

Psalms Devotional

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21 Day Prayer & Fast



Dear Church

This devotional is to be read along with the 21 day prayer and fast that we are doing as a church from 12 August - 1 September 2019.

Fasting is an opportunity to disconnect from things that take hold of us - food is one key way, but you may also choose to fast from other things such as social media, online shopping, gaming, Netflix, etc.

We hope that this devotional on a selection of the Psalms will encourage you to dive deeper into this portion of scripture.

Finally, I just want to thank our team that put this devotional together. Thank you Ashleigh Pandya, Chan Seek Kian, John Choo, Elder Henry Tan and Elder Woon Hinswee for studying the Word and seeking the Lord so that this devotional can be a blessing to our church.

Much love,
Rhordan Wicks
Senior Pastor

About The Psalms

ψαλμοί
psalmoi

The Hebrew title of the book translates to “praises.” The word “psalm” comes from the Greek *psalmoi*, meaning “songs.” This book is also called the Psalter.



Psalms contains some of the most beautiful poetry ever written. Many people find that these verses describe human problems so well that they make excellent prayers.



As the Psalms are poems, they use poetic devices such as imagery, metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole. Believers must take these tools of language into account.



Bible scholars have categorised the Psalms into these general types of hymns: laments, praise, thanksgiving, celebrations of God’s law, wisdom, and expressions of confidence in God.



Jesus loved the Psalms. With his dying breath, he quoted Psalm 31:5 from the cross: “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*” - *Luke 23:46*



Psalms covers timeless themes, which explains why it is as relevant to God’s people today as when the songs were written thousands of years ago.

Learning The Ways Of God

Read Psalm 1

Observation

1 The Psalm starts with “*Blessed is the man*” and ends with “*The Lord watches over*” Blessedness does not mean being prosperous or being fruitful. The Scriptures point out that these are simply evidence of one’s blessedness. Blessedness means gaining favour with the Lord and having Almighty God watch over us.

2 The Psalm states the condition of this blessedness as belonging to the man “*who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.*” Who among men have not walked or stood in the way of sinners? Who among men have not mocked our Creator with our wicked ways? Thankfully, it is not the past state of our walk that counts, it is the present state of our walk that matters.

3 V2 says that a man is blessed because he delights in the ways of God and meditates on God’s ways day and night. That can only happen because the man has the same nature as God. In Christ, God has put that nature in each one of us.

Application

1 Are you anxious and restless because of your life circumstances? Perhaps it is because you have not realised your standing with God. You have no control over your situation, but God has. He can move the mountain of difficulties before you. But will He? Assuredly He has declared that He will when you turn to Him. Would you believe in the things He says in the Scriptures no matter what?

2 Are you aware of the conflict in your heart when you learn to walk in God’s ways? Do you remember, as a new believer, the struggle you faced for the simple matter of giving thanks to God for the food you eat? Walking in the ways of God may feel

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**It is not the past state of our walk that counts,
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awkward in the beginning, yet the awkwardness is an indication of change. Would you continue with God on this journey of change even if it makes you uncomfortable?

3 Are you aware of someone in your circle that faces difficulty in life and is struggling with anxiety and restlessness? Will you pray for that person and ask God to give you opportunity to point that person to God and His ways of blessedness?

✦ Response

Father God, thank you for your love and mercy. Thank you for what you have done through the Cross of Christ so I may enjoy a new lease of life. Help me not to look at my life circumstance and lose heart. Help me to turn to you always and trust in your unfailing love for me. Teach me to walk persistently in your ways even if it feels uncomfortable at first. Use me to guide others to you as I grow in your ways. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Teach Me To Remember Your Goodness

Read Psalm 13

Observation

1 David brought his complaints to God from v1-4. He laments that God had forgotten him. He cried that he had to wrestle with his thoughts and sorrows everyday, and was seeing his enemies triumphing over him for too long.

2 Isn't it astonishing to see David so transparent when he approached God? When you look carefully at his complaints, do you not agree that they were not against his enemies but against God? Was David not complaining about the apparent inaction on God's part? How strikingly similar we are in our temperament when we find ourselves in stressful situations.

3 Despite his complaints, in v5-6, David declares that he trusts in God's unfailing love and rejoices in His salvation, of how God has been good to him. In times of trouble, like David, we forget how good God has been good to us! David caught hold of himself and did not let himself get carried away with his complaining. He reminds himself of God's goodness and salvation in his past difficulties. In Psalm 30:11-12, David declares *"You turned my wailing into dancing, you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy."*

Application

1 Have you been feeling distressed and helpless because of the apparent inaction on God's part? What more can you do to get God to intervene? Learn from David and cry out unreservedly to God. You need not put on a mask when approaching God.

2 Do you remember how God has delivered you in the past? Do you have doubts that He is already at work even when the situation seemingly turns for the worse? The

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**David declares that he trusts in God's
unfailing love and rejoices in His salvation.**

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Scriptures declare that His ways are beyond tracing. He works in mysterious ways!
But He always gives us the best outcomes in the end.

