



KINGDOM PSALMS

PART 2

Forty Daily Devotions
from Psalms 38-72
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

This series is the second part of our four-part study in the Book of Psalms. While we know this book simply as Psalms, the Hebrew title for this collection of writings is “The Book of Praises.” However, more than one of the psalmists declared it to be a book of prayers (see Psalm 72:20). In one of the most popular translations of all time (KJV), some form of the word “praise” is found in the Book of Psalms 187 times while some form of the word “prayer” is found 40 times. It is safe to say that Psalms is a book about praise and prayer.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Psalm 38	12/09/21
2	Psalm 39	12/10/21
3	Psalm 40	12/11/21
4	Psalm 41	12/12/21
5	Psalm 42	12/13/21
6	Psalm 43	12/14/21
7	Psalm 44:1-13	12/15/21
8	Psalm 44:14-26	12/16/21
9	Psalm 45	12/17/21
10	Psalm 46	12/18/21
11	Psalm 47	12/19/21
12	Psalm 48	12/20/21
13	Psalm 49	12/21/21
14	Psalm 50:1-12	12/22/21
15	Psalm 50:13-23	12/23/21
16	Psalm 51	12/24/21
17	Psalm 52	12/25/21
18	Psalm 53	12/26/21
19	Psalm 54	12/27/21
20	Psalm 55:1-11	12/28/21

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Psalm 55:12-23	12/29/21
22	Psalm 56	12/30/21
23	Psalm 57	12/31/21
24	Psalm 58	01/01/22
25	Psalm 59	01/02/22
26	Psalm 60	01/03/22
27	Psalm 61	01/04/22
28	Psalm 62	01/05/22
29	Psalm 63	01/06/22
30	Psalm 64	01/07/22
31	Psalm 65	01/08/22
32	Psalm 66	01/09/22
33	Psalm 67	01/10/22
34	Psalm 68	01/11/22
35	Psalm 69:1-18	01/12/22
36	Psalm 69:19-36	01/13/22
37	Psalm 70	01/14/22
38	Psalm 71:1-12	01/15/22
39	Psalm 71:13-24	01/16/22
40	Psalm 72	01/17/22

Day 1: Psalm 38

“Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O LORD, my salvation!” (Psalm 38:21-22)

A Petition

Although the titles that are included in some copies of the Bible may not be inspired, they were definitely part of the text and, as such, they are often translated in most study Bibles. In some Bibles the title to this psalm simply states, “A Psalm of David. To bring to remembrance.” Some say, “A Psalm of David. A Petition.” The word “petition” only occurs again in the title to Psalm 70. Psalm 38 is an urgent appeal to God for relief from the physical and spiritual effects of sin in David’s life. In Psalm 41:4, David said, “LORD, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.” Verse 5 of that same psalm mentions David’s “enemies”, but David clearly seems more concerned about his relationship with God than his personal problems with others. The Scriptures do not identify the specific cause or occasion for his suffering, but it is clear that David feels abandoned by his friends during a time of chastisement. David calls God by name eight times in this prayer and uses three different names for God. He cries out to the “LORD” (Jehovah) three times, to the “Lord” (Adonai) three times, and to “God” (Elohim) two times. Take a moment, circle each of these names, and then note the final word in the Psalm. In the NKJV it is translated “salvation” while in the NIV it is translated “Savior” – with a capital “S!” You get the idea that David was not content to remain in bad standing with God and he truly desired that his prayer for God’s restoration be heard!

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that even the best Christians sometimes sin and fall short of perfect obedience. **Understand** that God must chastise and correct His children when they sin. **Accept** God’s discipline with the knowledge that He sends it so that we might be restored to a right relationship with Him.

Day 2: Psalm 39

“And now, LORD, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions; do not make me the reproach of the foolish.” (Psalm 39:7-8)

“My Hope”

This psalm seems to continue the theme of Psalm 38. David’s physical sickness was so severe that it seems that he was near dying. Verses 4-5 speak of “the measure of” his “days” being as “handbreadths” and his life being like a “vapor”. In verse 13 David prayed, “Remove Your gaze from me, that I may regain strength, before I go away and am no more.” This experience caused him to see how brief and fleeting this life can be. He realized that his suffering was a result of his own sin, and he recognized that his only “hope” was in God and His divine forgiveness. Even though he had sinned, David still chose to “wait” (KJV) or “look” (NIV) to God as his “hope” and asked God to “deliver” (KJV) or “save” (NIV) him from his transgressions. Verse 12 clearly reveals that David felt his sin had created distance between himself and God spiritually. We know David had not lost his salvation, but it is quite clear that he had lost the joy that should accompany a right relationship with God.

Prayer Emphasis: Search your heart and make sure you have not allowed anything to come between you and God. **Confess** any known sin and **seek** forgiveness. **Consider** the two phrases: “Know God – Know Hope!” and “No God – No Hope!”

