drawing out of this, "I shall not want." In the unfolding we find repose, refreshment, restoring mercies, guidance, peace in death, triumph, an overflowing of blessings; future confidence, eternal security in life or death, spiritual or temporal, prosperity or adversity, for time or eternity. May we not say, "The Lord is my Shepherd"? for we stand on the sure foundation of the Psalm 23:1-6. How can we want, when united to him! we have a right to use all his riches. Our wealth is his riches and glory. With him nothing can be withheld. Eternal life is ours, with the promise that all shall be added: all he knows we want." -Thomas

My Shepherd

Ps. 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

This has to be the greatest of all Psalms, the Lord is my Shepherd. This was about as personal as it gets. David spent years caring for sheep. He endured heat, cold, and loneliness; he fought off the lions and the bears he had given and risked his life for the sheep. He protected them, provided for them, nursed them to health in sickness, and sought them when they were lost.

David knew what it was to be a shepherd, the Lord had become a shepherd to Him.

Long after his years as a shepherd, David found himself alone in the wilderness, running from King Saul. He looked to the Lord for protection, provision, shelter, and guidance. In his years of exile the Lord had become David's Shepherd. Here are some thoughts from Spurgeon on today's verse.

"A sheep is an object of property, not a wild animal; its owner sets great store by it, and frequently it is bought with a great price. It is well to know, as certainly David did, that we

belong to the Lord. There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence. There is no “if” nor “but,” nor even “I hope so;” but he says, “The Lord is my shepherd.” We must cultivate the spirit of assured dependence upon our heavenly Father. The sweetest word of the whole is that monosyllable, “My.” He does not say, “The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leadeth forth the multitude as his flock,” but “The Lord is my shepherd;” if he be a Shepherd to no one else, he is a Shepherd to me; he cares for me, watches over me, and preserves me. The words are in the present tense. Whatever be the believer’s position, he is even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.”^[SEP] I love that, a sheep is not a wild animal but an object of property. I am a sheep of the Lord’s pasture, I am the property of the Chief Shepherd. Since I belong to the Lord I live in a state of constant safety. What enemy can separate me from the Shepherd’s care? Sickness can’t, poverty is helpless against Him, my enemies run in terror before Him. He provides for me, protects me, shelters me, and directs my steps. Yes, the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

Resting By The River

Ps. 23:2 “He leads me beside still waters”

This is a beautiful picture of the spiritual rest the Lord gives His sons and daughters. The Amplified Bible says it like this, “He makes me lie down in [fresh, tender] green pastures; He leads me beside the still and restful waters”. That is one of the beautiful functions of the wonderful Holy Spirit, He gives us rest for our souls. This is one of the greatest of all needs in today’s crazy world. Stress seems to be the order of the day; seasons of earthquakes and national disasters, political chaos, racial contention, economic tsunamis, and incurable pandemics. Without this place of rest to run to we can easily be overwhelmed by the troubles of this life. Have you learned the importance of following the Shepherd daily to the waters of rest. I think I would have shipwrecked long ago without learning the blessing of resting in the Spirit. Here are some thoughts from Matthew Henry of the waters of rest.

“The still waters by which he leads them yield them, not only a pleasant prospect, but many a cooling draught, many a reviving cordial, when they are thirsty and weary. God provides for his people not only food and rest, but refreshment also and pleasure. The consolations of God, the joys of the Holy Ghost, are these still waters, by which the saints are led, streams which flow from the fountain of living waters and make glad the city of our God. God leads his people, not to the standing waters which corrupt and gather filth, not to the troubled sea, nor to the rapid rolling floods, but to the silent purling waters; for the still but running waters agree best with those spirits that flow out towards God and yet do it silently.”^[SEP] I can remember very clearly the first time I found myself in this semi-conscious state resting in the Holy Ghost. I was prayed for and fell under the power of the Spirit for the first time. I found myself totally caught by surprise as I was overtaken by the restful, waters of joy. Resting, laughing, and overcome by love; that’s the very place the Shepherd wants to take us. This is the beautiful place of restoration, cleansing, and empowering. Go ahead and take a break in the River, this is the place you have been looking for all of your life.