3 When Jesus died on the cross, did it not seem hopeless for the disciples? In that moment did the disciples remember that Jesus had said he would rise again three days later? Did they not treat the reports of His resurrection with disbelief? Yet what an ultimate victory His death on the cross has brought forth on our behalf! Our God can certainly bring ashes to life in your situation!

✦ Response

Heavenly Father, you work in mysterious ways that are beyond tracing! When I am in dire straits, my heart forgets what you have done for me! In my distress, I forget what an awesome Father you are. Forgive me. Help me to be transparent when I approach you. Answer me when I cry out to you! Help me even to articulate my distress! But most importantly, guide me to trust in You and have faith in Your timing in every situation. I know You will always come through for me. Teach me to have trusting peace in Your presence even in the midst of raging storms! In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Seek God's Ways

Read Psalm 25

Observation

1 Again, as in most Psalms, David was crying out to God in anguish. From the number of Psalms David wrote, we know that he had his share of difficulty in life. And without fail, David knew that the way out of his difficulties was to seek salvation from the Lord.

2 But David did not seek the Lord's help just to get out of his difficulties. He sought God's ways. In v4, David wrote "*Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths*" No wonder the Scripture call David "*a man after God's heart.*"

3 V8 tells us the secret David knew, "*Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.*" Can a sinner learn to be good and upright by turning to the advice of another sinner? It is foolish to do so. The Scriptures declare that, other than God, there is not one righteous!

4 David asked in v12, "*Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord?*" The answer is clear, he is not a person that fears God's judgement but one that delights in the ways of the Lord! Such a man is blessed because God confides in him, declares David in v14!

Application

1 One way we can reflect on our spiritual life is to identify the things we put our confidence in. Where does your confidence truly lie? It could be the source of all your anguish! Is your confidence in the sum of money you make? Or in people that are close to you? These are good but are not constant and unchangeable. Learn from David to put your confidence in God who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!

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The source of these difficulties may not be your own doing, but it can certainly be turned into blessings if they help to turn your attention to the Lord.

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2 The difficulties that you face could be God’s way of getting your attention. The source of these difficulties may not be your own doing, but it can certainly be turned into blessings if they help to turn your attention to the Lord. Learn from David to seek God’s ways instead of just God’s intervention to overcome the difficulties. God is your life source, do not allow yourself to be cutoff from the source. Reading a psalm every day can be a great help in this area!

3 You can be a delight to God by delighting God. God will confide in you. Learn from David, whose *“eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare” - v15.*

 **Response**

Father God, thank you for giving us the Scriptures! Forgive me for putting my confidence elsewhere instead of in you. I want to be a delight to you as I learn to delight in you. Teach me your ways for all your ways are loving and faithful, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Give Regard To The Weak

Read Psalm 41

Observation

1 Even though this psalm of David is again one in which he cries out to God in anguish, this is a rare one in which sickness is mentioned as his main suffering. Though sickness seems to be the main concern, his plea to God includes the gleeful whispers of his enemies. Even trusted friends seemed to have abandoned David.

2 In v4, David also linked his sickness with his failings before God. He declares “*for I have sinned against you*” when he asked God to heal him. Yet again, David was able to encourage himself as he remembered how God had been good to him. In v11, he says “*I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me.*”

3 Notice also how intimately David knew God’s compassion for the weak and helpless amongst us. In v1-3, he states the basis of his plea for God to heal him, and mentioned the extent to which God will act on behalf of those “*who has regard for the weak.*” God will deliver such a person from his troubles, protect and preserve his life, bless him and shield him from his enemies. God will sustain him and restore him from his bed of sickness!

Application

1 Is chronic sickness making you feel depressed and discouraged? Let this psalm be an encouragement to you. Even David who was a man after God’s heart suffered from a vile disease (v8). Trust that God will sustain you during the sickness, and he will restore you in His time.

2 David sees his suffering in connection with his failings before God and the work of his enemies. Whether it is the former or the latter, God deals favourably with them

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**Take your sufferings to Him,
he will give you rest.**

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both on our behalf. Perhaps because of the strain of your physical suffering, you have acted unwittingly and may have given the enemies opportunity to aggravate the situation for the worse. God understands and is waiting to give you an embrace. Take your sufferings to him, he will give you rest.

³ Even in your suffering, will you remember others who may also be weak and helpless? Do what you can for them. A prayer for them goes a long way with God.

✠ Response

Father God, I thank you even for the suffering and pain I need to go through. Men may forsake me, I myself may have given up hope, but your love and mercy still remain. Thank you for your heart for the weak and helpless, help me to do what I can for them as well. You sustain us in our suffering, and you will surely deliver us and lay a table in the presence of our enemies for us. Anoint my head with oil so my cup will overflow. And I know, surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

A Repentant Heart

 **Read Psalm 51**

 **Observation**

1 When the prophet Nathan informed David of his sin, David's immediate response was, "*I have sinned against the LORD*" - *2 Samuel 12:13*. He did not deny his sin or attempt to justify himself. His humility and willingness to be corrected is an example for us to follow.

