



Daily Devotions in the Psalms

Psalm 89-93

Monday 3rd August - Psalm 89

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.

2 I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven
itself.

3 You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,

4 'I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations.'"

5 The heavens praise your wonders, Lord,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

6 For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord?
Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings?

7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.

8 Who is like you, Lord God Almighty?
You, Lord, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds
you.

9 You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.

10 You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;
with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.

11 The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it.

12 You created the north and the south;
Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name.

13 Your arm is endowed with power;
your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.

14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your
throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.

15 Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,
who walk in the light of your presence, Lord.

16 They rejoice in your name all day long;
they celebrate your righteousness.

17 For you are their glory and strength,
and by your favour you exalt our horn.

18 Indeed, our shield belongs to the Lord,
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

19 Once you spoke in a vision,
to your faithful people you said:
"I have bestowed strength on a warrior;
I have raised up a young man from among the people.

20 I have found David my servant;
with my sacred oil I have anointed him.

21 My hand will sustain him;
surely my arm will strengthen him.

22 The enemy will not get the better of him;
the wicked will not oppress him.

23 I will crush his foes before him
and strike down his adversaries.

24 My faithful love will be with him,
and through my name his horn[f] will be exalted.

25 I will set his hand over the sea,
his right hand over the rivers.

26 He will call out to me, 'You are my Father,
my God, the Rock my Saviour.'

27 And I will appoint him to be my firstborn,
the most exalted of the kings of the earth.

28 I will maintain my love to him forever,
and my covenant with him will never fail.

29 I will establish his line forever,
his throne as long as the heavens endure.

30 "If his sons forsake my law
and do not follow my statutes,

31 if they violate my decrees
and fail to keep my commands,

32 I will punish their sin with the rod,
their iniquity with flogging;

33 but I will not take my love from him,
nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.

34 I will not violate my covenant
or alter what my lips have uttered.

35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—
and I will not lie to David—

36 that his line will continue forever
and his throne endure before me like the sun;

37 it will be established forever like the moon,
the faithful witness in the sky."

38 But you have rejected, you have spurned,
you have been very angry with your anointed one.

39 You have renounced the covenant with your servant
and have defiled his crown in the dust.

40 You have broken through all his walls
and reduced his strongholds to ruins.

41 All who pass by have plundered him;
he has become the scorn of his neighbours.

42 You have exalted the right hand of his foes;
you have made all his enemies rejoice.

43 Indeed, you have turned back the edge of his sword
and have not supported him in battle.

44 You have put an end to his splendour
and cast his throne to the ground.

45 You have cut short the days of his youth;
you have covered him with a mantle of shame.

46 How long, Lord? Will you hide yourself forever?
How long will your wrath burn like fire?

47 Remember how fleeting is my life.
For what futility you have created all humanity!

48 Who can live and not see death,
or who can escape the power of the grave?

49 Lord, where is your former great love,
which in your faithfulness you swore to David?

50 Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked,
how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations,

51 the taunts with which your enemies, Lord, have mocked,
with which they have mocked every step of your
anointed one.

52 Praise be to the Lord forever!
Amen and Amen.

Psalm 89 feels a little bit like a movie with a huge twist that throws everything you thought you knew into question. And the change of mood and direction in v. 38 is so sudden and unexpected it almost gives you whiplash. What is going on?

The first part of the Psalm focuses on God's covenant with David and His sovereign control over creation. God is praised for his rule over the sea and the monsters within (Rahab in v. 10 is an example of that - it is not referring to the Rahab of Jericho from Joshua). But even more focus is given to God's faithfulness and righteousness that is particularly expressed in His covenant with David.

In 2 Samuel 7, God promised to build David a house, a dynasty, that would last forever. And this Psalm picks up on the fact the God's love for David is that of a Father (v. 26-27). It is a love and faithfulness that will last forever (v. 37).

And then v. 38 comes crashing in and seems to blow it all up. It speaks of God renouncing the everlasting covenant and rejecting his people. Quite a jolt, huh?

I don't think this is a mistake or error. So often in life it seems very difficult to see how God's promises fit with the reality we find ourselves in. We don't know how to make sense of things. We question what God is doing.

This Psalm encourages us to remember God's promises and cling to them, especially when it seems like all is falling apart. It also encourages us to call out to God honestly, to cry out to Him and calling upon him to be merciful and gracious.