Day 3: Psalm 40

“He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD.” (Psalm 40:3)

A New Song

In the previous psalm, David said, “And now, LORD, what do I wait for? My hope is in You” (Psalm 39:7). From today’s Psalm, we can see that God must have made things worth David’s wait! You might wonder if this is the same man that wrote Psalms 37 and 38! In verse 1 David states, “I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.” David goes on to say, “He also brought me up out of a horrible pit...and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps” (v. 2). It is no wonder that David later said, “He has put a new song in my mouth – Praise to our God” (v. 3). The NIV uses the words “hymn of praise” to describe David’s new song. As a result of David’s restoration to a right relationship with God, he realized that “Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD” (v. 3). You do not have to read far into this psalm to know David’s spiritual security and stability have been restored. However, notice that David is credited only with waiting (looking with hope and expectation) while God is credited with lifting him up out of the slime and mud and setting his feet on a solid rock! David is surely singing “a new song” and it is one that honors and glorifies the Lord!

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God for the many times that He has loved you despite your sins and failures. **Recall** some of the situations from which He has delivered you and literally sing His praises today! Let someone “overhear” you truly worship God today!

Day 4: Psalm 41

“Blessed is he who considers the poor; the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.” (Psalm 41:1)

Times of Trouble

In the NKJV David speaks of a “*time* of trouble.” Some translations use the plural form and say, “*times* of trouble.” The literal Hebrew translation here is, “The day of evil.” You can read through these verses and circle some of the troubling “times” that David was experiencing. He suffered from sickness and illness (v. 3); sin (v. 4); enemies (v. 5); false reports (gossip) and slander (v. 6); and betrayal from even his closest friends (v. 9). A careful look at verse 9 will reveal that David described those friends as “familiar” friends and friends that he had “trusted”. The phrase, “who ate my bread”, meant that these were people with whom he had shared meals, whether in public, or in their homes or his. This psalm is the “Scripture” that Jesus was referring to in John 13:18 when He said, “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against me.’” In David’s situation, he was referring to his friend Ahithophel who had betrayed him (2 Samuel 16:20-17:3). In both situations, here with the Lord Jesus and with the story about David, the betraying friend hanged himself. Nevertheless, just as it was with David, so it was with Jesus – in the end, the enemy did not triumph in either situation!

Prayer Emphasis: Decide to trust God even through the toughest of “times” and situations. **Refuse** to believe that God is not always working in your best interest. **Accept** the fact that there will be some “times” like these in your own life. **Commit** now to remain faithful to God despite any desperate circumstances and/or situations that might await you.

Day 5: Psalm 42

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.” (Psalm 42:11)

A Commitment to Praise

This psalm begins a new “section” (Book Two) in the Book of Psalms. Many believe that Psalms 42 and 43 were once one psalm because the same refrain is repeated twice in Psalm 42:5 and 11 and then again in Psalm 43:5. In both psalms, David states that his soul is “cast down” and “disquieted” within him. Some translations choose the words “downcast” and “disturbed” to try to express how David was feeling at this time in his life. This same word that is translated “disquieted” here in the NKJV and “disturbed” in other translations is translated “roar” in Psalm 46:3 and “raged” in Psalm 46:6. It is obvious that these were difficult and disturbing times for David, yet he made a commitment to “praise” and not “pout” his way through his difficult circumstances! The phrase, “Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him” is very important. The “I shall yet praise Him” means that David fully believed that God would see him through his troublesome times and, when He did, David was committing, ahead of time, to praising God for delivering him. That, for lack of a better term, is what I call a commitment to praise!

Prayer Emphasis: **Commit** yourself to praise regardless of the circumstances that might await you today. **Ask** God to grow your faith and to put a song in your heart in every situation. **See** your trials as opportunities to add another reason why God is worthy of our praise! **Encourage** someone who is going through a trial today and let them know that you are praying for them.

Day 6: Psalm 43

“Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle.” (Psalm 43:3)

Light and Truth

We sometimes think that the world and times in which we live are vastly different from those in which others have served before us lived. However, we see that David said that he lived in the midst of “an ungodly nation” that was inhabited by “deceitful” and “unjust” people (v. 1). It is no wonder that he said to God, “You are the God of my strength” (v. 2). It is apparent that David was not going to find much in the way of spiritual strength in or from those who lived around him. In some translations, rather than having David use the term “God of my strength” they have him describing God as his “stronghold.” He asked God to give him some things that he desperately needed if he was to avoid being defeated by his enemies. Did he ask for armies or weapons of war? Did he ask for military prowess and superior strategies? He asked God for two primary things: “Your *light* and Your *truth*!” Those two things were to “lead” (NKJV) or “guide” (NIV) him through his challenging times. It was light and truth that would bring him to God’s holy place, direct him to the altar of God, and fill his heart with joy. As it was with David, so it is with the believer today. We live in a darkened world that requires God’s “light” and “truth” if we are to live in victory and joy.

Prayer Emphasis: **Read** God’s Word daily and **ask** Him to show you the way to victory. **Acknowledge** that victory is not always marked by deliverance *from* spiritual challenges but by direction *through* them. **Share** a testimony of God’s “light” and “truth” with someone you encounter today.