2 David models confession of sin to the Lord. He acknowledges his sin before the Lord, asks for mercy and cleansing. He pleads with the Lord for restoration and does not simply seek a way out of the consequences of his sin. He does not shift blame for his sin onto others but fully admits his responsibility.

3 David's guilt is great – lust, adultery, lies, murder (*2 Samuel 11*). Yet his hope is in a merciful God who forgives and restores. This confidence in God reflects a deep intimacy with the Lord, who has proven Himself faithful time and again in David's life.

 **Application**

1 How do you respond when you are confronted with your own sin, as David was by the prophet Nathan (*2 Samuel 12*)?

2 Examine your own habits of confessing sin: is there anything you can learn from David's example and apply to your own life?

3 Where does your hope lie? What areas in your life might you be trusting in your own strength to resist sin instead of relying on God?

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**Yet his hope is in a merciful
God who forgives and restores.**

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 **Response**

Father God, thank you for your amazing gift of forgiveness made possible by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Because of His work, I know that there is no sin beyond the reach of your mercy. Help me to be open to the correction of fellow believers, and teach me to humbly confess my sins and trust in the restoring work of your grace. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Salvation And Providence

 **Read Psalm 65**

 **Observation**

1 David praises God for many of His attributes in this Psalm. David sings praises to God, extolling His faithfulness, forgiveness, salvation, generosity in provision, creative powers and more. When we remember the character of God and the good things He has done, it is easy to sing praise to him.

2 In v5, David speaks of God answering prayers, saying, “You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds.” God often answers our prayers in unexpected and miraculous ways. We honour him when we speak of his deeds and share the story with others. This is often called a testimony in church. Testifying to God’s works is one way to thank God for his mercies.

3 V6-13 speak of God’s specific power in creation. David extols God’s power to create, bring order, and sustain the natural world for the benefit of humanity. In this picture of abundance, God is revealed as our provider.

 **Application**

1 Who in your life needs to hear about the wonderful attributes of God described in Psalm 65? What encouragement do you receive from reading this passage and how will it change your outlook today?

2 In v8, David says, “*The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.*” Is this true of your heart? What needs to change to give you a heart of praise to God?

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✠ **Response**

Father God, indeed You are an awesome God and I want my life to reflect joy in who You are. Give me eyes to see Your hand in my life and in the world, a heart that is sensitive to Your presence and will rejoice in Your work. Cause my mouth to sing praise to You in all I say and do. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Remembering His Faithfulness

Read Psalm 66

Observation

1 This psalm refers to the exodus of God's people from Egypt (v6, 10-12). The psalmist offers thanksgiving to God for parting the Red Sea in Exodus 14, which allowed the people of God to walk across on dry land and to safety from the Egyptian army pursuing them. This familiar story shows God's miraculous hand in an impossible situation.

2 The psalmist offers thanks to God in v10-12 for the suffering He allowed His people to experience. Two blessings are identified as a result of the suffering they experienced: first, they were refined; and second, they were brought into a place of abundance. In our lives we experience seasons of suffering and seasons of relative joy and peace.

3 In v18-20, the psalmist thanks God for answering his prayers. He says in v18, *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."* The principle here is that holding onto sin will hinder our relationship with God. We must be careful not to think of God as a wish-granting genie or Santa Claus and remember that we are in a relationship with the Almighty Creator. He has the power to answer our every prayer, but our relationship with Him becomes blocked when we are cherishing sin. If we refuse to let go of sin, we are telling God that our sin is more valuable to us than our relationship with Him. He may not answer our prayers in order to discipline us and convict us of our sin, and to remind us that this is a relationship.

Application

1 What can you give thanks to God for today? How does this psalm remind you of God's good works in your life?

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If we refuse to let go of sin, we are telling God that our sin is more valuable to us than our relationship with Him.

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2 How has God rescued you in the midst of impossible situations? In what impossible situation in your life today do you need to be still and trust God?

3 How will you thank God for both seasons and particularly the seasons of suffering for how God has used them to refine you?

 **Response**

Father God, thank you for your faithfulness to me over the years. I can look back on my life and see your hand of mercy, of discipline, of refining power making me into the person You want me to be. Give me a heart of thanksgiving so that I might find ways to praise You in every circumstance. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Part Of A Bigger Story

 **Read Psalm 69:16-28**

Observation

1 In supplication, we present our requests before God. David is clearly in crisis in this psalm, and this is a psalm of emotional supplication. Phrases like “*miry depths, deep waters, parched, scorned,*” suggest the emotional state David was in when he wrote this psalm. He is calling for mercy, rescue, justice, and redemption from the Lord. What is remarkable about this psalm is David’s confidence in the Lord. V16 says, “*Answer me, O Lord, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me.*”

2 In this psalm, David prophesied about Jesus’ suffering and death, specifically in v21, “*They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.*” This was fulfilled at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion in Matthew 27:48, when they gave Jesus wine vinegar to drink. David had no inkling that his words were prophetic, which reminds us that our lives are all part of a bigger story. Even more, we remember that we are blessed when we identify with Christ in His suffering (1 Peter 4:13).

Application

1 David did not hold back in his requests. Are you bold, like David, in your requests to God? Will you remember who you are in Christ, a beloved child with a gracious and generous Father?