This side of the cross, we can see God's faithfulness. Though the throne of Jerusalem was unoccupied after the exile, never to be taken up again by one of David's sons, THE Son of David was enthroned on the cross. And he rules forever. His kingdom will never end. And if you trust in Him, you too belong to His Kingdom.

All of which means, keep remembering the promises of God and clinging to them, even when all seems hopeless. The King of Kings is on His throne. He rules. He loves you. Keep trusting and praising Him even when all seems hopeless.

We praise you, Jesus, because you are the King of Kings and you rule forever. We thank you, Father, for your faithfulness to your promises. Please help us to remember and cling to your promises, even when it seems like they will come to nothing. Please give us faith to trust you and persevere. Amen.

James

Tuesday 4th August - Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.
2 Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
3 You turn people back to dust,
saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."
4 A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.
5 Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
they are like the new grass of the morning:
6 In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and withered.
7 We are consumed by your anger
and terrified by your indignation.
8 You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.
9 All our days pass away under your wrath;
we finish our years with a moan.
10 Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures;
yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow,
for they quickly pass, and we fly away.
11 If only we knew the power of your anger!
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due.
12 Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
13 Relent, Lord! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your servants.
14 Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.
15 Make us glad for as many days as you have
afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.
16 May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendour to their children.
17 May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

This beautifully moving and realistic psalm confronts our human insecurities, and invites us to receive God's gift of grace and strength. I love these words in v.12: "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

1. I think that recognising that our days are numbered means acknowledging the unnumbered days of God v. 1-2. God alone is permanent and enduring. The eternal sweep of the life of God is from "everlasting to everlasting." v.2. Within this panorama of life and eternity we have a fixed address: He is our "dwelling place." v.1. Therefore, true and lasting security can only be found in him.

2. I think that recognising that our days are numbered means acknowledging the transitory nature of our own lives v. 3-6. God is eternal, our lives are passing. God's days are without end, but our days are numbered. This year we have received a very stark reminder of how transient and uncertain life can be.

3. I think that recognising that our days are numbered means acknowledging the righteous anger of God v. 7-15. Notice that the psalm is titled a Prayer of Moses. No situation suits the psalm so well as that of Moses during his years in the wilderness. For 40 years Moses was confronted with the grim reality of the anger of God against sin, and watched sadly as a generation of Israel's sons and daughters were swept away.

4. I think that recognising that our days are numbered means acknowledging the "Lord" as the source of all our blessings v. 16-17. The psalm begins with an affirmation that God is our "dwelling place." It ends with a prayer that he will come upon his people with "splendour" and "favour." Only he is able to fulfil his righteous purpose and establish the work of our hands.

Father God, we are confronted by the stark realities presented in this psalm. Thank you for your promise of healing and forgiveness. Convince us in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that the Gospel of Jesus is true. Open our eyes. Heal our hearts. Help us to walk in the freedom of v.16-17.

John

Wednesday 5th August - Psalm 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my
fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."
3 Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
4 He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
5 You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
8 You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your dwelling,
10 no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
12 they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
14 "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue
him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
15 He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honour him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

Does the Bible have any contradictions? This is a question that many who stand opposed to Christian faith would resoundingly say yes too. But there are often explanations that provide an answer.

But a tougher question would be: does the Bible contradict the experience of life? And I think this psalm does just that. It takes the experience of life with all its hardest edges and says that the covenant God of Israel will make all of these edges soften and even go away. Take time and read this great psalm again. How then do I make sense of these verses in the face of sickness, deadly disease, the violence of war and a lack of honour? What is the answer? Who is the answer?

Verse 1 reveals that God's plan and purpose for our lives is to find shelter and rest in Him. We know this is true in that Jesus is the one person who will and does save. Jesus, as the promised King will save us from the hard edges, not by eliminating them but through experiencing them. See how this is reflected by the psalmist; he has experienced these pains. See how they aren't removed, rather the righteous in the psalm will pass through them.

So then how can I be one of the righteous? Psalm 1 and 2 help here. But as we read this psalm it is the righteous who are divided away from the wicked. For the righteous, the promise is a glorious and incredible salvation.

