



Daily Devotions in the Psalms

Psalm 6-10

Monday 6th April - Psalm 6

1 Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.
2 Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am faint;
heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony.
3 My soul is in deep anguish.
How long, Lord, how long?
4 Turn, Lord, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.
5 Among the dead no one proclaims your name.
Who praises you from the grave?
6 I am worn out from my groaning.
All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.
7 My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.
8 Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the Lord has heard my weeping.
9 The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;
the Lord accepts my prayer.
10 All my enemies will be overwhelmed with
shame and anguish;
they will turn back and suddenly be put to
shame.

In the quiet of your room fill in the box a sin that has snared you. That weighs heavily on you

David begins his psalm with the weight of sin in his life that is like yours. He has had enough and knows the specific nature of it and its pain and ultimately consequence. This isn't what we might consider a small sin, but one that has affected his life terribly (1 – 7)

But where does his sin take him. Unlike his parents who hid in the bushes waiting for God to find them. He goes seeking after God, Help me, save me, change me. This isn't a soft cry for help, rather it is the cry of repentance. The how and why of repentance comes only because David knows who God is when He is home. But this doesn't minimise the cry, but seems to make it even more impassioned.

In verse 4 David sees God as the only one who can save, because of His unfailing love.

There is something special in the cry of David, but even more so in the response of God's love. Not just for David but also for us. Jesus becomes for us the one who demonstrated so clearly not just the love of God (Romans 5:8) but also the cry to the weak and heavy laden to come (Matthew 11:28ff). He ultimately makes the way for us to come as he cries (Matthew 27: 51 – 55). This last cry to give us the hope of resurrection.

All this for the ones who do evil. The evil of our sin in the black box that causes us to know our darkness and failures. But see the light of what we have in Jesus in this psalm. Write down the light you have both in this psalm and what you know from the rest of Scripture

Dear God our Heavenly father

Thank you for the way open for us to cry out and be heard and for what you have given me in Jesus.

Tuesday 2nd April - Psalm 7

1 Lord my God, I take refuge in you;
save and deliver me from all who pursue me,
2 or they will tear me apart like a lion
and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.
3 Lord my God, if I have done this
and there is guilt on my hands—
4 if I have repaid my ally with evil
or without cause have robbed my foe—
5 then let my enemy pursue and overtake me;
let him trample my life to the ground
and make me sleep in the dust.
6 Arise, Lord, in your anger;
rise up against the rage of my enemies.
Awake, my God; decree justice.
7 Let the assembled peoples gather around you,
while you sit enthroned over them on high.
8 Let the Lord judge the peoples.
Vindicate me, Lord, according to my righteousness,
according to my integrity, O Most High.
9 Bring to an end the violence of the wicked
and make the righteous secure—
you, the righteous God
who probes minds and hearts.
10 My shield is God Most High,
who saves the upright in heart.
11 God is a righteous judge,
a God who displays his wrath every day.
12 If he does not relent,
he will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.
13 He has prepared his deadly weapons;
he makes ready his flaming arrows.
14 Whoever is pregnant with evil
conceives trouble and gives birth to disillusionment.
15 Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out
falls into the pit they have made.
16 The trouble they cause recoils on them;
their violence comes down on their own heads.
17 I will give thanks to the Lord because of his
righteousness;
I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most
High.

What is our response when we are unjustly wronged? Sometimes there's nothing you can do to show you are innocent of an accusation. While writing Psalm 7, David was being wrongfully persecuted. David cries out to God for rescue, "Lord my God" (v1, 3), and his slanderers also want to destroy him (v2). Even though he did what he could to escape harm, he shows here his ultimate hope is already in God.

Underlying his struggle is David's belief that God is his shield and refuge, the righteous judge who searches the hearts of all people (v9). This is a comfort as David is certain he will be vindicated (8). However, it's important to notice he isn't claiming to be completely without guilt, but innocent of a particular crime (v3-5).

David wants vindication and he asks God to act (v6). When you are falsely accused it can feel like God is asleep, but the scriptures are clear that God never sleeps (Psalm 121:4). David rightly leaves retribution to God who alone knows who deserves what (v6-11). David reflects on how God's justice often works itself out in life (v14-16) - deceivers are deceived and haters are hated.

This points to Christ who is the ultimate falsely accused man. Jesus came doing nothing but good, yet he was falsely accused, hated and put to death – the most unjust act in human history. Yet Jesus handled this injustice by trusting his heavenly Father to judge, like David did.

David's responses to persecution encourage us; that because of God's righteousness, justice, and love, we can trust Him even in our darkest days. Like David's, our cries of despair can become songs of praise.

Father God, you know how I struggle with the pain of unjust accusation against me. Help me learn from Jesus how to live in your Kingdom. As we trust you in our weakness give us wisdom and strength. Father

grant that your all wise, all good, all just, all holy will would be done throughout the world, the way the angels do it joyfully in heaven, and make it a reality in each of us. Amen.

Martin

Wednesday 8th April - Psalm 8

1 Lord, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
 in the heavens.

2 Through the praise of children and infants
 you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
 to silence the foe and the avenger.

3 When I consider your heavens,
 the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
 which you have set in place,

4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
 human beings that you care for them?

5 You have made them[d] a little lower than the angels[e]
 and crowned them[f] with glory and honour.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
 you put everything under their[g] feet:

7 all flocks and herds,
 and the animals of the wild,

8 the birds in the sky,
 and the fish in the sea,
 all that swim the paths of the seas.

