

Lessons from Psalms

The book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible. Psalms are poems that can either be sung as songs or spoken as prayers by individuals or groups. There are 150 psalms in this book, and many of them list King David as their author. They were collected over a long period of time and became a very important part of the worship of the people of Israel

Some of the psalms tell the music leader what instruments should be used and what tunes should be followed, for example, look at Psalm 4 and Psalm 45.

Many of the Bible's main ideas are echoed in the Psalms: praise, thankfulness, faith, hope, sorrow for sin, God's loyalty and help. And at the heart of all the Psalms, there is a deep trust in God. The writers of the psalms always express their true feelings, whether they are praising God for his blessings or complaining in times of trouble.

In ancient Israel, the psalms were used in several different ways: (1) to praise God, as in Psalm 105; (2) to express sorrow, as in Psalm 13; (3) to teach, as in Psalm 1; (4) to honor Israel's king and pray for fairness in his rule, as in Psalm 72; (5) to tell of God's power over all creation, as in Psalm 47; (6) to show love for Jerusalem, as in Psalm 122; and (7) to celebrate festivals, as in Psalm 126. Of course, many of the Psalms could be used for more than one purpose.

Jesus used the psalms when he preached and taught, and they were often quoted by the writers of the New Testament. The earliest Christians also used the psalms in worship, teaching, and telling others the good news about what God has done through Jesus Christ. A verse from Psalm 118, for example, is directly referred to six times in the New Testament:

The stone that the builders tossed aside
has now become the most important stone. (118.22)

Here are 33 Lessons from the Book of Psalms

Respect for God

1 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 2.11

The love of a friendship, a romance, or a marriage has to contain a strong element of respect. Let the respect disappear from one of these love relationships, and it will cool and disappear.

When we love God, our respect for him is different from our respect for anyone else. His power, his holiness, and his endless compassion produce a respect that has to be called reverence. We must admire God's mercy, power, glory, and holiness.

Don't let anything in your life cause you to lose your reverence for the love God has shown you. Lose the reverence, and in time you will lose your love for God.

The Cry of Suffering

2 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 6.4-10

Have you ever felt this kind of intense pain - pain so deep that it physically wears you out? Has a situation broken you physically or distressed you mentally, making you cry out for relief?

Take heart, for God, is with you. He hears your cry and he will come to your rescue. You may not be completely released from your suffering, but you will become an example to those around you of God's sustaining power.

The Lord Is a Kind Ruler

3 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 10.16-18

God is the only everlasting ruler, and his kind intentions will finally come about in the new creation that he had planned (see Revelation 21 and 22). now, human disobedience is the cause of the widespread suffering we hear about and sometimes even experience ourselves.

Often, we can't see God's answer to these situations, but that does not mean that he is ignoring human suffering. God works according to his timetable, not ours. The answer will come in time, and our sad and difficult times will be gone forever. In the meantime, God does give us hope based on his past faithfulness to his people.

The Lord's Perfect Law

4 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 19.7, 8

What a wonderful world it would be if we all knew what David misunderstood so well! David doesn't say that he himself is perfect, and none of us could make that claim either. Only God and his law are perfect.

If we could live by the Lord's perfect Law, imagine how happy we would be. We can begin where David begins - by delighting in the beautiful perfection of the Lord's law.

Jesus was that Law in human flesh. We should think about his perfection and the beauty of his words and works. Then we will begin loving what Jesus loved, seeking to do the things he did, and becoming more like him. We become what we admire.

Deserted by God?

5 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 22.1

No other words in the Bible capture the sense of abandonment we all feel at some point better than these. They are not an immature complaint of "Why don't I have more money," or "Why can't I be happy?" Instead, they are a cry from the very depth of our being- " Why have you deserted me?"

Jesus shouted these words at god when he hung on the cross centuries after they were written (Mathew 27.46)

So can we. God doesn't mind honest anguish and doubt. What he wants from us when we experience great pain is for us to hand that pain to him - even if we feel like God isn't there.

Our Shepherd Friend

6 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 23.1-6

This song in Psalm 23 mends our broken hearts after reading Psalm 22, though that psalm is an important part of God's message to us.

As Christians, we can consider it an honor to be a partner with Christ in his suffering. But afterward, it is comforting to "rest in fields of green grass," and to be led to "streams of peaceful water."

our shepherd - Jesus - leads us and refreshes our lives. We are given the wonderful promise: "I will live forever in your house."

The Storms of Life

7 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 29.3-9

Through the centuries, people have responded to God in the beauties of nature. The smouldering glory of a sunset, the delicacy of a rose, and the chuckle of a crystal brook dancing over rocks leave many in awe of God's power.