Day 7: Psalm 44:1-13

“But You have cast us off and put us to shame, and You do not go out with our armies.” (Psalm 44:9)

But Now...

David begins this psalm with praises to God for what He had done for His people in past times. The first eight verses recall the many victories that God had given His people over their enemies as they entered and conquered the land that He had promised them many years before. These glorious stories had been passed down to these people by their “fathers” and called to mind the victories of “their days.” However bright and beautiful the memories of the past might have been, it is apparent that the present was another case entirely. Notice that verse 9, our focus verse, begins with the word, “But”. Many Christians today find themselves in what I call *David’s Dilemma*. By that I mean that their past experiences include amazing testimonies of God’s presence, grace, and power, *but* their present circumstances or situations are marked by humility and defeat. Unfortunately, David and his followers could not live in the past, and neither can we. David seemed to know exactly what the problem was. They were losing battles because God was teaching them lessons about the importance of His presence. He attributed their current losses to God’s doing. Notice that you see the word “You” in every verse from verses 9-12. May we always seek the *present* of God’s *presence* and the *gift* of His *guidance* in our lives! Without him we are nothing.

Prayer Emphasis: **Examine** your life. Is your testimony mostly about things you did for God in the past or is it about what you are doing for God in the present? **Serve** God in the now and you will surely “know” His presence and power.

Day 8: Psalm 44:14-26

“Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body clings to the ground. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies’ sake.” (Psalm 44:24-26)

“Mercies”

Psalm 44 concludes with an appeal for God’s “mercies.” Some translations use two words here to define God’s “mercies.” Those two words are “unfailing love.” That is a very good definition for mercy. Mercy is God’s unfailing love for people like you and me. The Hebrew word used in this situation is a word that is used 248 times in the Old Testament with 127 (over half) of those times being found in the Psalms. The two books of the Bible with the second highest number of verses containing this word are Genesis and 2 Samuel where the word is found just 11 times in each of those books. Today, we have read this word (translated in various ways) for the 23rd time since we began our devotionals in Psalms. Compare this “23rd Psalm” with the psalm actually numbered “23” and you will see how much this unfailing God and His unfailing love does for us! It is obvious that God’s people sang of God’s mercy/unfailing love often! If there is anything that we know about God, it is that He loves us in spite of us! His love is unfailing because it is unconditional. While He has done everything necessary to earn our praise, we do not have to do anything to earn His love!

Prayer Emphasis: **Praise** God for His unfailing love today! Take some time to **review** your walk with Him and **count** some of the ways that He has consistently expressed His love for you. **Share** some of those experiences with someone today! **Speak** up for God! You will be blessed for your obedience!

Day 9: Psalm 45

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (Psalm 45:7)

“The Oil of Gladness”

In the NKJV, and others, David is said to have been anointed with “the oil of gladness”. Some translations refer to this same “oil” as “the oil of joy”. While the word for “gladness” is translated here, the NKJV translates this same word as “joy” more often than it does “gladness”. The KJV translates this Hebrew word as “joy” in 15 of the 22 places that it is found in the Bible. God desires that His people have joy and takes the initiative to anoint us therewith. Anointing was something that was performed on kings, priests, and prophets alike. Offerings were sometimes anointed. The tabernacle and its furnishings were anointed (Exodus 40:9-11). The word translated “anointed” here is also used to describe the way that a soldier would rub oil into his shield (Isaiah 21:5) or the way that one might brush paint onto a house (Jeremiah 22:14). God had graciously chosen to anoint David with a joy that was above his “companions.” I want every reader, every Christian, to know that our God has graciously chosen to do the same for us! Remember that as you go about your business today. Make a special effort to spread some of that joy, that “oil of gladness”, to others who you meet along the way.

Prayer Emphasis: Express joy in everything that you do today. **Meditate** on God’s goodness and **thank** Him for the song that He has put in your heart! **Sing** for God today! **Proclaim** His wondrous works to all those around you.

Day 10: Psalm 46

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling.” (Psalm 46:1-3)

Our Very Ever-Present Help

It was impossible to select just one verse as a focus verse from this psalm! While verse 1 is perhaps the best known among these verses, it is strongly supported by verses 2 and 3. Also, verses 4, 7, 10, and 11 bring great joy to my heart every time I read them. It may be that one of the other verses speaks to your heart today. In any case, or through whatever verse He chooses, God speaks to us because He is our ever-present help. The words translated “very present” here literally mean that God is “easy to find” in times of trouble. We may have encountered a few “fair-weather” friends along life’s way, but we have a Father that is always there, even in our times of “trouble.” The word translated “help” here is a noun and not a verb. In other words, it says more about what God *is* than what God *does*. The word is found in only 25 verses in the Old Testament and 14 of them are in Psalms! It is obvious that God’s people saw Him as their “refuge and strength”. We would be wise to allow Him to be ours as well.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that God is always listening to your prayers and looking for ways to bless and help you. **Expect** God to be there in times of trouble. **Claim** the promise of His presence! **Call** out to Him and you will soon learn that He is not hard to find when you need Him. **Encourage** someone today by reminding them of this wonderful promise of God’s presence!