2 How can you express David’s confidence in the Lord? How can you demonstrate faith even before He has answers your prayer?

3 How can identifying with Christ in His sufferings change the way you look at your current circumstances, and how will it change the way you ask God for help?

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Our lives are all part of a bigger story.

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✠ Response

God, teach me to have a vulnerable heart before you, that I will not hold back anything when I come before you. As I look to you for solutions, help me to have confidence that you are able to deliver me. May I ever have the cross before my eyes, and see that Jesus has indeed covered all my sins that nothing can keep me from your everlasting love and mercy. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

But As For Me (I)

 **Read Psalm 73:1-17**

Observation

1 Psalm 73 deals with one major question: Is God really good and faithful to His people? Notice that the question arises as the psalmist turns his gaze away from God's relationship with His people to "*the prosperity of the wicked*" (v3). It is only when he compares their life on earth with his own that he starts to doubt God's goodness (v13-14).

2 Read v15-17. Consider what prevents the psalmist from continuing in his doubts. Firstly, it is the knowledge that speaking of his doubts in a certain way does not just affect his own relationship with God, but also those of God's other children. When the psalmist's doubts cause him to openly give up on goodness, he describes it as a betrayal of the rest of God's people (v15). Take some time to think about why that is so.

3 Secondly, and more crucially, the psalmist "*entered the sanctuary of God*" (v17), drawing close to Him. At last, it is there in God's presence that the psalmist has his doubts dealt with.

Application

1 Reflect on moments in your life when you doubted God's goodness. Do you recall how they began? Where was your focus at those points in time? What is your focus today?

2 What does it mean to "*enter the sanctuary of God*" (v17)? How will you do that this week?

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**Teach us to enter your sanctuary each day,
that our perspective may become more like yours.**

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✠ **Response**

Father God, thank you for being good to those who are pure in heart. Forgive us when we turn our eyes away from you, and begin to think about your goodness only through the world's criteria. Teach us to enter your sanctuary each day, that our perspective may become more like yours. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

But As For Me (II)

 **Read Psalm 73:16-28**

Observation

1 In the second half of Psalm 73, the psalmist's perspective completely changes, as he begins to think about the "*final destiny*" (v17) of the people of God versus the "*wicked*" (v3,12). The goodness of God is thus framed not in terms of what He does in the here and now, but what He does in the future.

2 Read v21-22. Witness how he begins to understand the grief and bitterness he began with in the psalm as evidence of his ignorance before God. When he comes to understand God's greatness, he also starts to recognise his own smallness, especially in his doubts.

3 Now read v23-26. Is not the psalmist completely in awe of God's mercy at this point? For in spite of who the psalmist realises he is, God still "*holds him by his right hand*" (v23) and is "*the strength of his heart and his portion forever*" (v26). God is faithful to His people, preserving them to the very end, when He will finally deliver justice.

Application

1 How often do you think about God's goodness in terms of "final destiny", especially relative to what He does in the here and now? How might emphasis on the former change the way you live today?

2 Are there times in your life when you feel undeserving of God's love? How might this psalm speak to you in those circumstances? What can you do today to remind you of it?

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God is faithful to His people, preserving them to the very end, when He will finally deliver justice.

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✠ **Response**

Father God, thank you for being a solid refuge. Thank you for allowing us to declare that though our flesh and heart may fail, you are the strength of our heart and our portion forever. Give us today a renewed understanding of your goodness, that we may tell of all your deeds. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Remember

Read Psalm 77

Observation

1 Psalm 77 is written from the experience of unanswered prayer. Pay attention to the effort the psalmist makes in his pursuit of God's answers (v1-6). His prayers are not frivolous.

2 Reflect then on the questions the psalmist asks in that situation (v7-9). Are his queries not reasonable? Surely, he cannot be faulted for interpreting God's silence as His rejection or anger. See also the cry of Job 13:20-27.

3 The psalmist recovers from his doubts when he decides to remember the great acts of God in the past (v10-12), focusing on the Exodus in particular. See Exodus 13:17-14:31 for reference. Notice that two things happen as a result: (1) the psalmist identifies himself with the wider people of God; and (2) God's redemptive act to His people in history is made relevant in the present, bringing hope.

Application

1 Which of your prayers remain unanswered today? How have these affected your perception of God and your relationship with Him?

2 Presently, we have more great acts of God to look back on, as compared to the psalmist. The greatest of these is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Take some time to meditate on Matthew 26:26-30. What new meaning does it have for you today?

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God’s redemptive act to His people in history is made relevant in the present, bringing hope.

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✠ Response

Father God, thank you for being a mighty redeemer for your people. Help us to remember your deeds when we do not hear from you. Teach us to trust you in faith even when we fail to see your work in our lives. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

In The Darkness

Read Psalm 88

Observation

1 Sometimes, in the end, there is still no relief. This is the deep sadness at the heart of Psalm 88. Death and darkness are at the forefront of the psalmist's mind (v3-5, 10-12, 15-18), and he feels incredibly alone (v8, 18). He calls out to God relentlessly (v1-2, 9, 13). Yet, unlike other psalms, there is no resolution here. Spend some time to reflect on possible reasons why this psalm is included in the Bible. It is alright if you do not arrive at a definitive answer.