“Still water run deep. Nothing more noisy than an empty drum. That silence is golden is indeed in which the Holy Spirit meets with the souls of his saints. Not to raging waves of strife, but to peaceful streams of holy love does the Spirit of God conduct the chosen sheep. He is a dove, not

an eagle; the dew, not the hurricane. Our Lord leads us beside these "still waters;" we could not go there of ourselves, we need his guidance, therefore is it said, "he leadeth me." He does not drive us. Moses drives us by the law, but Jesus leads us by his example, and the gentle drawings of his love." Spurgeon

Green Pastures

Ps.23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Once you see it, it becomes a major part of your everyday life. What am I talking about? Why, it's right there in today's verse. The green pastures are the daily provision for sheep. It's what they live on. What is our provision for daily survival? Of course it is the written word of God. The Bible is our daily food. It is the nutrition we need for our spiritual health. The Shepherd leads us into life itself by constantly directing us to His book. This is where we find salvation, spiritual cleansing, wisdom, equipping for ministry, and it is the weapon to put our enemy on the run. Remember how the Shepherd Himself dealt with the deceiver, "It is written" is all He had to say. Check out Charles Spurgeon's thoughts on the green pastures.

"What are these "green pastures" but the Scriptures of truth—always fresh, always rich, and never exhausted? There is no fear of biting the bare ground where the grass is long enough for the flock to lie down in it. Sweet and full are the doctrines of the gospel; fit food for souls, as tender grass is natural nutriment for sheep. When by faith we are enabled to find rest in the promises, we are like the sheep that lie down in the midst of the pasture; we find at the same moment both provender and peace, rest and refreshment, serenity and satisfaction. But observe: "He maketh me to lie down." It is the Lord who graciously enables us to perceive the preciousness of his truth, and to feed upon it. How grateful ought we to be for the power to appropriate the promises!."

Remember what Jesus told His disciples in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me". Shepherds in Bible days had some kind of relationship with their sheep, they talked to them and even sometimes called them by name. This is what happens to us when we begin to spend time reading the Bible. We become accustomed to His word and begin to hear His voice speaking to us. He will take the scripture and breathe on it and make it personal to us. We hear His voice and recognize He is speaking directly to us.

He Restores My Soul

Ps. 23:3 "He restores my soul."

Before we met Christ, our souls were in a continuous state of shambles. Our pride and sin had blinded our eyes, our tragedies and offenses had wounded us. Our conversion began the work of restoration in our lives. Only the Shepherd could restore our soul. Here is a thought from Adam Clarke on this restoration.

"Brings back my life from destruction; and converts my soul from sin, that it may not eternally perish. Or, after it has backslidden from him, heals it's backsliding, and restores it to his favor."^f_{SEP} After conversion we still need the restoring work of the Spirit in our lives. Temptations, offenses, and calamity tend to take their toll on all of us. Only the work of the

Spirit can restore our souls so that we can walk with our Shepherd. Here is what Spurgeon says about the restoration of our souls.

“When the soul grows sorrowful he revives it; when it is sinful he sanctifies it; when it is weak he strengthens it. “He” does it. His ministers could not do it if he did not. His Word would not avail by itself. “He restoreth my soul.” Are any of us low in grace? Do we feel that our spirituality is at its lowest ebb? He who turns the ebb into the flood can soon restore our soul. Pray to him, then, for the blessing—“Restore thou me, thou Shepherd of my soul!”

The Apostle Paul says in best in Titus 3:5 “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” So, how is it with your soul today? There is renewal and restoration available for us every time we step into the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit. These are the waters of rest that the Shepherd gently and faithfully leads us to. You may feel tired or drained emotionally, there is renewal in the Holy Spirit for you. You may feel like the work of the ministry is just too much for you, good news, these are waters of rest as well as restoration. He will bring rest to your soul and strength for tomorrow’s journey. He is restoring our souls and making all things new again.

To Die Is Christ

Psa. 23:4 ¶ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^[1] I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Have you thought about the day of your death recently? Jonathan Edwards said that we need to think of that day everyday of our lives. Why? You ask. Thinking about dying and what comes next tends to have a great and dramatic effect on the way we live our lives right here right now. Of course for the Christian, that leads us to thinking about heaven. Heaven will be better than you think. The Father, the fountain of all life, will be there. Jesus, His only begotten Son, will be ruling with His Father. The Holy Spirit will be there; He will be the atmosphere we breathe, the life that we live, and the veritable ocean of God’s love that shall swallow us. I guess the thing that keeps us from reflecting more often on heaven is that shadow of death that we have to pass through. Here is how Spurgeon sees it.