Day 11: Psalm 47

“Oh, clap your hands all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! For the LORD Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth.” (Psalm 47:1-2)

“A Great King”

Psalm 47 is the first of six “Royal” or “Enthronement” Psalms. Psalms 93 and 96–99 are the remaining psalms of this type. In these psalms, God is exalted as the “great King”, and they all emphasize His rule over all creation and kingdoms. These psalms were sung periodically to remind Israel that Jehovah was the King of kings and the ruler of the universe. In verse 2, God is referred to as, “the LORD Most High”. (Not all translations capitalize the entire title.) The word translated “Most High” is a word that is used in the Bible to indicate anything that stands “higher” or “above” any and all other things in its class. (Turn to Deuteronomy 28:1 to see a good example of the meaning of this word. There God told His people that He would set them “high above all the nations of the earth.”) Here, these words clearly indicate that Jehovah (“the LORD”) is the highest of all gods, thus, the “Most High” God. He is over “all...peoples” and He is the “great King over all the earth.” How blessed we are to serve a God that is above all people and above all places. There is no person that should not bow to His divine authority and no place that should not be under His control. As such, He is God of the Christian and God of the church!

Prayer Emphasis: Surrender your life fully to God and **promise** Him that He will be the “Most High” in your life. **Seek** to yield to His control in every area and aspect of your life and ministry. In the Christian’s case, “the voice of triumph” (v. 1) is found only in our surrender to His authority!

Day 12: Psalms 48

“As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it forever. Selah. We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, in the midst of Your temple.” (Psalm 48:8-9)

Seeing is Believing!

For generations, the people of Israel heard the many amazing stories of God’s miraculous protection and provision for His own. Now their experience goes beyond hearing to seeing! Kings have come against God’s city only to be driven back by His power and presence. In “the city of the great King” (v. 2), God became known as their “refuge” (v. 3). Some translations, such as the NIV, choose to use the word “fortress” here in place of “refuge.” In either case, both words represent a place of shelter and protection. When the kings joined forces and advanced against Jerusalem, they saw God’s presence and fled in terror (v. 5). “Fear” (NKJV) or “trembling” (NIV) “took hold” (NKJV) or “seized” (NIV) them and soon they were destroyed like ships caught in a sudden and terrible storm (vs. 6-7). The destruction of God’s enemies was both sudden and severe. God’s people had seen God’s power for themselves. Now it was more than just an amazing story read from a scroll or heard from the elders. Everything they had ever heard about God was fulfilled in their own lives and times. They could not help but cry, “As we have heard, so we have seen”!

Prayer Emphasis: Look for God’s presence in your most trying situations and you will soon see that every amazing thing you have ever heard about Him is absolutely true. **Trust** Him completely. **Know** that He will never fail you and that He never leaves us defenseless. **Remind** someone of these great truths today.

Day 13: Psalm 49

“My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall give understanding. I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.” (Psalm 49:3-4)

Solving the “Riddle”

The writer of this psalm referred to it as a “dark saying” (v. 4). Some translations use the word “riddle” here in place of “dark saying.” My NKJV Study Bible includes the words “dark saying” in the footnote and includes the word “riddle” in the margin notes. The word that is translated “dark saying” or “riddle” here is translated “hard question” twice elsewhere in the Old Testament. It is sometimes difficult to answer the questions about why God’s people often suffer while some of those who show no love or respect for God seem to prosper. This psalm reminds us that these types of questions may never be answered to our satisfaction in this lifetime. The writer declares that those who love riches and this world’s wealth will someday find that they cannot take them with them. He states that they will “leave their wealth to others” (v. 10). However, it is just the opposite for those who wisely trust in the Lord! Death and the grave are nothing more than a passage to true riches and wealth. When believers die, God takes them to be with Him immediately. For the believer, death is not an ending, but a beginning. Such things were a “riddle” to those who did not understand the wisdom that is revealed to us through God’s Word.

Prayer Emphasis: Accept that we will not always understand everything that happens in life. When life is not everything that we desire or expect it to be, we must **remember** that this life is fleeting, and heaven is where the believer should anticipate receiving true riches and rewards.

Day 14: Psalm 50:1-12

“For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.” (Psalm 50:10-12)

It All Belongs to God

This is the first Psalm that is said to have been written by Asaph. Asaph wrote 12 psalms, which include Psalm 50 and Psalms 73-83. There are three different men in the Bible that bore the name Asaph. This Asaph is the young man mentioned in 1 Chronicles 16. This young Levite was appointed by David to serve in the temple as a choir director. 1 Chronicles 16:5 refers to him as the “chief” among those who ministered in that capacity. Asaph’s father, Berechiah, was one of the doorkeepers for the Ark of the Covenant in the temple. There is no question but that this faithful man was very proud of his son and his son’s calling. Four of Asaph’s sons followed him in the music ministry and are mentioned as serving under him in 1 Chronicles 25:1-2. Those verses clearly state that “the sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph”. No doubt that Asaph was one proud father! Although Asaph was a very young man when he was appointed to this position, he was wise enough to know that everything belonged to God – the world and everything in it! Such wisdom probably helped to keep this man in this one position for over 40 years! His ministry carried over into the reign of Solomon.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for the young people in our church. **Support** them in their efforts to live and minister for the Lord. **Encourage** some young person today by letting them know that you love them, and you are praying for them.

