



## Daily Devotions in the Psalms

**Psalm 25-29**

# Monday 4th May - Psalm 25

In you, Lord my God,  
I put my trust.  
2 I trust in you;  
do not let me be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.  
3 No one who hopes in you  
will ever be put to shame,  
but shame will come on those  
who are treacherous without cause.  
4 Show me your ways, Lord,  
teach me your paths.  
5 Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Saviour,  
and my hope is in you all day long.  
6 Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,  
for they are from of old.  
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth  
and my rebellious ways;  
according to your love remember me,  
for you, Lord, are good.  
8 Good and upright is the Lord;  
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.  
9 He guides the humble in what is right  
and teaches them his way.  
10 All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful  
toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

11 For the sake of your name, Lord,  
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.  
12 Who, then, are those who fear the Lord?  
He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.  
13 They will spend their days in prosperity,  
and their descendants will inherit the land.  
14 The Lord confides in those who fear him;  
he makes his covenant known to them.  
15 My eyes are ever on the Lord,  
for only he will release my feet from the snare.  
16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.  
17 Relieve the troubles of my heart  
and free me from my anguish.  
18 Look on my affliction and my distress  
and take away all my sins.  
19 See how numerous are my enemies  
and how fiercely they hate me!  
20 Guard my life and rescue me;  
do not let me be put to shame,  
for I take refuge in you.  
21 May integrity and uprightness protect me,  
because my hope, Lord, is in you.  
22 Deliver Israel, O God,  
from all their troubles!

I wonder what you do when you know that you've sinned and you feel guilty about it?

Some of us tend to run from God. We feel our unworthiness and guilt deeply and so we don't pray or confess because we think God won't accept us. Others of us may have a tendency to minimise our sin; we tell ourselves that God is forgiving and so it's no big deal. Both of these responses cause further harm because both deny an aspect of the gospel.

Running away says that God's grace and mercy isn't big enough for my sin, which is to deny the work of Christ on the cross. And minimising sin is to say that sin, and therefore the cross, is no big deal. Both responses call God a liar.

Psalm 25 helps us to avoid both these errors. It seems this Psalm was written by David later in his life (v. 7), perhaps during the time when Absalom staged a coup. The Psalm is a mixture of prayer directed towards God (v. 1-7, 11, 16-22) and meditation on God's character (v. 8-10, 12-15).

David doesn't shy away from the reality or nature of his sin; he recognises his guilt and shame, even saying that his "iniquity is great" (v. 7, 11, 16-19). He confesses and asks for forgiveness. He runs towards God rather than away; he remembers God's "great mercy and love" (v. 6).

Let me encourage you to read over this Psalm more than once. Pray and meditate like David. Let David's words remind you of the mercy and love of God, which he only glimpsed. We get to see God's goodness in the cross in full.

*Lord, my hope is in you. Help me to run to you in repentance when I sin. Teach me your ways and help me to be faithful to you. Thank you for your mercy and love shown to me in Jesus.*

James

## Tuesday 5th May - Psalm 26

Vindicate me, Lord,  
for I have led a blameless life;  
I have trusted in the Lord  
and have not faltered.  
2 Test me, Lord, and try me,  
examine my heart and my mind;  
3 for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love  
and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.  
4 I do not sit with the deceitful,  
nor do I associate with hypocrites.  
5 I abhor the assembly of evildoers  
and refuse to sit with the wicked.  
6 I wash my hands in innocence,  
and go about your altar, Lord,  
7 proclaiming aloud your praise  
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.  
8 Lord, I love the house where you live,  
the place where your glory dwells.  
9 Do not take away my soul along with sinners,  
my life with those who are bloodthirsty,  
10 in whose hands are wicked schemes,  
whose right hands are full of bribes.  
11 I lead a blameless life;  
deliver me and be merciful to me.  
12 My feet stand on level ground;  
in the great congregation I will praise the Lord.

David has been charged falsely by his enemies and cries out asking God to "judge". It's a prayer for "vindication" and he is looking forward to being redeemed so he will be able to stand on a level place in the congregation to bless God (vv. 11-12). David has a claim on God's favour, since he has walked with integrity, shunned the assembly of the wicked, worshipped God in purity, and loved Yahweh's house (vv. 1-8).