9 Lord, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

There's something about living in cities that makes you feel big and important. I think it's the busyness of life and the supposed 'importance' of what we get up to. We don't see the stars or the bigness of the world. But there's something about feeling small that is so healthy. A few years back I got to hike a few tracks in New Zealand. We climbed mountains that plunged into lakes and the grandeur of creation humbled me and made me feel small.

The Psalmist here has a humbling experience as he looks at creation. In it, he sees the glory of God and turns to worship. God's glory is writ large in the beauty of the world around us.

But the Psalmist also reflects on himself. He recognises the enormity of the world and how infinitely small he is. It is an amazing thing that the God who spreads his glory in the heavens cares about little ol' us.

And yet, I think the Psalmist (who is already amazed at God) would be staggered if he understood the glory to be displayed in the cross and resurrection of Christ. Not only does God care about us, he cares so much that he entered into our world and died an awful death for us.

We can really say: "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Help us today to be reminded of how small we are and to be humbled by the truth that you care deeply for each of us. Help us to believe your word and marvel at Christ.

James

Thursday 9th April - Psalm 9

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| 1 I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. | 11 Sing the praises of the Lord, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done. |
| 2 I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High. | 12 For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted. |
| 3 My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you. | 13 Lord, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death, |
| 4 For you have upheld my right and my cause,
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge. | 14 that I may declare your praises
in the gates of Daughter Zion,
and there rejoice in your salvation. |
| 5 You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. | 15 The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. |
| 6 Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished. | 16 The Lord is known by his acts of justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. |
| 7 The Lord reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment. | 17 The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God. |
| 8 He rules the world in righteousness
and judges the peoples with equity. | 18 But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish. |
| 9 The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble. | 19 Arise, Lord, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence. |
| 10 Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you. | 20 Strike them with terror, Lord;
let the nations know they are only mortal. |

If there is ever a time that the Lord lets the nations know, lets us know, that we are mortal, it is in the face of a global health pandemic. I am feeling distinctly mortal at this moment.

In this Psalm, David praises God for defending him against his enemies, for vanquishing his enemies on behalf of David and for uprooting the cities of his enemies and for blotting out all memory of their existence.

It is not a reasonable comparison to compare the enemies of God's anointed king with an indiscriminate illness, but it is entirely reasonable for us to look at the reasons for David's confidence in God, whilst he is in the middle of the crisis he finds himself in.

David reminds us that the Lord reigns forever (v7), He sits enthroned (v11), He rules as sovereign King (v8) even in times of distress (v4), the Lord sees the plight of his people (v13), He provides a refuge to the oppressed (v9), God has made himself known to us (we know His name) (v10) and He will never forsake those who seek Him (v10).

We are mortal. This moment proves it. But God is immortal, all powerful, all knowing and ever present. He loves the world, so much that he gave His only son to redeem for himself a people from every nation, if only they would seek him. When I write these words, and marvel at the God that David describes, I wonder why I do not seek Him more? I wonder even more why I don't offer my neighbours, friends and work colleagues the refuge of the God who sees their plight also.

Lord God, you alone are in control of all things. You alone reign. You see the plight and the predicament of our world. Please have mercy on us all. Please make it our hearts desire to give thanks to you in this moment also and to be a people of serious intent in declaring your name and your displayed love for all people in Jesus.

Matt

Friday 10th April - Psalm 10

1 Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?	10 His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength.
2 In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.	11 He says to himself, "God will never notice; he covers his face and never sees."
3 He boasts about the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord.	12 Arise, Lord! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless.
4 In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.	13 Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, "He won't call me to account"?
5 His ways are always prosperous; your laws are rejected by him; he sneers at all his enemies.	14 But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.
6 He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me." He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."	15 Break the arm of the wicked man; call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out.
7 His mouth is full of lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue.	16 The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.
8 He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent. His eyes watch in secret for his victims;	17 You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,
9 like a lion in cover he lies in wait. He lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.	18 defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

Have you ever looked at the world and thought that evil people seem to get good things while good people get bad things? You're not alone.

And yet the world of the Psalmist must have been far more difficult than ours. The ancient world was a brutal place where justice was often not found. Where kings ruled as they pleased. Where evil ruthlessness and oppression of the poor was normal. In many parts of our world, it is still the same.

In those moments, it would be easy to feel like God is distant, hidden and uncaring. And yet this Psalm reminds us of some very important truths.

The LORD sees the afflicted. The LORD hears the afflicted. The LORD cares about his peoples' grief. The LORD encourages the afflicted. The LORD is King forever and ever. He will call all to account.

And yet, that the Psalm is here and part of the songbook of God's people suggests that God is preparing us to pray and be faithful in the face of injustice and evil. God is inviting us to call out to Him and trust Him, even when he seems far off and hidden; he's giving us holy words of complaint.

Maybe you're feeling the sting of injustice. Maybe you feel like God is far off and hidden. This Psalm reminds us that he isn't. And as we look at the cross, we remember that the Father stood far off from Christ for us, so that we would never be forsaken. Christ understands how you feel, which means you can call out to Him and know he understands and cares and will, one day, make all things right.

Lord, help me to continue to trust you and call out to you, even when you seem distant or hidden. Thank you that because Jesus was forsaken, I can be sure that you will never leave or forsake me. Please bring justice where it is most needed. Please hear the prayers of your people in need and act. Help us to persevere in trusting you.

James