Day 15: Psalm 50:13-23

“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.” (Psalm 50:14)

Some Godly Advice!

Every young person would be wise to heed the warnings given in the last half of Psalm 50. However, the wise counsel that is provided in verse 14 is the key to success for every Christian. Two very important characteristics should mark the life of every believer. First, *the believer’s life should be marked by appreciation*. We are reminded to “Offer to God thanksgiving”. Some translations use the word “sacrifice” in place of “thanksgiving” in today’s focus verse. Although the Hebrew word found here in this verse is also translated “praise” in some places in the Old Testament, it is most often translated in some form of the word “thanks” or “thanksgiving.” Second, *the believer’s life should be marked with dedication*. God reminds His people to “pay” (NKJV) or “fulfill” (NIV) their vows to Him. The first time that the word translated “vows” is found in the Bible is in the story of Jacob, at Bethel, when he vowed to return to God a portion (10%) of everything that God gave to him. The first vow ever made to God was made about material things. Jacob promised God that he would express his appreciation for all that God had given him by giving back to God. When we appreciate what God gives us, we will gladly dedicate a portion of it back to Him!

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that God is interested in more than your money! Be careful to **ensure** that thanksgiving is a part of your giving to God. **Remember** that God is deeply interested in you because He loves you and has great plans for your life.

Day 16: Psalm 51

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” (Psalm 51:1-2)

“Mercy”

The title to the psalm reminds us that it was written after David committed adultery with Bathsheba. It is a psalm written by a broken man who had broken God’s laws. David knew that he was guilty of a grievous sin – a sin that had damaged many people – and it had even cost the lives of some of his own, loyal people. Therefore, he cried out to God for “mercy”. I have often shared the difference between *grace* and *mercy*. Grace is getting that which we do not deserve. Mercy, on the other hand, is *not getting what we do deserve*. In verse 7, the word translated “purge” (NKJV) or “cleanse” in other translations, could literally be translated “un-sin me.” Hyssop was used in ritual cleansings. It was first used in the Bible for the sprinkling of the blood from the Passover lambs on the doors of the Israelites homes at the time of the Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12:22). Notice that David was seeking a complete and thorough cleansing. He first asked God to “blot out” his “transgressions.” That meant to remove them from his record. Then he asked God to “wash” him from his “iniquity.” In doing that, he was asking God to fix his sin problem so that he never did anything like he had done before. Finally, he asked God to “cleanse” him from his “sin.”

Prayer Emphasis: Repent of any known sin in your life. **Refuse** to allow anything to hinder you from having a right relationship with God. **Remember** that it is never too late for the believer to cry out to God for forgiveness and restoration. **Accept** God’s forgiveness and move on with your life and service to Him.

Day 17: Psalm 52

“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.”
(Psalm 52:8)

David vs. Doeg

In my study Bible, the notes over Psalm 52 read: “To the Chief Musician. A contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, ‘David has gone to the house of Ahimelech.’” Although most people, saved and unsaved alike, are familiar with the David of the Bible, few would recall a man named Doeg. Doeg is mentioned five times in the Bible. All of those five mentions are found in 1 Samuel 21 and 22. However, Doeg’s story in the Bible is not an honorable one. Doeg witnessed someone’s loyalty to David and reported it to King Saul. At Saul’s command, Doeg killed 85 priests and then destroyed the city of Nob, killing all its inhabitants, including women and children (1 Samuel 22:18-19). This is the treacherous person that David had in mind when he wrote Psalm 52. God’s Word to men such as Doeg is: “Your tongue devises destruction” (v. 2). Notice the words in this Psalm that have to do with speech or the tongue. David knew that Doeg’s sins with his tongue would soon tell on him in eternity! His sins would be punished while David would flourish like an olive tree in the house of God. Note that David’s tongue would sing praises to the Lord forever.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to give you a controlled tongue! So much of the troubles that come to God’s people come because of some careless word spoken in a wrong way or at a wrong time. As much as possible, **speak** to others of God’s goodness and **praise** Him for all that He is and for what He has done. There is not much that the devil can do with that!

Day 18: Psalm 53

“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none who does good.” (Psalm 53:1)

Some Things Never Change!

