



## Daily Devotions in the Psalms

Psalm 16-19

## Monday 20th April - Psalm 16

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;

I have no good apart from you."

3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,  
in whom is all my delight.

4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;  
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out  
or take their names on my lips.

5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;  
you hold my lot.

6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;  
in the night also my heart instructs me.

8 I have set the Lord always before me;  
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;  
my flesh also dwells secure.

10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,  
or let your holy one see corruption.

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.

Have you ever had something pop into your mind that caused sudden anguish and fear? It is clear from the opening verse that David feels himself threatened. David tells us how he responds to this threat: "I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

I am surprised by his ability to rejoice and delight in God even in this stressful situation:

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;  
my flesh also dwells secure...  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Throughout the psalm David highlights the benefits flowing from his relationship with God: Security v.1,8. Providence v.6. Guidance v.7. He warns about the danger choosing other gods.v.4. Sin may bring short term please but it always results in long term misery. He seems to be leading us to he point of decision: Who will you choose? Will you choose the LORD or will you choose other gods?

We may not believe in literal gods of beauty, wealth or pleasure, but the fact remains that we must all choose to live for someone or something. David leaves us in no doubt about his decision:

"Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure." v.5.

The essence of the Christian life is to seek everlasting joy and pleasure in God.

*Lord, help us, like David, to find our delight in you.*

John

## Tuesday 21st April - Psalm 17

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry!  
Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit!

2 From your presence let my vindication come!  
Let your eyes behold the right!

3 You have tried my heart, you have visited me  
by night,  
you have tested me, and you will find nothing;  
I have purposed that my mouth will not  
transgress.

4 With regard to the works of man, by the word of  
your lips

I have avoided the ways of the violent.

5 My steps have held fast to your paths;  
my feet have not slipped.

6 I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;  
incline your ear to me; hear my words.

7 Wondrously show your steadfast love,  
O Saviour of those who seek refuge  
from their adversaries at your right hand.

8 Keep me as the apple of your eye;  
hide me in the shadow of your wings,

9 from the wicked who do me violence,  
my deadly enemies who surround me.

10 They close their hearts to pity;  
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.

11 They have now surrounded our steps;  
they set their eyes to cast us to the ground.

12 He is like a lion eager to tear,  
as a young lion lurking in ambush.

13 Arise, O Lord! Confront him, subdue him!

Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword,

14 from men by your hand, O Lord,  
from men of the world whose portion is in this  
life.

You fill their womb with treasure;  
they are satisfied with children,  
and they leave their abundance to their infants.

15 As for me, I shall behold your face in  
righteousness;

when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your  
likeness.

Songs are important as for us. They often give us words to express what is going on in our life. Do you know someone who has abandoned faith? It seems as though a light has gone out or a song that has been forgotten. Resentment, anger and pain replace the faith that once called them to live so freely. Throughout the Psalms there are people who are within Israel who have abandoned faith. These are often the ones who are described as the wicked who oppose the righteous king. But they are there, close to the writer, close to the king and the true people of God.

One of my leaders at Youth Group experienced this. Scott was once a follower of Jesus, wrote worship music, led us in prayer and communion and gave us clear reasons to believe. But in the end the light went out in following Jesus and his songs stopped singing. Scott moved from being a follower to one who opposed faith and those who believed. In this Psalm people like Scott are described in certain ways; you can see how they live in verse 4, and 10–14.

But this isn't the story of this Psalm. The Psalmist centres our attention on the voice who is innocent and dependant upon God's vindication. It is good for us to remember that this Psalm would have been sung by our Lord Jesus. These are the words which speak of His innocence and His suffering and His deliverance. As we see Jesus (who is innocent) willingly become prey to the wicked in order to save the wicked. These are the ones who are close to Him. His disciples who run away, the people who cry out crucify, those Roman soldiers who defile the One who made them.

As we read this psalm take time to consider the innocent King Jesus as He reigns and rules and the invitation for those who are wicked to bow the knee and to Kiss the Son (Psalm 2). Pray for those who like Scott stand opposed to Him.