It's a mark of integrity that David invites God to examine him and is more concerned about God's opinion of the situation. How often do we prefer to ask our friends to defend us or try to change the opinions of our enemies? God looks for integrity in public and private. From blood doping in professional sports to principles manipulating test scores - Integrity is in short supply today. Psalm 15 and 24 ask the question of who is blameless and can dwell with God?

If we read this without Christ, we load a heavy burden onto our shoulders which will not bring anyone closer to God. Jesus is the true man of integrity the only man to live up to Psalm 26 and fulfil it completely. He had nothing to hide, nothing in common with the wicked and God tested him at the cross and found him blameless! If this Jesus is your saviour, then you can stand on firm ground with him - as your life is joined to his.

*Father God, it's easy for us to forget we are great sinners who have been saved by a great saviour. Father we confess that so often the opinions of others matter too much to us, instead of your opinion. Help us to remember how on the cross Jesus made himself of no reputation for us. The more we thank you and rejoice in that, the less we need to worry about our own reputation. We ask that the Spirit of Jesus, would strengthen our godly resolve. Amen.*

Martin

## Wednesday 6th May - Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked advance against me  
to devour me,

it is my enemies and my foes  
who will stumble and fall.

3 Though an army besiege me,  
my heart will not fear;  
though war break out against me,  
even then I will be confident.

4 One thing I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek him in his temple.

5 For in the day of trouble  
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;  
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent  
and set me high upon a rock.

6 Then my head will be exalted  
above the enemies who surround me;

at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make music to the Lord. 7 Hear my  
voice when I call, Lord;

be merciful to me and answer me.

8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"  
Your face, Lord, I will seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me,  
do not turn your servant away in anger;  
you have been my helper.

Do not reject me or forsake me,  
God my Saviour.

10 Though my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will receive me.

11 Teach me your way, Lord;  
lead me in a straight path  
because of my oppressors.

12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,  
for false witnesses rise up against me,  
spouting malicious accusations.

13 I remain confident of this:  
I will see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord;  
be strong and take heart  
and wait for the Lord.

This Psalm seems to me to sum up the breadth of experiences of the Christian life, both from start to finish as well particular seasons that we experience. It is difficult to know exactly when David wrote this Psalm, but it seems likely that he wrote it either while he was on the run from King Saul, or as he reflected on that experience.

He begins by expressing confidence in God despite all the difficulties of his life (v. 1-3). Yahweh is his stronghold. His faith in God helps him to not be afraid. And so it does with us! The more we fix our eyes on Him who holds us, the less our fears grip us.

He speaks of his desire and longing for God's temple and presence (v. 4). How amazing that we don't have to go to the temple, but because of Christ, we are the temple; both individually and corporately. And this desire for God moves David to joyful sacrifice (v. 6) and a desire for obedience (v. 11).

It might be easy to assume that David spent his days in a state of spiritual ecstasy, but that is not the case. The prayer for God to hear him and sustain him (v. 7), and the call for us to "Wait for the Lord" (v. 14) remind us that perseverance is a central part of the Christian life.

I love this Psalm. It reminds me that joy and obedience are possible in seasons of severe difficulty. It reminds me that life following Jesus requires perseverance. It reminds me that sacrifice and obedience are meant to flow out of the joy I have in God, rather than a sense of dull duty or a desire to protect my reputation. I want to have the same heart and need God to do a work in me to make it happen.

*Lord, help me to trust in you, delight in you, obey you and persevere in all these things in every season of life.*

James

## Thursday 7th May - Psalm 28

To you, Lord, I call;  
you are my Rock,  
do not turn a deaf ear to me.  
For if you remain silent,  
I will be like those who go down to the pit.  
2 Hear my cry for mercy  
as I call to you for help,  
as I lift up my hands  
toward your Most Holy Place.  
3 Do not drag me away with the wicked,  
with those who do evil,  
who speak cordially with their neighbours  
but harbour malice in their hearts.  
4 Repay them for their deeds  
and for their evil work;  
repay them for what their hands have done  
and bring back on them what they deserve.  
5 Because they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord  
and what his hands have done,  
he will tear them down  
and never build them up again.  
6 Praise be to the Lord,  
for he has heard my cry for mercy.  
7 The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.  
My heart leaps for joy,  
and with my song I praise him.  
8 The Lord is the strength of his people,  
a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.  
9 Save your people and bless your inheritance;  
be their shepherd and carry them forever.