2 Pay attention to v10-12. In the midst of the psalmist's despair, observe that he continues to cling onto God's nature, onto his knowledge of God as someone who demonstrates His love and faithfulness while His people are alive. He may be confused about God's inaction, but he never chooses to revise his understanding of God.

3 *"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face."* - Job 13:15. Think about what Job is saying here. He will continue to trust in God even though God appears to strike him down without reason. The psalmist is of the same attitude. Their faith in God is dependent on who God is, not so much on what He does to them in the moment.

Application

1 Which of your prayers remain unanswered today? How does this psalm change your attitude towards these prayers?

2 Do you know people who are struggling with waiting for God's reply? How might you support them this week, and what would your prayer for them be?

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He may be confused about God’s inaction, but he never chooses to revise his understanding of God.

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✠ Response

Father God, we acknowledge that your ways are sometimes beyond what we can understand. O God, you know how hard it is for us to live without that understanding. Comfort us with your church and your Word in those situations, Lord. And fill us with your love that we might comfort others who need it as well. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

God, Our Dwelling Place

 **Read Psalm 90**

 **Observation**

1 Moses begins this psalm by declaring “*God has been our dwelling place in all generations*”. Ever since Abraham decided to follow God, His presence has always been with His people. God is faithful and good to us, His children; but we must never forget that He is God.

2 In v3, 5 Moses declares that our mortal bodies will all soon be returned to dust. To man, a thousand years is a very long time, but to God, it is only like a day. Thus we need to use our time wisely, for very soon, our youth will turn to old age and we need to ensure that what we do aligns with God’s plans for our life, for that is what will remain.

3 V7-12 paint a picture of a fierce and unrelenting God. But He is also gracious and a loving God. Even as Moses was writing these verses, God provided food and water daily and ensured they were clothed and enjoyed good health but they lacked one thing - a destiny to fulfil and when they die, they fade away just like grass. This is what Moses was crying out to God, “*teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*”

 **Application**

1 Like the children of Israel in the wilderness, God has been providing for all of us our daily needs. If we lack anything, all we need is to cry out to him in faith and He will supply abundantly. How do we trust God for his providence in the midst of a world that is rife with lack, greed and anger?

2 How do you respond to God’s assurance that He sees it all and will make a way?

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To man, a thousand years is a very long time, but to God, it is only like a day.

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✠ **Response**

The above call comes through the Bible in so many ways. We see it in the prayer Jesus taught us to pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name - like in Psalm 90, we acknowledge the greatness, the reality of God and praise Him.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven – This is the crux of Psalm 90 and all of the Bible, that God reigns on the earth, His will be done. Cry out “I want to be part of Your eternal plan”.

Give us this day our daily bread – “God, You will provide for all my needs just as You provided for Moses in the wilderness” and then thank Him for all He is providing.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us - this is key, walking right before God with all our sins forgiven because we repented and asked for His forgiveness.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil - God change my heart and take away all wrong motives and sinful desires from me.

God, Our Protection

📖 **Read Psalm 91**

🔍 **Observation**

1 Psalm 91 speaks confidently of the protection of God. It describes the many different situations that God will protect us from. He rescues us from traps set by our enemies (v3). Are you in a situation where someone is trying to get you into trouble? God will protect you. He will also protect you from the deadly plagues. (v6)

2 The thought of an all-encompassing protection is carried on in v9-13 which declare that *“no harm will overtake us, no disaster will come near our dwelling”*. But in these verses a new and wonderful thought is added! V11 says *“For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways”*. God does not exaggerate or lie so if He says it, He will do it.

3 What a wonderful promise! If we make God our dwelling place, God commands His angels to watch over us. It is a very comforting thought but v11-13 are never to be flaunted presumptuously. This was one of the devil’s temptations to Jesus (Matthew 4:5-7, Luke 4:9-12) where he twisted this promise of God to try to tempt Jesus to show off and to build an awestruck audience. Like Jesus, we only rest in the assurance that God has promised angels to protect us but we are never to act presumptuously.

4 In v14-16, God Himself begins to speak. These last 3 verses are spoken by God promising to protect us, rescue us, answer us in times of trouble, deliver us, honour us, give us a long and satisfying life and always show us His saving grace. Read v14-16 again and be thrilled with His promises that are yes and amen to those who love Him.

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**God does not exaggerate or lie
so if He says it, He will do it.**

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Application

1 What does it mean to dwell under the protection of the Almighty?

2 What would you do differently if you knew that God was your refuge? God says he will rescue you because you love Him. What are some areas you may need rescuing from?

Response

There is an old song called “In The Garden”. The lyrics go like this:

I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses

And He walks with me and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am his own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known

Search for the song on YouTube and sing it to Jesus. It is a lovely song. Then tell God in your own words that this is the desire of your heart, to come to that garden, that secret place to meet with Him and talk with Him.