Phil

## Wednesday 22nd April - Psalm 18:1-30

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:

I love you, O Lord, my strength.

2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,  
and I am saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death encompassed me;  
the torrents of destruction assailed me;

5 the cords of Sheol entangled me;  
the snares of death confronted me.

6 In my distress I called upon the Lord;  
to my God I cried for help.

From his temple he heard my voice,  
and my cry to him reached his ears.

7 Then the earth reeled and rocked;  
the foundations also of the mountains trembled  
and quaked, because he was angry.

8 Smoke went up from his nostrils,  
and devouring fire from his mouth;  
glowing coals flamed forth from him.

9 He bowed the heavens and came down;  
thick darkness was under his feet.

10 He rode on a cherub and flew;  
he came swiftly on the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him,  
thick clouds dark with water.

12 Out of the brightness before him  
hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds.

13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens,  
and the Most High uttered his voice,  
hailstones and coals of fire.

14 And he sent out his arrows and scattered them;  
he flashed forth lightnings and routed them.

15 Then the channels of the sea were seen,  
and the foundations of the world were laid bare  
at your rebuke, O Lord,  
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

16 He sent from on high, he took me;  
he drew me out of many waters.

17 He rescued me from my strong enemy  
and from those who hated me,  
for they were too mighty for me.

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

19 He brought me out into a broad place;  
he rescued me, because he delighted in me.

20 The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me.

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

22 For all his rules were before me,  
and his statutes I did not put away from me.

23 I was blameless before him,  
and I kept myself from my guilt.

24 So the Lord has rewarded me according to my  
righteousness,

according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

25 With the merciful you show yourself merciful;  
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;

26 with the purified you show yourself pure;  
and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.

27 For you save a humble people,  
but the haughty eyes you bring down.

28 For it is you who light my lamp;  
the Lord my God lightens my darkness.

29 For by you I can run against a troop,  
and by my God I can leap over a wall.

30 This God—his way is perfect;  
the word of the Lord proves true;  
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

31 For who is God, but the Lord?  
And who is a rock, except our God?—

32 the God who equipped me with strength  
and made my way blameless.

33 He made my feet like the feet of a deer  
and set me secure on the heights.

34 He trains my hands for war,  
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

35 You have given me the shield of your salvation,  
and your right hand supported me,  
and your gentleness made me great.

36 You gave a wide place for my steps under me,  
and my feet did not slip.

37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them,  
and did not turn back till they were consumed.

38 I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise;  
they fell under my feet.

39 For you equipped me with strength for the battle;  
you made those who rise against me sink under me.

40 You made my enemies turn their backs to me,  
and those who hated me I destroyed.

41 They cried for help, but there was none to save;  
they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them.

42 I beat them fine as dust before the wind;  
I cast them out like the mire of the streets.

43 You delivered me from strife with the people;  
you made me the head of the nations;  
people whom I had not known served me.

44 As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me;  
foreigners came cringing to me.

45 Foreigners lost heart  
and came trembling out of their fortresses.

46 The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock,  
and exalted be the God of my salvation—

47 the God who gave me vengeance  
and subdued peoples under me,

48 who rescued me from my enemies;  
yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me;

you delivered me from the man of violence.

49 For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations,  
and sing to your name.

50 Great salvation he brings to his king,  
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,  
to David and his offspring forever.

I can't imagine what it must have been like for David to live in the wilderness, on the run, as King Saul hunted him. But I do know what it's like when my worst fears haven't come to be. There's relief and tears and joy and gratefulness.

In this Psalm, David declares his love for the God who has sustained and saved him during his darkest days. And yet his days are a glimpse of the danger we all found ourselves in apart from Christ.

The Psalm reminds us that being faithful to God doesn't mean ease and comfort. David is righteous and clean before the Lord (v. 20-21, 23) and yet his life is marked by difficulty.