“The dying saint is not in a flurry, he does not run as though he were alarmed, nor stand still as though he would go no further, he is not confounded nor ashamed, and therefore keeps to his old pace. Observe that it is not walking in the valley, but through the valley. We go through the dark tunnel of death and emerge into the light of immortality. We do not die, we do but sleep to wake in glory. Death is not the house but the porch, not the goal but the passage to it. The dying article is called a valley. The storm breaks on the mountain, but the valley is the place of quietude, and thus full often the last days of the Christian are the most peaceful of his whole career; the mountain is bleak and bare, but the valley is rich with golden sheaves, and many a saint has reaped more joy and knowledge when he came to die than he ever knew while he lived.”^[1] We are all headed for that valley one day, our approach to the valley is determined by our vision that lies beyond it. Heaven is real and nearer than you think. We live one breath, one heartbeat from our eternity. This life matters, it will determine what the next one is like.”

Anoint Me With Oil

PSA. 23:5 ¶ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

David knew the importance of the anointing. Ever since that day when Samuel visited his family and anointed David with oil, the anointing had become a huge part of David’s life. He saw the importance of the anointing when facing the lion and the bear, fighting the giant, running from King Saul, fighting the Philistines, writing the songs of the Lord, and reigning as the King of Israel. It was the supernatural enabling that kept and empowered David all of his life.

Today, that anointing is available for all of us. Whether we are facing temptation, challenges in our work or ministry, the anointing of the Lord will equip us for whatever we face. Charles Spurgeon shares about the importance of anointing with fresh oil everyday.

“Thou anointest my head with oil. May we live in the daily enjoyment of this blessing, receiving a fresh anointing for every day’s duties. Every Christian is a priest, but he cannot execute the priestly office without unction, and hence we must go day by day to God the Holy Ghost, that we may have our heads anointed with oil. A priest without oil misses the chief qualification for his office, and the Christian priest lacks his chief fitness for service when he is devoid of new grace from on high.”

I love what Spurgeon said, “every Christian is a priest”. This was a cardinal doctrine of the Protestant Reformation, the priesthood of every believer. The anointing with the oil of the Spirit is critical for the ministry of the priest. Think about it, David instituted 24 hour worship and ministry to the Lord in his tabernacle. Ministry to the Lord is the first duty of the priest. The priests needed God’s empowering and intoxicating anointing to minister on a daily basis. Stepping into His daily anointing equips us for our ministry of worship to the Lord. Secondly, the priest has a ministry to the hurting people all around us. It is the anointing that puts the compassion in our heart for those around us. This compassion spills over in pouring out the love of God to the suffering people we see everyday. Just like David saw the importance of the anointing to face his daily challenges, we too need His help everyday.

He Anoints My Head With Oil

Psa. 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

David was a man of the Spirit. His whole life and ministry were an outflow of the anointing that was on his life. From the lion and the bear, to the Philistine giant, the jealous king, the rebellious son, and the Philistine armies; David was able to rise above and conquer every foe. He understood exactly what he meant when he penned the words, “You anoint my head with oil”. Today’s church has majored on programs, ministries, and principles with little or no mention of the anointing. The anointing is the weapon of our warfare to do damage to the kingdoms of the world and to establish the kingdom of God. Martin Luther spoke of the intoxicating effect of the anointing of the Spirit and the powerful effect it has on our world. Check out Luther’s thoughts on the anointing of the Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit makes them not only courageous and bold, but also so secure and happy that they get drunk with a great and boundless joy. David is thus speaking here of spiritual power,

joy, and intoxication-the power of God; and a joy in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul calls it; and a blessed intoxication, in which the people are filled not with wine, for that is debauchery, but with the Holy Spirit. And this is the armor and the weapons with which our Lord God equips His believers against the devil and the world; that is, He puts the Word into their mouths and puts courage, that is, the Holy Spirit, into their hearts. Unafraid and cheerful, they attack all their enemies with that equipment. They smite and conquer them despite all their power, wisdom, and holiness. Such warriors were the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. They stood up in Jerusalem against the command of the emperor and the high priest and acted as though they were veritable gods and all the others mere locusts, and they pressed forward with all strength and joy, as though they were intoxicated, as some actually mocked them and said they were filled with new wine. But St. Peter showed from the prophet Joel that they were not filled with wine but with the Holy Spirit. Afterward he flays about with his sword; that is, he opens his mouth and preaches, and with one stroke he rescues three thousand souls from the devil.”