Psalm 14 and Psalm 53 are almost identical. Although we are not certain as to how much time passed between the two, it is believed that David wrote Psalm 14 while he was a young man and Psalm 53 later in his life. It is sad to see that, even though much time had passed, man had not progressed very far in his understanding of God. When “the fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God,’” it was the word Elohim that was used. This is the name used for God the Creator in Genesis 1. So, what these people were literally saying was that there was no Creator! David sadly stated that there had been little change in the world’s attitude about God and creation over the span of his life and ministry. This sinful attitude was still thriving in Paul’s day. He cited Psalms 14 and 53 in his letter to the Romans (see Romans 3:10-12). It is sad to see that there is still little change in the hearts of many today. The desire to remove God from our educational system is deep rooted and long standing. Evolution has become a key weapon in removing the idea of God from the minds of our children. Such people were considered as “corrupt” in David’s day, and they are still “corrupt” in our day.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for our students! **Lift** their names up before the Lord and **ask** Him to help them remain faithful in the face of ridicule and persecution. Then give them a personal “lift” by doing some act of kindness for them and letting them know how much you love and appreciate them.

Day 19: Psalm 54

“Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life.” (Psalm 54:4)

The Ziphites

Psalm 54 is one of the Psalms that contains a heading. Part of the heading in my study Bible reads thusly: “A Contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, ‘Is David not hiding with us?’” Although the Ziphites are mentioned only twice in the Bible (1 Samuel 23:19 and 26:1), both occasions told of their betraying the whereabouts of David to King Saul. Not once, but twice, these people betrayed David during a very perilous time in his life when he was a fugitive, hiding from an angry and jealous King Saul. There are many great lessons to be learned from the Psalms. One of the lessons to be learned from Psalm 54 is a reminder that we must never trust men in the same way that we trust God. If we need a “helper” (NKJV) or “help” (NIV) we must look only to God! He is the One who can “uphold” (KJV) or “sustain” (NIV) us. As God would have it, the hometown of these betrayers was also the scene of David’s farewell to his dear friend, Jonathan, as well as the place where David, out of love and commitment, spared the life of King Saul. When our own “Ziphites” betray us, we can only ask that God help us to be the kind of friend that David proved to be to both Saul and Jonathan. We cannot control the things that people say about us or do to us, but we can surely control how we treat and speak of others.

Prayer Emphasis: Prepare yourself for disappointments. **Realize** that we, ourselves, have probably disappointed others more times than we know. **Look** only to God for your spiritual strength and sustenance. **Remember** that God is our true “helper” who can “uphold” us in the tough times in life.

Day 20: Psalm 55:1-11

“Give ear to my prayer, O God, and do not hide Yourself from my supplication.” (Psalm 55:1)

A Time of Desperate Need

The heading in my study Bible tells me that this is yet another “Contemplation of David.” You can sense the desperation in David’s heart as he writes this song for the Lord. He begs for God’s attention, pleading with Him to “give ear” (KJV) or “listen” (NIV) to his prayer. He follows that with another prayer, asking God not to “hide” Himself from him (NKJV) or “ignore” his plea. The fact that David was “restless” is an indicator that his problems were keeping him up at night and robbing him of his much-needed rest (v. 2). Verse 3 states that David had an “enemy” who was “wicked” and who was causing great “trouble” in his life. Here is the saddest part about this psalm. Most believe that this psalm was written about the events recorded in 2 Samuel 15-17 where David’s own son, Absalom, was conspiring against him. That situation was so heartbreaking that it caused the man who had once stood boldly before Goliath to reach a place where fear and trembling overwhelmed him to the point that he desired to “fly away” (NKJV) or “flee” (NIV) into the “wilderness” (NKJV) or “desert” (NIV) (vs. 6-7). Notice the linking of “violence and strife,” “iniquity and trouble,” and “destruction” and “oppression” in verses 9-11. Perhaps David’s greatest woe in those verses is found in the word “deceit” (v. 11). When David was betrayed, he turned to God for strength, help, and relief.

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that God is faithful and praise Him for it today! Share a testimony of God’s faithfulness with someone that you meet today. Look for an opportunity to brag on the goodness of God! Pray for someone who has been hurt and be a true friend to them in their time of sorrow and need.

Day 21: Psalm 55:12-23

“As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.” (Psalm 55:16-17)

Ahithophel

Here is another little-known name from Bible history. Although this man is mentioned 20 times in the Scriptures, most of those times are compressed into just three chapters of the Old Testament (2 Samuel 15, 16, and 17). He is mentioned twice more in 1 Chronicles 27. This man, a one-time counselor of David and Absalom, was so highly regarded among God’s people that 2 Samuel 16:23 states, “Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God.” By that, the Holy Spirit is telling us that Ahithophel’s advice came from God and His Word. From that Bible story, it is clear that was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel’s advice. When Absalom revolted against his father, Ahithophel sided with the son and abandoned his lifelong friend, David. Some believe there were some very personal reasons for this counselor’s actions. You see, Ahithophel was the grandfather of a young woman named Bathsheba! (If you take the time to compare 2 Samuel 11:3 and 23:34, you can make that connection.) You can read 2 Samuel 17:1-3 to see this man’s advice to Absalom and then compare it to how David was feeling as he wrote this psalm. If you compare 2 Samuel 17 to Psalm 55, you will have no trouble connecting this psalm to that occasion in the lives of David and Absalom.

Prayer Emphasis: Listen to wise counsel but place your complete confidence in God and God’s Word. **Realize** that even the best of men will fail you because no human being is exempt from sin and error. **Include** God in every plan and make Him the center of every aspect of your life.