I want you to notice how God-centred this Psalm is. It teaches us that God saves (v. 1-18). He protected David from death and David reflects on how great God's power is to save. And yet, it should cause us to reflect; how much more does God save us in Christ? The cords of death do not entangle us because they entangled Him.

I felt confronted by v. 20 in particular. How grateful I am that the LORD does not deal with me according to my righteousness, but according to Christ's righteousness. I'm reminded that God saves the humble and humbles the proud (v. 27) and I'm reminded to repent of pride again. David had great reasons to love the LORD. But we have more. May this Psalm stir your affections and love for God. He is a refuge and saviour (v. 2); He's merciful (v. 25) and delights in His people (v. 19).

*Lord, I love you. Help me to see more and more how lovely you are. Thank you for saving me in Christ. Thank you for giving your Son for me, that I might know the joy of salvation. Please help me to love you more, and make you the foundation and centre of my life.*

James

## Thursday 23rd April - Psalm 18:31-50

We humans find all sorts of reasons to be proud, don't we? Elevating ourselves comes so naturally. Whether it be how we look, how smart we are, how we drive, the way we talk, how clean or messy our car is or how much or little meat we eat, we find ways to think highly of ourselves and poorly of others.

In the second half of this Psalm, David now looks at God's role in giving him rule of the people of Israel. It would be so easy for David to be impressed by himself and boast of his greatness. Though he does speak of his victories, he continuously acknowledges that God is his rock and sustainer (v. 31-32). God makes him secure and gives him strength (v. 32-33). God supports him and keeps him stable (v. 34-35). He gives God the credit for his salvation and all the good in his life that followed.

In 1 Corinthians 4:7, Paul says something similar when he asks the Corinthians "What do you have that you did not receive?" The truth is, if there is anything in our life worth boasting in, it is because of God's grace and mercy to us and thus our boast should be in Him. It is God's continuing steadfast love to us (v. 50) that brings every good thing into our lives.

David's total victory is clearly God's grace. And the victory we have in Christ is the same. We're forgiven freely, fully and forever. Like Paul at the end of 2 Corinthians, we should only boast in Christ.

*Lord, please forgive me of my pride. Help me to remember that every good thing I have is evidence of your grace. Thank you for the total victory won for me by Christ. Help me to walk in humility, for your glory.*

James

# Friday 24th April - Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

2 Day to day pours out speech,  
and night to night reveals knowledge.

3 There is no speech, nor are there words,  
whose voice is not heard.

4 Their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,

5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his  
chamber,

and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them,  
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure,  
making wise the simple;

8 the precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is pure,  
enlightening the eyes;

9 the fear of the Lord is clean,  
enduring forever;

the rules of the Lord are true,  
and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the honeycomb.

11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern his errors?  
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

13 Keep back your servant also  
from presumptuous sins;  
let them not have dominion over me!

Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation  
of my heart

be acceptable in your sight,

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Have you ever been looking for something and then suddenly discovered it is there, right in front of you? Psalm 19 not only tells us that we don't have to look far in order to find the revelation of God's glory, but that it is, in fact, staring us in the face.

1. God reveals himself through his Creation (vv 1-6). As soon as we look up into the sky, and watch the movement of the sun, we see the demonstration of God's power and might.

2. God reveals himself through his Word (vv 7-11). In v 7 the psalm shifts from the world of God to the word of God. These verses tell us that God's word refreshes the soul, makes wise the simple, gives joy to the heart and light to the eyes.

3. God reveals himself through his Son (v 14). The last word in this psalm is the word, redeemer. This psalm reminds us that in the fullest way, God reveals himself to us is through his Son, our Redeemer.

What is to be our response to this amazing revelation of God? In the face of God's greatness and glory the psalmist becomes aware of his human brokenness, and cries out in v 13:

"Keep back Your servant from presumptuous (deliberate, wilful) sins; Let them not rule and have control over me. Then I will be blameless (complete), And I shall be acquitted of great transgression" (Amplified)

*May the Lord reveal his greatness and my brokenness, and through the Redeemer graciously release me from the crippling power of sin.*

John