The one thing that can change the world is the one thing that has been ignored and even despised in church. We must have the anointing if we expect to change our world. The Lord has given Victory Church a sharp sword to use in our battle in New Orleans. It is the outflow of Holy Spirit intoxication from the years of saturation at our church. Oh Lord, anoint our heads with fresh oil!!!

“It is as when the son of some great king comes back from foreign soil to his father's dominions, and is welcomed at every stage in his journey to the capital with pomp of festival and messengers from the throne, until at last he enters his palace home, where the travel-stained robe is laid aside, and he sits down with his father at his table.” - Alexander Maclaren, 1863.

Discussion:

1. Most of us have read Psalm 23 and applied it to our life. Did anything that you read bring more revelation to what you already knew of this psalm? Share with the group.
2. Each blog talked about different aspects of Ps. 23- here is our Shepherd, we live by the rivers, and green pastures, he brings restoration and keeps us in the dark times and lastly he anoints our head with oil. What, if any of these verses can you especially relate to where God brought his word to you? Please let others share if they haven't done so.

Lesson Nine

“St. Chrysostom, suffering under the Empress Eudoxia, tells his friend Cyriacus how he armed himself beforehand: εἰ μὲν βούλεται ἡ βασίλισσα ἐξορίσαι μέ, etc. "I thought, will she banish me? 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' Take away my goods? 'Naked came I into the world, and naked must I return.' Will she stone me? I remembered Stephen. Behead me? John Baptist came into my mind," etc. Thus it should be with every one that intends to live and die comfortably: they must, as we say, lay up something for a rainy day; they must stock themselves with graces, store up promises, and furnish themselves with experiences of God's lovingkindness to others and themselves too, that so, when the evil day comes, they may have much good coming thereby.” - John Spencer.

Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

Who Can Approach God

Psa. 24:3,4 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

At the end of all our decisions and arguments, “our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You” Augustine. That is what we all long for though most of us have no idea. Our sins have clouded our vision of God and they have also clouded our understanding of what we really want in life. David cuts through all the smoke and just says it, “who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord”. That is what the whole Bible is about, returning to what we lost in the garden, intimate fellowship with the Lord. So how do we approach the Lord, man has struggled with this question and the answer was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. Here are some thoughts from Luther and Spurgeon.

“It is not he who sings so well or so many Psalms, nor he who fasts or watches so many days, nor he who divides his own among the poor, nor he who preaches to others, nor he who lives quietly, kindly, and friendly; nor is it he who knows all sciences and languages, nor he who

works all virtuous and all good works that ever any man spoke or read of, but it is he alone, who is pure within and without.” —Martin Luther

“Who shall be able to “stand” or continue there? He casteth away the wicked, who then can abide in his house? Who is he that can gaze upon the Holy One, and can abide in the blaze of his glory? Certainly none may venture to commune with God upon the footing of the law, but grace can make us meet to behold the vision of the divine presence. The question before us is one which all should ask for themselves, and none should be at ease till they have received an answer of peace. With careful self-examination let us enquire, “Lord, is it I.” — Spurgeon

So how do we become one who approaches and lives on God’s holy hill? There is only one way, having our sins washed away by faith in the blood of Jesus. It is faith in the blood that makes us that righteous man that can come to the holy hill, no one else can abide in His holy presence. "The hill of the Lord," can be no other than a hill of glory. His holy place is no less than the very place and seat of glory. And being such, you cannot imagine it but hard to come by, the very petty glories of the world are so. This is a hill of glory, hard to climb, difficult to ascend, craggy to pass up, steep to clamber, no plain campagna to it, the broad easy way leads some whither else (Matthew 7:13); the way to this is narrow (Matthew 7:14); 'tis rough and troublesome. To be of the number of Christ's true faithful servants is no slight work; 'tis a fight, 'tis a race, 'tis a continual warfare; fastings and watchings, and cold and nakedness, and hunger and thirst, bonds, imprisonments, dangers and distresses, ignominy and reproach, afflictions and persecutions, the world's hatred and our friends' neglect, all that we call hard or difficult is to be found in the way we are to go. A man cannot leave a lust, shake off bad company, quit a course of sin, enter upon a way of virtue, profess his religion or stand to it, cannot ascend the spiritual hill, but he will meet some or other of these to contest and strive with. But not only to ascend, but to stand there, as the word signifies; to continue at so high a pitch, to be constant in truth and piety, that will be hard indeed, and bring more difficulties to contest with. - Mark Frank.