Day 22: Psalm 56

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” (Psalm 56:3)

A Song of Trust

The title to this psalm helps us understand the circumstances that inspired it and trace its origin to the events recorded in 1 Samuel 21:10. Notice the words “all day” in verses 1-2 of the NKJV and “all day long” in the same verses of the NIV. It certainly appears that the persecution against David, and the pursuit of his enemies, was a daily affair with no rest for this suffering saint. It seems that every day, all day, his enemies slandered, pursued, and attacked him (vs. 1-2). Daily, they twisted his words and plotted to harm him (v. 5). Every day, “all day,” they conspired, lurked, and watched his steps, eager to take his life (v. 7). Even this very courageous man, this slayer of lions and giants, was willing to admit he was afraid (v. 3). However, even in such terrible times, David decided to keep trusting in God. The word translated trust in verse 3 is translated in other ways in various places in the Old Testament. Some of the ways that this word is translated in those places are, confident, confidence, secure, and bold. Because of his faith in God, David was able to live in constant expectation rather than constant anxiety. We can truly relax when we know that God is in control! He has never failed us, and He never will! That is why David could say, “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You” (v. 3).

Prayer Emphasis: Trust God despite your situation or circumstances. **Recount** some of the times God has delivered you and **praise** Him for each of those occasions. **Encourage** someone who may be going through tough times and **express** your love and concern for them.

Day 23: Psalm 57

“I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations.” (Psalm 57:9)

Another Vow of Praise

Psalm 57 is another psalm that includes a vow of praise. A vow of praise was a promise to praise God *in spite of* and not *because of* one’s current circumstances. The title to this psalm links it to the events of either 1 Samuel 22 or 24, or possibly both. There we find a man who had once lived in luxury now hiding in a cave. (Are you beginning to notice how many of David’s psalms (songs) are born from dangerous and discouraging times?) An important phrase is found in verses 5 and 11: “Let your glory be above all the earth!” One of the ways that God’s glory could be spread over all the earth is found in verse 9: “I will praise you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations”. (The English words “peoples” and “nations” are reversed in order in some translations.) On several occasions in the Bible, these two words are linked. The first group of people before whom David was going to praise the Lord was his own people, or kindred. The second group of people before whom David would sing and praise the Lord would be other nations, or strangers. It is one thing to speak highly of God in church and another thing entirely to speak and sing of Him while we are on our daily pilgrimage through this world.

Prayer Emphasis: Make your own vow to praise God wherever you are. The world will be blessed to hear a song of praise coming from the joyful heart of a believer. **Be bold** enough to **praise** God in spite of your circumstances, situation, or surroundings. Someone may need to hear what you have to say about God today!!

Day 24: Psalm 58

“So that men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely He is God who judges in the earth.’” (Psalm 58:11)

The Righteous Judge

This psalm was written early in the time that David reigned as king. Just as it is today, government was often corrupt and calloused in the way that it dealt with citizens. In this case, the king is concerned with the character of some who sat as judges. Notice that the corruption began in the heart and was ultimately manifested in the hands of these evildoers (v. 2). In other words, evil thoughts soon became evil deeds. The words of verse 3 are symbolic and indicate that these judges had strayed early and far from what God had intended them to be. Their actions were as poisonous to their society as the venom of snakes (v. 4). They were out of control and would not listen to those from whom they should have been receiving instruction and direction (v. 5). David called upon God to strip these evil doers of their power and control over the people and to render them humbled before Him. He prayed that God would “take them away as with a whirlwind” (v. 9). David wanted his people to look beyond the cruelty and injustice of human judges and look to the One who would ultimately judge the world. His desire was “that men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely He is God who judges in the earth’” (v. 11). We should pray that God will be the righteous judge “in the earth” and in our own hearts.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for our court system and pray especially for those who sit as judges on every level. Ask God to touch their hearts so that the work of their hands can be for the good of the people and the glory of God.

Day 25: Psalm 59

“But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. To You, O my strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy.” (Psalm 59:16-17)

Our “Defense and Refuge”

The title to this psalm reveals that it was inspired by the events recorded in 1 Samuel 19, when Saul sent men to watch David’s house and lay in wait to kill him (See Psalm 59:3). This was in the beginning of David’s struggles with King Saul and right after Saul tried to kill David with a spear. At this time, David was not even aware of why Saul was so intent on killing him (vs. 3-4). This is a prayer for deliverance from the attacks of David’s enemies, and it can become a prayer for protection from our enemies. In verse 1, the word “enemies” is plural as well as the words “workers of iniquity” in verse 2. Notice the word “they” in verses 3 and 4. It is obvious that this psalm was not written with Saul alone in mind and it is also obvious that every believer who sang it could apply it to their own lives and personal situations. David’s enemies are referred to in plural form again in verses 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. However, look at verse 8 and circle the word “You”. David knew something that we would do well to learn for ourselves. No matter how many our foes may number, God can singlehandedly defeat them. We can say with David, that God is our “defense and refuge in the day of (our) trouble” (v. 16).