Four Ways To Praise God

Read Psalm 92

Observation

¹ Psalm 92:1-5 declares that it is good to praise God; proclaim His love in the morning and faithfulness at night. When we do that, He is exalted, and in faith we see our enemies will be defeated. These enemies can be anything; from difficult people to difficult situations, poor health, financial problems etc. This is the result of praising and thanking God.

² V10 declares that *“You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox.”* Horn in the Bible always speaks of strength. The wild ox is probably the strongest animal in the Bible lands and God wants us to be very, very strong in our spirit, soul and body.

³ God’s intention is that we flourish. Another picture here is of a well-nourished, well-watered palm tree flourishing in the garden of God. Staying fresh, green and bearing fruit even in old age (v14) tells us that as we praise God and give Him thanks, we do not become old and cranky but stay fresh and fruitful. The key to this is to praise God with a heart of thanksgiving and joy and to practice this as a daily discipline.

Application

Psalm 92:1 and 2 begins by declaring that it is good to praise God, proclaiming His love and faithfulness in the morning and at night. God wants us to do this as a daily part of our lives. A practical way of doing this is by taking the 4 “vitamin pills” daily.

¹ Thanksgiving – begin to thank God for everything the Holy Spirit brings to mind – for the air we breathe, for a new day, for friends and family, for our church, for Pastor Rhordan, for this country where we enjoy safe, happy prosperous lives, and also for any difficulties and problems that you may have because you have the assurance that

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The key is to praise God with a heart of thanksgiving and joy and to practice this as a daily discipline.

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He will bring you through to victory.

2 Praise – Praise Him because He is good. Praise Him for His great, great love that sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins. Praise Him declaring His grace that will forgive and receive us every time we repent and come to Him. Praise Him for His kindness and generosity. Praise Him for His power and wondrous love! As led by the Holy Spirit, sing a song of praise or read a Psalm of praise and declare it to God with all your heart.

3 Contentment – then rest in God’s presence. Lay all your fears, cares, agitations at His feet, and ask the Holy Spirit to give you His peace. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recognise and accept that God knows everything about your life, and that His plans for you are good, to give you a future and a hope. Then lay everything at His feet, acknowledging that He is a God of love.

3 Faith – what are your needs? Present them to God. Ask for His help, His blessings. Ask Him for scripture verses that speak into these situations. Then declare those scripture verses into those situations.

4

✦ Response

Dear God, thank you for hearing this prayer. Thank you for lifting up my faith. I declare that my whole life is in your hands and that you have good plans and breakthroughs in store for me. Thank you for being with me, now and always. I love You and I trust You. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Bless The Lord, O Blessed!

Read Psalm 103

Observation

1 Psalm 103 begins with a call to “*Bless the Lord.*” This does not mean that we are to bestow a blessing upon God. We cannot, because He is God and He is the source of all blessings. What these opening verses are saying is that God is blessed (made happy, pleased and honoured) when we, His creatures praise Him and thank Him sincerely and wholeheartedly.

2 God’s heart is for His people to acknowledge His goodness and love. This is because as we do, we are transformed. It is to our benefit that we praise and thank God. Our mood and character are shaped by what we focus on. As we focus on the goodness and majesty and mighty power of our Creator God who loves us, instead of all the negative things around us, our souls are lifted up. We become joyful, gracious, loving people, full of faith, hope, love and joy, just like our Father God whom we adore and look to. This releases faith into our lives and releases the power of God to move in every situation.

3 David the author of the Psalm exhorts us to remember “*His benefits*”. V3 tells us that He forgives all our sins. For us today, Jesus has taken all our sins and wrong doings and nailed them to the cross! We are reminded that God not only forgives us all our sins, He also heals us of all our diseases. Healing is included in atonement! Sickness came into this world because of sin, but even as Jesus paid the price for our sins, He also redeemed us from all disease. That is why we can confidently declare that “*By His stripes we are healed!*”

4 He redeems our life from destruction. In this world we are faced with many different, difficult situations that seek to destroy our health, our finances, our relationship, our reputation, our families, but God wants to and will rescue us from all the difficult

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**Our mood and character are shaped
by what we focus on.**

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situations we are in. He is our loving and generous Father.

 **Application**

1 The command is clear, to bless and praise God. Corporate worship in church is great, but how can we live a life of praise and worship every day?

2 As we worship, God will come and meet us and pour His abundance into our lives. As we thank Him and praise Him, we enter into His presence. This is the promise of Psalm 100:4-5. Will you do this today and every day of your life?

 **Response**

There is an old song sung by Kent Henry, Karen Clark Sheard, Ron Kenoly and others that goes as follows:

Oh, the glory of Your presence
We Your temple
Give You reverence
So arise to Your rest
And be blessed by our praise
As we glory in Your embrace
As Your presence
Now fills this place

Sing this song from your heart. Let God be blessed by your praise, enter into His presence and let Him fill your heart.

God To The Rescue

📖 **Read Psalm 107**

🔍 **Observation**

1 *“Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He brings them out of their distresses.”*

This verse was repeated in four different places in Psalm 107:6,13,19,28. This remarkable psalm praises God’s deliverance in four wonderful pictures. The four stories show that each individual’s distress, yet the response of our God is consistently good.