“The earth is full of God; he made it full and he keeps it full, notwithstanding all the demands which living creatures make upon its stores the sea is full, despite all the clouds which rise from it; the air is full, notwithstanding all the lives which breathe it; the soil is full, though millions of plants derive their nourishment from it. Under man's tutored hand the world is coming to a greater fulness than ever, but it is all the Lord's; the field and the fruit, the earth and all earth's wonders are Jehovah's.” Spurgeon

Discussion:

1. Discuss how the earth is the Lord's. How should one behave himself?
2. Discuss who can ascend unto the “Hill of the Lord?”

Psalm 26

Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.
I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord:
That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.
Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.
Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:
In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.
But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the Lord.

That Old Idiot

Psa. 26:2 Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.

One of the big challenges that many of us face is the desire to be famous. No one will admit it, but this is a very real problem. I think this may be one of the secrets to the success of social media, especially Facebook. Suddenly everyone has a voice. Every Christian has become a preacher with or without the calling of God. What lies at the base of this problem? I believe it is the very struggle the first worship leader faced, pride and selfish ambition was at the heart of the fall of Lucifer. He wanted to be special (he already was). He wanted the very throne itself. This is not a new problem, over 500 years ago Luther said ambition was the cause of all heresies. Here are some of Luther's comments on the same problem. "Even people who have a good understanding of God's Word often stumble over this sin (selfish ambition). This sin causes all heresies. As the saying goes, "Ambition is the mother of heresies and sects." Some people always want to be special. They're never content being like everyone else. This is how they wander off the path without even realizing it. People must pray every day that God would keep this secret rebel inside of them in check. As Paul says, "Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:10). Here Paul acknowledges that the ego— that old idiot—always wants to be the center of attention. As soon as people learn something and can speak about the Lord Jesus Christ, they want to become special. The ego wants people to tell themselves, "Yes, you can get the job done. You're an educated person. You're a cut above the rest." We can't do enough to protect ourselves from this shameful wickedness. Other human vices are so crude that we easily perceive them, but this one sneaks up on us. It disguises itself as honoring God and doing what his Word tells us to do. However, selfish ambition lies hiding like a secret rebel behind it all." How many people have I known who thought they were going to fill stadiums for Jesus or be a national celebrity? More than you can imagine. I think one of the things awakening or revival does for us is to bring us to a place that God Himself is enough for us, not our position or accomplishments. "One thing have I desired", David said, "to be in the house of the Lord and look upon His beauty". That is more than enough.

Discussion:

1. If you can be really transparent discuss your thoughts of being famous that you have entertained? How has it changed or not?

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Brand New Desire

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. Ps. 27:4

I used to have a friend as a young Christian that would ask the strangest questions. One of them was something like this. "If I get really close to the Lord I'm afraid He will ask me to do something that is too hard, something I don't want to do". We talked for hours about this and other pretty funny questions. I must admit, neither one of us had many of the right answers back then. Today I can begin to respond to that thought, when Jesus becomes my treasure and I draw near to Him all my desires begin to change. Actually, He begins to put His desires for my life into my heart. They then become my desires and joy. What an awesome God. Here is how Andrew Murray described this reality.

"When God's desire becomes our desire, these words also become our words: to dwell in His house, to gaze upon His beauty, and to seek Him in His temple. The more we realize God's desire to give rest and peace in our heart, and the more our desire is quickened to dwell with Him and behold His beauty, the more the spirit of intercession will grow upon us to claim all that God has promised in His New Covenant. We will start thinking more of our church and country, home, and school. We will think of saved ones and their need, or the unsaved and the dangers that threaten them. We will think of God's desire to find His home and His rest in the hearts of men. All thoughts of our weakness and unworthiness will be swallowed up in the wonderful assurance that He gave to His children: "This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:14)." Actually, this is the answer to all of our misery. Our self-absorbed lives that lead to depression and misery get swallowed up. We find

