

**CCBC**

**Daily Devotions in the Psalms**

# Monday 30th March - Psalm 1

Blessed is the one  
    who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
    or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
    and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
    which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
    whatever they do prospers.  
Not so the wicked!  
    They are like chaff  
    that the wind blows away.  
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
    nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.  
For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
    but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

The former principal of SMBC, David Cook, used to say that Psalm 1 tells us how to get through all that life throws at us and at the end of our days be able to sing Psalm 150 and mean it. How can we live in this broken world with all its pain and sorrow and still praise God at the end?

Psalm 1 tells us that we must delight in God's word and meditate on it day and night.

I don't know about you, but I've been prone to meditate on the news lately more than God's word. And it hasn't helped.

But Psalm 1 reminds us that those who delight in God and his word will stand firm through all that life brings. And it warns us too; those who ignore his word and walk in the way of the wicked will not stand. This Psalm doesn't promise an easy life for the righteous; it reminds us that the only way to get through the difficulties of life is to delight in the one who sustains and gives life.

So, friends, delight in God's word, because through it we meet and know the God who sustains and gives life. Delight in God's word, Jesus, knowing that He is the righteous one for us.

*Prayer: Lord God, help me to be regularly reading and meditating on your word. Help me to know you more deeply through it. Transform me more and more into the likeness of Jesus, that I may be faithful to you in all of life.*

James

## Tuesday 31st March - Psalm 2

Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord and against his anointed,  
saying,  
"Let us break their chains  
and throw off their shackles."  
The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.  
He rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,  
"I have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain."  
I will proclaim the Lord's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son;  
today I have become your father.  
Ask me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.  
You will break them with a rod of iron[b];  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."  
Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.  
Serve the Lord with fear  
and celebrate his rule with trembling.  
Kiss his son, or he will be angry  
and your way will lead to your destruction,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Skyhooks 'Horror Movie' describes our world well.

Shockin' me right outa my brain

It's bound to get ya in  
Get right under your skin  
Hit you right on the chin, oh yeah  
It's bound to be a thriller  
It's bound to be a chiller  
It's bound to be a killer, oh yeah

The nations are there on the tv, online and on the radio. They rage against God and His people and in particular King Jesus. What is our response? Do we feel overawed, anxious, angry or fearful of what is in front of us? The nations seem so strong, our world seems so powerful.

Psalm 2 levers off Psalm 1, in that the destiny of the nations (like the wicked) is sure. Our perspective feels different but God teaches us that the raging of the nations does not concern Him like it might us. Why? Because Jesus as Israel's promised king is and continues to be the true ruler of all. He is the one who stands and calls for our world to be wise and come and 'kiss the son'. Such an intimate invitation to be wise and not be fools as Psalm 1 describes.

This invitation comes for his people to come kiss, love and serve and be blessed.

What a different way to respond to the cries of our world, King Jesus still reigns come to King Jesus.

*Please, Lord Jesus, forgive me when the fear and anxiousness of my heart causes me not to come, kiss, love and serve you. When my fears lead to selfishness, pride and arrogance. Give me the joy of bowing my knee to you and please help me to know your love as you rule over my anxious heart.*

Phil

## Wednesday 1st April - Psalm 3

Lord, how many are my foes!  
How many rise up against me!  
Many are saying of me,  
"God will not deliver him."  
But you, Lord, are a shield around me,  
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.  
I call out to the Lord,  
and he answers me from his holy mountain.  
I lie down and sleep;  
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.  
I will not fear though tens of thousands  
assail me on every side.  
Arise, Lord!  
Deliver me, my God!  
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;  
break the teeth of the wicked.  
From the Lord comes deliverance.  
May your blessing be on your people.

Trials and hardships are a part of every life, and the Christian life is no different. In Psalm 3 King David describes a dire situation where he is surrounded by enemies. Things look so bad that his own people are whispering that God has abandoned him.

How does David get such peace that he can sleep with all that pressure? (v5,6)

To walk with your 'head held high' (v3) is a metaphor for healthy confidence and a clear conscience. Despite the rumours (v2), he says God lifts his head, that you oh Lord are my glory (v3).

David realises he has tended to let the approval of his people be the cause of his self-worth. But now he says God is his only glory (v3). This is enormously important for learning how to process our suffering. When something is taken from us, our suffering is real and valid, and David models genuine faith during severe persecution when he places his trust in the truth of God's character (v3 "But You Lord...").

How does God become our glory? When we, like David, rediscover God's grace. In verse 8 David declares "From the Lord comes deliverance." David realised he was saved by God's undeserved favour. When we read this Psalm in light of the cross, where Jesus quite literally is our shield (v3), against the blows that would have destroyed us, we have even more assurance.