2 In v4,10,17, the verses revealed that they were lost in the wilderness, bound in iron and afflicted by their iniquities. Interestingly enough, it also revealed that for most of the distress and crisis, they were self afflicted – caused by their own sins and disobedience.

Yet, notwithstanding the cause, the Amazing goodness and the loving kindness of God was ever present and always sufficient to lift them out of their dire situations. They were lost but found, bound but set free, afflicted but were healed. Little wonder, the Psalmist repeated their praises to Him on each occasion.

3 V8,15,21,31 - Just as God had led the people of Israel out of difficult situations, He has promised to lead us, His covenanted people, out of similar situations. Be it from the tossing storms in lives, the dangers in the wilderness, the negative words or waning faith, He will remain steadfast in love and in close fellowship by His Spirit. Indeed, this psalm advises us to be wise and learn from these situations that we may have a deeper understanding of His loving kindness!

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**He will remain steadfast in love and
in close fellowship by His Spirit.**

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Application

As you read through Psalms 107, consider if you, personally or as a family or as a church, are facing similar situations like the Psalmists? Search and see how God provide timely solutions to “bail” them out of each tough situation.

1 Consider God’s goodness, His loving kindness and His mercy in each case. Did the people of “old” do anything to deserve it? What about us, the new covenanted believers – on what basis do we gain access into His kindness and mercy?

2 The Psalmists recorded they had to call out to God in the heavens for help; but for believers in Christ, the Lord has chosen to be IN us and WITH us.

“To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” - Colossians 1:27

Stop for a moment and allow this truth to sink into our spirit: That the God of the Universe is readily IN YOU and WITH YOU to help overcome every trouble and distress that YOU may be facing now and in the future!

Response

*“You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God; I will extol you.
Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!” - Psalm 118: 28*

His Love Is Steadfast And Endures Forever

 **Read Psalm 118:1-18**

Observation

1 There are many, many qualities of God's love. The above Psalms highlighted two such qualities – steadfastness and everlasting.

2 The word “steadfast” is made up of two words, i.e. steady and fastened. As we walk the journey of life in this broken world, we WILL face trials, temptations and tumultuous times. On a certain day it maybe a relationship problem, and on another, troubled work situations or struggling with financial difficulties. Even, when seemingly riding on crests of success, there is fear of losing it at the next turn.

There is little doubt that everyone of us will need a pair of steady hands to guide us through such situations.

3 Like the Psalmists experienced, these are times that we begin to realise how His arms are steadily fastened around us to protect and to lead. He is unwavering and not bothered by the shifting circumstances. He does not go about finding a scape-goat for He is the ultimate sacrifice!

Another facet is His love is NOT just a one-off act. It is unlike the way we treat consumables these days – use once and throw away. It is everlasting, ever present and will not diminished nor fade away. His love reflects His eternal nature, and that it is from everlasting to ever lasting.

Application

1 In Psalms 118, the Psalmist declared the truth “*for his steadfast love endures forever*” for each act. What about us? Can we see the hands of God in the rebuilding of our

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**He is unwavering and not bothered by
the shifting circumstances.**

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own personal lives or the life of the church?

² God's grace and love in Christ to us is eternal - from everlasting to everlasting. It was not given just for your initial salvation but is available throughout your new life - today, tomorrow and until you meet Him. Stay with the Lord at all times, even though your situation may not look pretty at the moment.

✦ **Response**

Father God, thank you for your steadfast love already so rich in the times of the Psalmists. Thank you that it is ever lasting that we can still partake of it these days. Your love O Lord touches and changes us so deeply, enabling us to give thanks in everything. You even made it your will to ensure all your people living on earth shall do so! In response, we pray each believer can fathom your steadfast love that NEVER ceases - in whatever circumstance he/she may be in. We shall be so secured and on firm grounds that in turn, we can help with one another's problem regardless what causes it. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Preparation For Worship

📖 **Read Psalm 133**

🔍 **Observation**

1 Within the book of Psalms, there is a special collection known as the Songs of Ascent. They are also called Pilgrim Songs. The city of Jerusalem is situated on a high hill. Jews traveling to Jerusalem for one of the three main annual Jewish festivals will climb the uphill road to the city and traditionally, would sing these songs on their “ascent”.

The theme of each Song of Ascent offers much encouragement for those who seek to worship God today. It proclaimed God’s mercy, His Help, His Promises and Blessings. The Songs of Ascent continue to find a place among the many hymns and songs of worship of Jews and Christians today. That through the song, we can prepare for worship that so pleases God. The lyrics of Psalm 133 is one such example.

2 So often in our worship, we long for the presence and the blessings of God to fall upon the people. The Scriptures in v3 give us a possible clue to that :

“ For there, the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.”

It is worthwhile to take note that the Lord did not simply give but He has commanded (it’s already a standing order) that the blessings and life will come when the folks in the church body live in unity and when God can see how good and pleasant it is!