ourselves in love with the Lord and passionate about His kingdom. Our hearts are filled with love for the hurting that spills over in ministry and intercession. This is the beautiful work of God. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." For the sake of communion with the King, David longed to dwell always in the palace; so far from being wearied with the services of the Tabernacle, he longed to be constantly engaged in them, as his lifelong pleasure. He desired above all things to be one of the household of God, a home born child, living at home with his Father. This is our dearest wish, only we extend it to those days of our immortal life which have not yet dawned. We pine for our Father's house above, the home of our souls; if we may but dwell there for ever, we care but little for the goods or ills of this poor life. "Jerusalem the golden" is the one and only goal of our heart's longings. To behold the beauty of the Lord. An exercise both for earthly and heavenly worshippers. We must not enter the assemblies of the saints in order to see and be seen, or merely to hear the minister; we must repair to the gatherings of the righteous, intent upon the gracious object of learning more "of the loving Father, more of "the glorified Jesus, more of the mysterious Spirit, in order that we may the more lovingly admire, and the more reverently adore our glorious God. What a word is that, "the beauty of the Lord!" Think of it, dear reader! Better far—behold it by faith! What a sight will that be when every faithful follower of Jesus shall behold "the King in his beauty!" Oh, for that infinitely blessed vision!" Treasury of David

Waiting On The Lord

Psa. 27:14 Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

One of my big challenges throughout my Christian experience has been waiting on the Lord. I have a natural tendency, like many of us, to take matters into my own hands. How many times do I have to be reminded that the Lord does not need my help? Taking what we perceive as the Lord's work into our own hands can be quite deceptive. We mask our own motives behind a spiritual facade. How do I know? I have been guilty too many times. Waiting on the Lord brings us to a place of total decency on the Lord, gives us greater clarity, and makes room for His power and glory to be displayed. As Isaiah says, "they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. Here are some thoughts from A.B. Simpson on waiting on the Lord.

"Wait on the Lord. How often this is said in the Bible; how little understood! It is what the old monk called the "practice of the presence of God". It is the habit of prayer. It is the continual communion that not only asks but receives. It is this that renews our strength until we "mount up with wings as eagles, run and are not weary, walk and are not faint." Our hearts are too limited to take in His fullness at a single breath. We must live in the atmosphere of His presence till we absorb His very life. This is the secret of spiritual depth and rest, of power and fullness, of love and prayer, of hope and holy usefulness. Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Waiting on the Lord is how my calling to New Orleans was confirmed to me so many years ago. I was zealous for foreign missions. I had built my zeal reading about missionaries like Hudson Taylor, C.T. Studd, Jim Elliot, and David Brainerd. I wanted to make my mark on the nations. As I was preparing to go, the Lord spoke to me by various means all saying the same thing, "Be still and know that I am God". As I reluctantly waited on clarity from the Lord His direction

became crystal clear, I was to return to my home in New Orleans. Yes, I was called as a missionary, a missionary to the city of New Orleans.

Discussion:

1. Why is the “One Thing” so precious in our lives? Do you feel you are still on this quest?
2. As we read about the “One Thing”, is the Spirit speaking to you to dive deeper?
3. How does waiting on the Lord connect to the “One Thing?”

Spend some time in soaking prayer and worship to practice intimacy with Christ!

Lesson Ten

"The Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon." - What a shame is it then that our hard hearts break not, yield not, though thunder-struck with the dreadful menaces of God's mouth! - John Trapp.

"When the holy Spirit makes the divine promise to be heard above the many waters of our soul's trouble, then is God as glorious in the spiritual world as in the universe of matter. Above us and beneath us all is the peace of God when he gives us quiet." Spurgeon

Psalm 29

Psalm Of David

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.

The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth everyone speak of his glory.

The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.

The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

"It seems to be the general opinion of modern annotators, that this Psalm is meant to express the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder and seen in an equinoctial tornado. Just as the Psa 8:1-9 is to be read by moonlight, when the stars are bright, as the nineteenth needs the rays of the rising sun to bring out its beauty, so this can be best rehearsed beneath the black wing of tempest, by the glare of the lightning, or amid that dubious dusk which heralds the war of elements. **The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts.** God is everywhere conspicuous, and all the earth is hushed by the majesty of his presence. The word of God in the law and gospel is here also depicted in its majesty of power. **True ministers are sons of thunder,** and the voice of God in Christ Jesus is full of majesty. Thus, we have God's works and God's word joined together: let no man put them asunder by a false idea that theology and science can by any possibility oppose each other. We may, perhaps, by a prophetic glance, behold in this Psalm the dread tempests of the latter days, and the security of the elect people."