But what should we think about the brutal force of hurricane winds, splintering everything in their path? Timid souls run and hide from God's power. Those with the courage of the psalmist watch the lightning split the night, and marvel that such a powerful God hears our prayers and rejoices in our praise.

I Forgive You

8 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 32.1-4

This is among the greatest phrases in any language. After a long separation caused by disagreement between friends or loves, to forgive each other is a welcome relief. To be forgiven is to begin life all over with renewed hope that life will be beautiful again.

Forgiveness is not an emotion. It is a decision. When we chose to forgive someone, God will see to it that the feelings of forgiveness follow that decision. God always stands ready to forgive us. Like David in this psalm, our sorrow for some sins may be unbearable. Only God knows our deep need of forgiveness. Like David, we will find God's "welcome home" when we come to him

Let the Sun Shine

9 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 34.4-6

What is your response to answered prayer? Some people are unsure about it because they don't know if God actually answered or if it was just coincidence that things worked out as they had prayed.

The psalmist had no such doubts. He beamed like the sun in his excitement over answered prayer. We are urged to do the same thing. Let the love of God shine on you as he responds to your prayers, and reflect his love to others.

What is True Repentance?

10 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 38.18

We cannot truly repent, and therefore be forgiven until we understand what sin is and what it has become within our hearts. Do you realize how dangerous it is to be separated from God? Sin is turning away from God and disobeying his commands, which builds a wall of separation between God and humanity.

But this knowledge is useless until we see that our own lives - our actions and our thoughts - make us sinners before God. We may recognize and condemn the sins of others, but we must examine ourselves as well. now is the time to look within, express our sorrow for our sins, and receive God's forgiveness

Examine Your Soul

11 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 43.5

Three times in the last two psalms the writer has questioned the validity of the emotions that are surging through his soul. our moods and emotions tend to be influenced by our circumstances.

We should strive to examine and control our feelings by focusing on God as the All-Powerful Lord. As difficult as our emotional pain may be, it is not beyond God's power to overcome this. He is the source of strength and help in time of need. It is not wrong to have emotions; we simply need to keep them in perspective.

Our Mighty Fortress

12 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 46.1

Historically, a fortress was a place of protection for people during times of trouble. Often, during times of war, soldiers guarded these structures and gave the people inside a strong sense of security.

Psalm 46.1 tells us that God is "our mighty fortress." In our times of trouble, we can run to him - he is our mightiest protection. God is our strongest security and the safest place to be.

The Meaning of Success

13 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 49.16-18

After the funeral for an extremely wealthy man, one friend turned to another and asked, "How much money did the old man leave behind?" After a moment, the other gentleman wisely replied, "All of it."

The world had convinced many of us that the pursuit of wealth and fame is one of the highest goals we could achieve. But this is in complete opposition to the wisdom of the psalmist (v.17), for our greatest success can only be accomplished by having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul said it best in Philippians 3.8: "Nothing is as wonderful as knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have given up everything else and count it all as garbage. All I want is Christ."

Pure Thoughts

14 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 51.10

Do you ever struggle with impure thoughts? has a failure somewhere along the way left your heart longing to be faithful to God again? Here's hope for you: You are not alone. Even the psalmist shared your struggles of years ago.

We can pray his prayer: Create pure thoughts in me and make me faithful again. God delights in this kind of prayer and is eager to create pure thoughts in us and make us faithful to him again.

Tears in a Bottle

15 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 56.8

In the times of our greatest distress we can trust in this promise: God hears our prayers (Isiah 38.5). While we weep with frustration or agony, God captures our tears as they fall. He carefully collects our sorrows and holds them close.

With his great patience, God has noticed the times we have strayed from his path and have stumbled on the rocks. And yet, no matter how weak or pitiful our words may seem, God does not forget the cries of those in need. Remember the words of the psalmist - You protected me from death and kept me from stumbling (v. 13).

The Spirit of Worship

16 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 63.1-8

Here is a wonderful picture of someone worshiping God. The psalmist desires God above all else has experienced the power of his glory is in constant prayer, sings joyful praises, and is filled with an excitement that only God can provide.

This is the hope of all who believe - to have this type of relationship with God. We all have a tendency to wander away from God, so there is the encouragement to "stay close" to the Lord. Cling to him, not as a frightened child, but one filled with a strong hunger for God.

Drowning in Misery

17 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 69.1-3, 13-17

You've lost your job, the car needs to be repaired, the kids have been fighting again, and your "friends" have deserted you. Your feet feel like they are planted in thick mud and the river is quickly rising to your chin. Your voice is hoarse and your eyes are swollen from your tears. Where is God when you need him?