But it starts from the top! V2,3 suggest that the anointing oil upon the priestly Aaron starts from his head and flow downwards to the rest of the garments; likewise, the dew of Hermon falling upon Zion, first touches the mountains of Zion and then flow down into the plains. Certainly it is there, the unity at the head, that the Lord has commanded the blessings.

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**Blessings and life will come when
the church body live in unity.**

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Application

1 If you are a leader of the church, ministry, life group or a family please consider if unity in the Lord is a top consideration over issues like disagreement in approaches, methods or even personality issues, etc ?

2 Perhaps you have been trying to rejuvenate the slackening spiritual life and lack of blessings in your team, organisation, family - have you ever given thoughts that perhaps a lack of unity amongst your leaders could be a possible cause? Consider His words and the counsel of the Holy Spirit and put things right to become a channel of blessings for others.

Response

Father God, as your church body, teach us how to stay united in and through Christ so that the life of the church is good and pleasant in your sight. Thank you for the leaders. We pray every spiritual leader will become aware that he/she is an appointed channel of anointing, blessings and life to the rest of the flock. Give them your wisdom and understanding in upholding unity. Provide them with the daily bread of encouragement and endurance that will bring joy and patience to their tasks. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Come To Him As I Am

 **Read Psalm 139:23-24 & 142**

Observation

1 King David was the writer of 73 psalms. In it, he expresses his relationship with God, his emotions, and the complexities encountered at different phases of his life, i.e. as a shepherd boy, as a King, as a sinful man and his sufferings as a refugee. Not many can claim to have that spectrum of life experiences as him.

2 Therefore, it is not surprising that in reading his work, there is sometime huge contrasts expressed in David's thoughts, will and emotions. Yet this man is known as "*a man after God's own heart*". Perhaps, as we read the above cluster of Psalms composed by David, we can learn from him some key points in building our relationship with God.

Psalm 139 was written by David when he was crowned King of Israel whereas Psalm 142 recorded four lessons in the pit of caves when hiding from his enemies.

- He was fully aware that God knows him more than he knows himself.
- Even though he was a king, he was humble enough to ask God to search him "*and see if there be any grievous way in me*" and where necessary, to "*place him back on the right path to eternity*" and "*lead me in the way everlasting*".
- He knew that God was ever present and trusted Him – even when he was overwhelmed.
- He was transparent and direct in his prayers. He tells God exactly the situations he was in.

Application

1 Put ourselves in the shoes of David as you read each of his Psalms. Reflect on the

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**He was fully aware that God knows him
more than he knows himself.**

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kind of emotions and thoughts that he would have. Learn how he met them with his understanding and trust in God.

2 Many a time, King David recalled the past works of God in order to build up his faith to stand on the future promises of God. Do likewise and see how He has been charting your path thus far. Pray and seek His counsel for the future.

✦ Response

Father God, thank you for King David and Jesus Christ who were humans just like us relating to the SAME God as us. We see your mighty hands in their lives. Help us therefore to learn more of you from their encounters and experiences. We pray flowing from that, our faith in you will grow to add riches to our own walk with you. and on firm grounds that in turn, we can help with one another's problem regardless what causes it. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Exaltations And Praise

Read Psalm 150

Observation

1 The Psalms illuminate the greatness of our God, affirm His faithfulness to us in times of trouble, and remind us of the absolute centrality of His Word. As the Psalms present a clear picture of God lovingly guiding His people, the responses of praise and worship to God are never far from the psalmists' pens. The book of Psalms expresses worship. Throughout its many pages, Psalms encourages its readers to praise God for who He is and what He has done. It is appropriate that Psalms 146-150 is the ending series with five final songs and they are known as the Hallelujah (Praise the Lord!) Psalms.

2 Psalm 150 contains no argument, no real teaching, no real explanation. It is an eloquent, passionate cry to all creation to give Yahweh the praise due to Him. This entire Psalm can be seen as a doxology that not only closes the fifth and final volume of the collected Psalms, but also closes the entire Book of Psalms.

3 As we come to the end of the Book of Psalms in this devotional study, truly one cannot help but desire to know more the unlimited greatness and grace of this one God. He truly deserves ALL our praises unlimited. The Psalmist encourages us to praise the Lord in:

- In every place – wherever we are
- For every reason – for His mighty acts, His love, etc
- With every expression – raising our hands, on instruments, etc
- With every available breath – let everything that has breath

Indeed He give us life and as long as we are breathing. Praise the Lord!

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Praise God for who He is and what He has done.

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 **Application**

¹ If you are born again, and getting ready for His heavenly Kingdom, learn to praise Him more! *“There is no heaven, either in this world, or the world to come, for people who do not praise God. If you do not enter into the spirit and worship of heaven, how should the spirit and joy of heaven enter into you?” - Pustford, cited in Spurgeon*

 **Response**

Our Father in heaven, thank you O Lord for what you have done for us. You sent your only Son to us, giving us a new life, and a new spirit. You pour out your Holy Spirit into us and enable us to discover the manifold grace readily available to prepare us for your Kingdom.

Lord, as the church reads through your word recorded in the book of Psalms, may their minds be renewed and their spirit refreshed to praise you anytime, anywhere, and proclaiming, *“Thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”*. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.



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