We spent a lot of time listening to the radio when we were growing up in Canberra. I remember hearing these words the first time when I was eight years old:

*When I was younger so much younger than today  
I never needed anybody's help in any way  
But now these days are gone I'm not so self assured  
Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the doors  
Help me if you can, I'm feeling down  
And I do appreciate you being round  
Help me get my feet back on the ground*

And then John Lennon, (one of the Beatles and the singer of this song) reached into his falsetto voice in the last line and said: *Won't you please, please help me?"*

Have you ever been singing in falsetto, and nobody heard you? Even though Paul McCartney helped John Lennon write the song, he didn't realise John was struggling. This song was a genuine cry for help.

In a 1971 interview with Rolling Stone, Lennon said this was one of his favourite Beatles records, because he was communicating his deepest true feelings. John said: "I meant it - it's real. It was just me singing 'Help' and I meant it."

Psalm 28 opens with David expressing his true feelings about his desperate situation:

*To you, O Lord, I call  
my rock, do not refuse to hear me  
for if you are silent to me  
I shall be like those who go down to the Pit  
Hear the voice of my supplication  
as I cry to you for help*

There is something far more insidious and dangerous than COVID-19. David fears being undermined and dragged away with the wicked. He cries out, HELP, don't let me be swept away!

There is a remarkable turnaround in this psalm. What must have happened for David to turn his cry for help into a wonderful prayer of confidence in God. 28: 6-7.

*Blessed be the Lord,  
for he has heard the sound of my pleadings.  
The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
in him my heart trusts;  
so I am helped, and my heart exults  
and with my song I give thanks to him*

Think of those who are singing in falsetto right now. Pray for God to do it again, to do it today, to do it in their lives: May he hear their cry for help and turn their life around.

John

## Friday 8th May - Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.  
2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
worship the Lord in the splendour of his[a] holiness.  
3 The voice of the Lord is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.  
4 The voice of the Lord is powerful;  
the voice of the Lord is majestic.  
5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;  
the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.  
6 He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,  
Sirion like a young wild ox.  
7 The voice of the Lord strikes  
with flashes of lightning.  
8 The voice of the Lord shakes the desert;  
the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.  
9 The voice of the Lord twists the oaks  
and strips the forests bare.  
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"  
10 The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
the Lord is enthroned as King forever.  
11 The Lord gives strength to his people;  
the Lord blesses his people with peace.



Picture Credit: Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen – Animal Tales: Favourite Stories About Jesus

I have incredibly vivid memories of our children acting out the part of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4 as we read to them from a fantastic kids book Animal Tales: Favourite Stories about Jesus by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen.

Standing on the end of the bed in their pyjamas, staring unflinchingly at an imaginary squall and

*"then stretching out his hand he shouts into the wind. His voice is firm and strong and very, very loud.*

***'Peace!' he shouts. 'Be still'.***

*And straight away the storm does what he tells it to!  
The wind dies down, the thunder stops, the sea is calm and....all... is.... Still!*

*Can you believe it? The wind, the lightning, thunder, waves and rain all stop!*

*What kind of man is that?"*

Breathless, like the now exhausted tempest, our kids would sink into their pillows, safe from the storm for one... more... night. Safe because Jesus spoke into chaos and brought it under his absolute control.

In Psalm 29, David breathlessly recounts the power of the voice of the Lord which is over the waters and calms their might, a voice which shatters the mighty cedars of Lebanon into splinters. It's a voice, David tells

us, that strikes with immediacy like flashes of lightning. It shakes the expanse of the desert and twists mighty oaks while stripping the forests bare. It's a voice we should feel shaking us to our core.

What kind of man is that? What kind of God is that?

The Lord is the kind of God that when his power is observed causes the Temple inhabitants to cry "Glory"!

And so David calls us to worship! Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to him the glory due his name, worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness. And so we should do that without delay or hesitation.

But David gives us further reason to worship the Lord. We should worship him not because of his power alone, but that his power comes from his eternal Kingship. He is strong because he is King, he is not king because he is strong.

But then the warning in v10! He is King even over the flood, the tide of judgement over all the world. It's a warning that tells us that he can speak, world covering floods, into existence.

So where is our refuge if he is mighty and King over all creation and has the power to drown it? David, the king, tells us that his refuge and our refuge is in the King of heaven because the Lord gives strength to his people and he blesses them with peace.

Are we His people? Are you his person? Only an answer of YES will allow us to sink breathlessly into the refuge of God for all eternity, because only he is enthroned forever!

Matt