Don't be afraid, for despite your overwhelming circumstances, God can be trusted (vv. 30-36), The day will soon come when you can "tell the heavens and earth to start singing! Tell the mountains and every tree in the forest to join in the song! The Lord has rescued his people; now they will worship him" (Isiah 44.23)

A Prayer for the King

18 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 72.1

The psalmist asked God to "please help the king to be honest and fair just like you, our God." We would do well to follow his example in praying for the leaders of our world today.

Though many of us are not subject to earthly kings, we all have leaders. But God is the only true king. All human leaders need our support and God's guidance. Remember to pray for those people who are leaders in your community, church, country, and the world.

The Delights of His Temple

19 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 84.3

The temple of ancient Israel was the centre of the life of the Israelites. People worshiped at the altar with sacrifices every day of the week, but they also went to the open courtyards and covered colonnades for all kinds of social reasons.

The psalmist looked at the birds who nested in the eaves of the temple and imagined building his life so that it centered on worshiping God. God doesn't live in a temple, but he will love in our hearts. This means he really can be the center of our lives.

Time Is ticking Away

20 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 90.12

There are only 8,760 hours in each year. Nearly half of that time is spent sleeping, eating, and commuting to and from work. The average job consumed another 2,080 hours, leaving only a quarter of the year for everything else.

How are you using your time? When your life is coming to an end how will you see your life in light of moral and spiritual issues? "What good did you receive from the things you did? All you have to show for them is your shame, and they lead to death. Sin pays off with death. But God's gift is eternal life given by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6.21,23). Time is ticking away; don't waste it.

The Lord Our Shepherd

21 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 95.7

Do you ever feel like a sheep? Sheep are known as being dumb and rather dirty farm animals. Because they are not able to properly take care of themselves, they need a shepherd. The shepherd doesn't blame the sheep for being dumb, nor is he offended by their dirtiness.

We all feel dumb at some point in our lives. We probably all have felt "dirty," too. Our shepherd is the Lord himself. He has placed us in the safe pasture of his care. He loves us perfectly in spite of our imperfections. God forgives the dumb things we do and cleanses our dirtiness.

The Light of the World

22 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 97.11

From a scientific viewpoint, night is merely the turning of the earth on its axis from the sun. But spiritual darkness is the turning of the human heart away from God. Repentance (or turning away from sin) is the movement of the soul toward the eternal light of God.

The brilliant light of Christ's righteousness extinguishes the darkness of our hearts. Jesus promised, "I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won't be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life" (John 8.12). Do you need to have the shadows removed from your life?

Unfinished Business

23 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 102.23-27

He was a brilliant musician and had written six symphonies by age 21, but Franz Schubert is most famous for his symphony No. 8 in B Minor, or the "Unfinished" Symphony. His life cut short at the age of 21, he never had the opportunity to complete this masterpiece. The world calls it a tragedy. But what is God's view?

In this psalm, the psalmist cries to God to extend his life. He is afraid of a premature end, perhaps because he feels there is so much unfinished business. We echo this fear with

our frantic busyness, trying to cram as much as possible into the day. Take a moment right now to contemplate the eternity and the sureness of God (v. 27) Think about how the eternal, almighty God cares for you and wants to call you one of his own!

A Life of Praise

24 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 108.1

To praise the lord with your whole heart is the most selfless act you can experience in your life. Sometimes our prayers contain a bit of selfishness, even if the asking is on behalf of others.

On the other hand, praise is a gift that is freely given in adoration of the awesome God. It demands a reverent attitude of the body, a focused mind, and energetic emotion from the heart, and a submissive spirit. Our songs and words are sent out with no expectation of getting something in return. Praise is an expression of unconditional love.

Focus on the Creator

25 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 115.3-8

Saving our earth and protecting the environment receive a lot of attention these days. While this is an admirable pursuit, there is a danger of worshiping the creation, rather than the creator. The psalmist warns against such folly (v.8). He describes the idols of his day as being senseless (v. 5-7).

Shouldn't we concentrate on the one who placed the stars in the heavens and the water in the sea? Look at the beauty of the earth in wonder and do what you can to protect our planet, but also remember to look beyond and seek God whose face is brighter than a thousand stars. Shout praises to the Lord!

Our Kind and Merciful God

26 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 118.1-3

Kindness and mercy are part of the character of God. The God of the Old Testament sometimes gets a bad reputation as a vengeful, angry God who sends plagues on people.

Certainly, God is capable of doing such things when provoked, but God's response to his people is kindness and mercy first. It thrills him to hear us thank him for the goodness of his heart. Telling God how thankful we are not only makes God happy; it is a blessing to us to speak forth words of thanks and praise.