How Much Glory

Ps. 29:2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; ^{SEP}worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

This verse has always demanded my attention. It is extremely convicting to me; how could anyone ascribe the glory 'due' to His name? Impossible!!! He rescued us from our pit of despair

that we had dug for ourselves and delivered us from the very pit of hell and brought us into His glorious presence. How much glory should I credit to Him for that? He has kept me from destruction and blessed me beyond belief in my personal life, with my wife and children, and in my ministry. How much glory is due to Him for all of that? He has filled me again and again with the joy that comes from God Himself; how much glory should I ascribe to Him for that? Spurgeon also seemed to be overwhelmed by a continual need to worship. Here is some of what he said about worshipping the Lord.

“The Lord always deserves to be praised for what he is in himself, for his works of creation and providence, for his goodness towards his creatures, and especially for the transcendent act of redemption, and all the marvelous blessing flowing therefrom. It is always beneficial to praise the Lord; it cheers the day and brightens the night; it lightens toil and softens sorrow; and over earthly gladness it sheds a sanctifying radiance which makes it less liable to blind us with its glare. Have we not something to sing about at this moment? Can we not weave a song out of our present joys, or our past deliverances, or our future hopes? Earth yields her summer fruits: the hay is housed, the golden grain invites the sickle, and the sun tarrying long to shine upon a fruitful earth, shortens the interval of shade that we may lengthen the hours of devout worship.”

It's not just what He has done that cries for our worship, it is God Himself. His greatness is higher than the heavens, His love stretches beyond the horizon, and His mercy is deeper than the depths of the ocean. Worship is still my only recourse. His greatness demands me to shout for joy. Let the nations see His greatness, let my praises touch the world around me. Let everything that has breath give praise to the Lord.

“Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God, where it is aimed at, will put out and consume all bye and base ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. He that sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat (Genesis 41:4), so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a man's greatest end, there all bye and base ends will be kept at an under”. - Thomas Brooks.

"The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve." "Cervi sunt predicatores," says S. Jerome, who bring forth souls to Christ by the gospel which is God's voice; and the stripping of the leaves of the forest by the voice of the Lord, represents their work in humbling the strong oaks and lofty cedars of the world by the power of the gospel, and in stripping the souls of the worldly-minded of their manifold disguises (S. Basil). Others apply it to the act of the preachers of God's word, disclosing the dark thickets of divine mysteries in the holy Scriptures by evangelical light set forth by the Holy Ghost (S. Jerome). - Christopher Wordsworth

Discussion:

1. Living a life of thanksgiving and giving God all the glory is our chief end or purpose. How does the Apostle Paul tie this together in the New Testament also?
2. Jesus also spoke of the glory of the Father. Discuss this in the group.
3. Why is the preaching of the Word so important in our lives?

4. "Dear reader, is not this a noble Psalm to be sung in stormy weather? Can you sing amid the thunder? Will you be able to sing when the last thunders are let loose, and Jesus judges quick and dead? If you are a believer, the last verse is your heritage, and surely that will set you singing." Spurgeon is asking us this!

Psalm 31

"We plead for his name's sake. If God should begin and not continue, or if he should carry on but not complete the work, all would admit that it was for some reason that must bring reproach on the Almighty. This can never be. God was self-moved to undertake man's salvation. His glorious name makes it certain the top-stone shall be laid in glory." - William S. Plumer.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.
Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me.
For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.
Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.
Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.
I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.
I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;
And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.
For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.
I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.
I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.
For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.
But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.
My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.
Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.
Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.
Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!
Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.
Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.
For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

The power of God flows out of intimacy with God. This was David's secret and the key to his greatness. His love for the Lord brought him near to God. Out of that nearness power flowed out. We see God's power displayed in David when he defeated Goliath as a child, God's power was on display when David defeated the Philistine armies, and God's power was on display when David unified Israel and brought it to greatness.

We also see the intimacy of God on display in David's Psalms, his love for God was expressed in his worship. This is a true picture of the power of God. Here is Spurgeon on this verse.