But who are the righteous? Those who love God, who do find their shelter fully in Him, who are dependant upon the salvation of God. Who in the OT did this fully? No one did! Not even King David. But we know the promised King will exemplify these things. But what does Jesus do? He rebukes Satan when he quotes 11 – 12. He exposes Himself to pain and suffering, not to protection. Why? Because He is one of us and suffers along with us and it is through this suffering that Jesus is protected, that he is safe and so also are we. Take some time to think through these verses again and see how they contradict the experience of your life and how they are fulfilled in your life because of what Jesus has done.

The Old carol 'It came upon a midnight clear has this verse
And ye, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low
Who toil along the climbing way,
With painful steps and slow
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing
Oh rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing!

Read again the psalm and hear the psalm sing.

Phil

Thursday 6th August - Psalm 92

It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,
2 proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
3 to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.
4 For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
5 How great are your works, Lord,
how profound your thoughts!
6 Senseless people do not know,
fools do not understand,
7 that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be destroyed forever.
8 But you, Lord, are forever exalted.

9 For surely your enemies, Lord,
surely your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.
10 You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox;
fine oils have been poured on me.
11 My eyes have seen the defeat of my
adversaries;
my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.
12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
13 planted in the house of the Lord,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
15 proclaiming, "The Lord is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in
him."

According to the title, this psalm was written for use on the Sabbath day. Gathering together for Sunday worship is something we have dearly missed in recent months.

This psalm captures the joy of gathering together as believers v.1-4. It delights our hearts and it delights the heart of God.

As we gather together and study God's word our thinking begins to change. We start to view life from God's perspective. We learn things we did not know, and come to comprehend things that formerly were incomprehensible to us. The old thinking starts to disappear. Our spiritual eyes are opened, not only to profound spiritual concepts, but to the exaltedness of God v.8. God is the supreme ruler of the universe, he is always in control.

There are those who are unaware of this - the spiritually blind of v.6.

The psalmist says God's people don't need to puzzle over why things go wrong for believers, or why the wicked prosper. As a young wild ox grows and increases in strength, so God shall endow his people with strength. As magnificent trees spread out their branches and flourish, so the righteous will be strong and fruitful. As a house that is built on rock is safe, so God's people shall be secure proclaiming, "The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

Father God, thank you for the promises you make for a relationship with you that will never end, but will last for eternity. So move our hearts to hear and receive the truth of the psalm. Thank you for providing a Rock of security for our salvation through the person of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

John

Friday 7th August - Psalm 93

The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with
strength;

indeed, the world is established, firm and
secure.

2 Your throne was established long ago;
you are from all eternity.

3 The seas have lifted up, Lord,
the seas have lifted up their voice;
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.

4 Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea—
the Lord on high is mighty.

5 Your statutes, Lord, stand firm;
holiness adorns your house
for endless days.

In the ancient world, the sea was a place of chaos and uncertainty. With no long term weather forecasting, no Bureau of Meteorology app, heading out into the sea was dangerous.

I've felt the power of the seas in miniature plenty of times. I've been picked up and tossed around and dumped! But I've never been out on a boat in high seas. I've never looked up at 5 metre swell and feared that I was about to met my Maker.

Psalm 93 reminds us that the Lord reigns, even over the most chaotic and dangerous thing. In fact, the seas lift up their voice in praise of the Lord., because he is "mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea".

Notice also the time of God's reign. He reigns now (v. 1). His reign has always existed (v. 2); never has there been a competitor the throne. There is no collection of powers who fought it out for power and used humans in their purposes such as in Greek mythology. There has only been Yahweh. And God's reign will continue unthreatened forever, "for endless days" (v. 5).

All of this means, God reigns. He reigns over all. He reigns over the chaos of our world. He reigns over the chaos of our lives. As so much is uncertain, God's reign is certain. Even the seas, marked by chaos, praise God for his rule and reign.

I struggle when there is a lack of routine and structure in my life. I struggle with chaos and uncertainty. I've found these last few months to be especially challenging. I'm sure many of us have felt the same. Let this Psalm remind you, as it has reminded me, that God reigns. Remind yourself regularly of that truth. Rest in it - if God controls the chaotic seas then he also controls the chaos of life in this world. He is armed with strength (v. 1) and so the challenges of life are not there because He is weak or unable, but because He is working out His good purposes.

And even though it is hard, don't just rest in the truth of His reign, praise Him for it. We know that the Lord Jesus is seated in glory; we know he reigns. And through the cross, where it appeared that evil and chaos and death reigned, God brought about salvation and life. And He continues to do the same today.

James