The Word Is a Lantern for My Feet

27 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 119.105

The soft glow of a lamp on a dark night is a friendly companion. It breaks up the shadows that bring fear to our journey. The lamp is also a protection against danger.

The Word of God is like this, encouraging us with its steady light. The light of truth exposes the spiritual hazards and temptations that litter our path. But the ultimate value of the lamp is that it shows us the proper way through life. The Word of truth shows us the correct road and ultimately the journey's end.

We Need God's Help

28 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 127.1, 2

God is the one who established homes and families on the earth. In these days of increasing divorce and domestic violence, it is easy to see that homes and families desperately need God's help and blessing. Whether you are parent or child, husband or wife, or a person on your own, God wants to help you build your home. Ask his blessing on the place where you live.

Wait for the Lord

29 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 130.1-6

All of us know what is like to restlessly wait for the morning. Sleepless, restless, and exhausted, our minds race through the dark hours of night. Some experience nightmares where cruel possibilities of the future and the real worries of the present come crashing together. But finally, the morning comes. Equipped with the freshness of dawn, we set out to meet our foes.

The psalmist is in the midst of deep distress (v.1), but is willing to wait on the Lord to rescue him. This is not a passive waiting, but the fierce anticipation of someone desperate for the light of dawn to arrive. We need not despair for God said, "At the time I have decided, my words will come true. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting - it will happen!" (Habakkuk 2.3).

His Love Endures Forever

30 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 136

No matter what confronts us, God's love never fails! We may try to create substitutes for God, but none can really compare. Throughout history God has always brought his people out of the most difficult situations (vv. 10-22)

You will notice that four words repeat throughout this psalm - "God's love never fails." There may be times in our lives when it seems that things don't go exactly as we'd like. We may even feel that God has failed us. But once we have had some time and distance from those situations, we see that God knew what we did not know. We see that his love did not fail us after all. God's Word is true and we can be certain that he does not fail us.

A Divine Examination

31 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 139.23, 24

When we look into our hearts, we often find many conflicting emotions and motivations. We want to have God's presence woven into the fabric of our lives, but we are still full of selfishness. It is one thing to take a close look at ourselves, but is another to surrender to God's investigation.

Can you stand strong under the severity of the Lord's gaze? We must pray that God will deliver us from that which is unholy and unworthy, as a threshing machine separates the corn from the chaff. Our own way of life is marked by emptiness. May God, with his infinite wisdom, show us the true path of righteousness.

His Gentle Spirit

32 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 143.10

Sometimes people have a hard time figuring out what to do in certain situations. Answers aren't always clear. Psalm 143.10 says, "You are my God, Show me what you want me to do, and let your gentle Spirit lead me in the right path."

This tells us that God does have plans for us and that he will show us what to do. It is his gentle spirit who will lead us. When you seek God's direction for your life, be prepared for his gentle Spirit. That Spirit will not compete with the noise and bustle that comes when we try to chart our own course. When you ask God for his direction, stop your own frenzy and quiet yourself so that you may hear his gentle Spirit.

Praise the Lord with Music

33 # Short Commentary and Lesson from Psalm 150.6

Martin Luther wrote, "Music is one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God, to which Satan is a bitter enemy, for it removes from the heart the weight of sorrow, and the fascination of evil thoughts."

Music is the language of emotions in the same way that speech is the language of the intellect. It can express the inexpressible. When words alone or musical notes alone are insufficient, the simple song can blend the two together in an eloquent statement of glorious praise.

In heaven the occupation of the angels is eternal praise (Revelation 5.11-13). Music is a symbol of our sacred responsibility to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Shout praises to the Lord!

Promises For Us

Songs! They do so many things in life. They celebrate happy events like birthdays and weddings. Songs motivate athletes, soldiers, and ordinary people. Songs summarize the character and aspirations of nations. They tell stories that keep heroes and villains alive. Songs help people mourn; songs help them dance. They help us worship.

Songs touch our emotions before they touch our thoughts. Perhaps that's why so many songs sing of romance. The music of youth is filled with finding, keeping, and losing love. "Oldies but goodies" remind the middle-aged of the wonders of young love. Songs spring from the heart and touch the heart.

The Psalms are songs of believing hearts in every imaginable situation. Here is a collection of lyrics that can help us deal with anger and depression, joy and hope, fear and doubt, life and death, hatred and love. A common chorus to many of the psalms is, "I asked the Lord for help, and he saved me from all my fears" (Psalm 34.4)

For Consideration

In each psalm, what is the writer concerned about in his life?

In what ways is your life situation similar or dissimilar to the psalmist's?

How can you honestly express to God the positive and negative emotions of your heart in a way that deepens your faith?