“With strong, hearty affection will I cling to thee; as a child to its parent, or a spouse to her husband. The word is intensely forcible, the love is of the deepest kind. “I will love heartily, with my inmost bowels.” Here is a fixed resolution to abide in the nearest and most intimate union with the Most High. Our triune God deserves the warmest love of all our hearts. Father, Son and Spirit have each a claim upon our love. The solemn purpose never to cease loving naturally springs from present fervor of affection. It is wrong to make rash resolutions, but this when made in the strength of God is most wise and fitting. “My strength.” Our God is the strength of our life, our graces, our works, our hopes, our conflicts, our victories.”

The irony of David being a warrior and a worshiper is a great thought for the church today. Worshippers are not weak; they are mighty through God and are used to destroy the strongholds of the devil. The Lord is pouring out His love on His people. His love is infectious and causes us to love Him. This brings us to the secret place of His power.

Stored Up Treasure

Psa. 31:19 Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!

"For thou art my strength." Omnipotence cuts the net which policy weaves. When we poor puny things are in the net, God is not. In the old fable the mouse set free the lion, here the lion liberates the mouse." - C. H. S.

“Heavenly mercy is not all hidden in the storehouse; in a thousand ways it has already revealed itself on behalf of those who are bold to avow their confidence in God; before their fellow men this goodness of the Lord has been displayed, that a faithless generation might stand rebuked. Overwhelming are the proofs of the Lord's favor to believers, history teems with amazing instances, and our own lives are full of prodigies of grace. We serve a good Master. Faith receives a large reward even now, but looks for her full inheritance in the future. Who would not desire to take his lot with the servants of a Master whose boundless love fills all holy minds with astonishment?” - Spurgeon

The treasures that the Lord has stored up for His sons and daughters are untraceable. They are bigger and better than we can ask or think. He has thought about everything in this life and the

one to come, He has set apart all that we could ever need. Spurgeon recognized how impossible it was to fathom or describe God's goodness revealed in His stored-up treasure. Sometimes all we can do is stand in amazement.

"Truly the life of faith is a miracle. When faith led David to his God, she set him singing at once. He does not tell us how great was God's goodness, for he could not; there are no measures which can set forth the immeasurable goodness of Jehovah, who is goodness itself. Holy amazement uses interjections where adjectives utterly fail. Notes of exclamation suit us when words of explanation are of no avail. If we cannot measure we can marvel; and though we may not calculate with accuracy, we can adore with fervency."

Now the question begging to be asked is this, who are all these blessings stored up for? Could I be possibly included in this outpouring of excessive delight? Here is the answer from William Gurnall.

"Mark the phrase "Laid up for them"; his mercy and goodness it is intended for them, as a father that lays by such a sum of money, and writes on the bag, "This is a portion for such a child." But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happiness which is in him? This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title to all this. That which makes him a child, makes him an heir. Now, faith makes him a child of God."^[SEP]Did you catch that? The faith that makes you a child makes you an heir to the riches of heaven's treasure-house. So are you a child of God? Not everyone is. There is a distinct moment in your life when that happens. John said it like this, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name".

Open your heart today and let Jesus, the greatest of all heaven's treasure, come into your life.

"Into thine hand I commit my spirit," etc. For what are the saints to commit their spirits into the hands of God by Jesus Christ?

1. That they may be safe; i.e., preserved in their passage to heaven, from all the enemies and dangers that may stand in the way. "I know," saith the apostle, "whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
2. They commit their soul into the hands of God, that they may be admitted to dwell with him, even in that presence of his where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore: where all evil is excluded, and all good present, to fill their desires, and find them matter of praise to all eternity.
3. They commit their departing spirits into the hands of God, that their bodies may be at length raised and reunited to them, and that so they may enter at last into the blessedness prepared for them that love him....
4. His known faithfulness. "Into thine hand I commit my spirit, O Lord God of truth." Into thine hand I commit my spirit, who hast been a God of truth, in performing thy promises to all thy

people that are gone before me out of this world; and hast been so to me hitherto, and, I cannot doubt, wilt continue so to the end. - Daniel Wilcox.

Discussion:

1. How important is the truth “for His name’s sake”?
2. Discuss the inheritance of the saints!
3. When we die how important is it to know what it means to commit our souls to God?