God sustains every breath you take (v5), and this Psalm reminds us to seek refuge in God's presence. Confronting suffering in this way points the world to a Saviour who is infinitely trustworthy and valuable regardless of our circumstances.

*Father, thank you that on the Christ shielded me from the penalty for sin that we deserve. Help me to trust you more and more each day. Help me to treasure you because you are a glorious and gracious God.*

Martin

## Thursday 2nd April - Psalm 4

Answer me when I call to you,  
my righteous God.  
Give me relief from my distress;  
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.  
How long will you people turn my glory into shame?  
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?  
Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself;  
the Lord hears when I call to him.  
Tremble and do not sin;  
when you are on your beds,  
search your hearts and be silent.  
Offer the sacrifices of the righteous  
and trust in the Lord.  
Many, Lord, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?"  
Let the light of your face shine on us.  
Fill my heart with joy  
when their grain and new wine abound.  
In peace I will lie down and sleep,  
for you alone, Lord,  
make me dwell in safety.

I wonder how quick we are to pray when we are afraid, or suffering? This Psalm takes us from fear and distress to faith and joy.

It seems the writer of this psalm was struggling. There's a sense of desperation because of the evil words and actions of others. They are speaking lies about him and turning away from God. But the psalmist looks back to God's faithfulness in the past in order to trust Him today. God's past faithfulness enables him to call on God again. How much more can we look back to the cross, to God's faithfulness to us in Jesus, in order to trust him with today?

The final verses of this Psalm are incredible. The Psalmist doesn't just look to God for security, but for joy! There is a deeper joy in knowing God than there is from the biggest feast of the year. Many of the things that ordinarily bring us joy have been taken from us at the moment. But when we make God our deepest and greatest joy, no lockdown can take Him away from us.

May we know the joy and peace that only comes from God. May we look to Him and call out to Him with our fears. May we know that despite all that is going on in the world, we can enjoy the deep sleep of those who know that whilst life today may be uncertain, eternity is sure.

*Our Heavenly Father, thank you that you hear our prayers. Thank you that you are always faithful. Help us to bring our fears and sorrows to you. Help us to not be sinfully angry. Give us the peace and joy that comes from knowing that you are with us. Please help us to look to Jesus, and fill our hearts with peace and joy.*

James

## Friday 3rd April - Psalm 5

Listen to my words, Lord,  
consider my lament.  
Hear my cry for help,  
my King and my God,  
for to you I pray.  
In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice;  
in the morning I lay my requests before you  
and wait expectantly.  
For you are not a God who is pleased with  
wickedness;  
with you, evil people are not welcome.  
The arrogant cannot stand  
in your presence.  
You hate all who do wrong;  
you destroy those who tell lies.  
The bloodthirsty and deceitful  
you, Lord, detest.  
But I, by your great love,  
can come into your house;  
in reverence I bow down  
toward your holy temple.

Lead me, Lord, in your righteousness  
because of my enemies—  
make your way straight before me.  
Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;  
their heart is filled with malice.  
Their throat is an open grave;  
with their tongues they tell lies.  
Declare them guilty, O God!  
Let their intrigues be their downfall.  
Banish them for their many sins,  
for they have rebelled against you.  
But let all who take refuge in you be glad;  
let them ever sing for joy.  
Spread your protection over them,  
that those who love your name may rejoice in  
you.  
Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous;  
you surround them with your favor as with a  
shield.

I still remember my kids as toddlers waddling towards me with their arms up in the air, seeking the love and relative safety of their father. They were never taught to do this, it just came naturally to them.

In this Psalm we see David crying out to his heavenly Father. We're not told exactly what the problem was; was it Saul chasing him? Was he having to flee from his own son Absalom? Whatever it was, his response in crying out to God was good and right. So often my knee jerk reaction when facing difficulty is to try and sort it out myself and only cry out to God as a last resort.

In Matthew 18 Jesus tells us to become like little children. Part of this means to trust God as our Father, a Father who loves us, who is in control of our situation and who wants us to cry out to Him.

Notice in this Psalm that the wicked will face the consequences for their actions. Notice also in v7 that David recognizes that it's only by God's "great mercy" that he is not one of them. We too have been shown "great mercy" in that Jesus takes our sinful life and bears its' consequences; we receive His life and its' consequences. Payment for sin and a perfect life lived on our behalf.

As God's children we long for a future rest where all things will be put right. In the meantime we cry out to our Father who helps us to live with and make sense of the pain of this world in the here and now.

In these uncertain times may we cry out and cling to the only thing that doesn't move, our Rock, our Lord.

*Lord God, help us in our fears and uncertainties to run to you for safety. Help us to cry out to you and cling to you. Thank you for showing us such great mercy in Christ. Thank you that he bore the consequences of our sin and that we receive his righteousness.*