Prayer Emphasis: Run to the shelter of God’s loving arms when the enemy attacks. **Trust** Him to protect you and to provide His strength when you are tired and weary.

Day 26: Psalm 60

“Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies.” (Psalm 60:11-12)

For Teaching

Of all the psalms with titles, this is the only one that includes the words, “For Teaching” or “To Teach” in some study Bibles. This does not mean that these are the only psalms that were “teaching psalms.” You can search for such psalms and see that many are included in this category and that the opinions of Bible teachers today vary on which psalms were “for teaching.” The idea is that this is a psalm that the author or compilers believed that everyone should know and from which everyone could learn. The custom of helping God’s people to remember God’s acts and truths goes back to Deuteronomy 31:19-21 and 2 Samuel 1:18. One of the things that God’s people in Bible times wanted others to remember was the fact that we should be as prayerful in our times of prosperity as we are in our times of adversity. At the time of the writing of this psalm, David and his armies had just won great victories over two very powerful foes. David is home and sitting on his royal throne. It is one of the mountain top times for both the king and the nation. Yet, they did not forget to pray. The focus verses teach us that *trust* is the way to *triumph*!

Prayer Emphasis: Teach your own family to pray in good times and bad. **Explain** the importance of involving God in all our life circumstances and not just in the circumstances that seem to be beyond our control. The songs that we sing say a lot about us. They should also say a lot about God. **Commit** to listening to the kind of music that glorifies God and empowers you to live as a shining light in this world.

Day 27: Psalm 61

“Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer...So I will sing praise to Your name forever, that I may daily perform my vows.” (Psalm 61:1 & 8)

Praises and Promises

Psalm 61 begins with a *prayer* and concludes with a *promise*. In the final verse, you will find the words “praise” or “vows” in almost every translation of the Bible. In the early part of this song, David wrote of several ways that God had consistently helped and strengthened him in his times of conflict and confusion. God had been his “rock,” his “shelter” (vs. 2-3). In the last part of verse 3, David refers to God as “a strong tower from the enemy.” Some translations choose to use the word “refuge” in place of “strong tower” in this verse. Any way one may choose to say it, it all means that God is the place to which we should run in our times of affliction and trial. The promise, found in verse 8, was, “So I will sing praise to Your name forever”. Perhaps it was because God had been so consistent in His *provision* for David that David, in return, desired to be consistent in his *praise* for God. There are two constants that David desired. He desired to be constant in his praise for God and in the keeping of the promises he made to God. He wanted to be faithful in these two priorities on a “daily” (NKJV) or “day to day” (NIV) basis. This is yet another vow of praise that you will find as you read through the Bible.

Prayer Emphasis: Commit, or recommit, to praise God now for what you know He will do in the future. Remember that praise is often connected with promises in the Bible. **Recall** some of God’s promises that He has kept in the past and **believe** He will continue to keep His promises in the future. **Praise** God in your personal time with Him today and thank Him for His faithfulness to you.

Day 28: Psalm 62

“God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God.” (Psalm 62:11)

A Very Musical Man

The title to Psalm 62 clearly states that it was “A Psalm of David,” but it adds that it was written “To Jeduthun.” This is not the first psalm title that mentions Jeduthun. You might not have noticed it, but Jeduthun was also mentioned in the title to Psalm 39. If you pay careful attention, you will notice that he is once again mentioned in the title to Psalm 77. Some scholars are convinced that Ethan and Jeduthun were the same person. If so, then this man is also mentioned in the title to Psalm 89, but that time as the author and not just as an addressee. Besides the titles to these three psalms, this man is mentioned as Jeduthun 13 times in the Bible. Jeduthun is mentioned in 1 Chronicles (chapters 9, 16, and 25), 2 Chronicles (chapters 5, 29, and 35), and in Nehemiah (chapter 11). Even with all of those mentions in the Bible, this man is seldom mentioned in sermons or Bible lessons. It would be worth your time to find a good Bible dictionary and read about this man. He was one of the directors of music appointed by King David (1 Chronicles 25:6). Some of his sons served with him in his music ministry and others served in other positions in the temple. It is also apparent that some of this man’s grandsons, and perhaps great-grandsons, were also in the ministry. He was himself a skilled musician and was probably the director of the orchestra for many years.

Prayer Emphasis: Look for someone who may often be “overlooked” and take the time to thank him or her for the work that he or she does. **Encourage** someone who serves in some capacity at our church and let them know how much their personal ministry means to you and your family.

Day 29: Psalm 63

“Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.” (Psalm 63:4)

The Ultimate Vow of Praise

The reference to the “wilderness” (NKJV) or “desert” (NIV) of Judah in the title to this psalm probably ties it to the times and events recorded in 2 Samuel 15:23-28, 16:2, 16:14, 17:16, and 17:29. This psalm is perhaps one of the most distinguishing testimonies to David’s commitment to God. Notice the words and phrases of verse one: David is earnestly seeking God, his soul is thirsting for God, and his body is longing for God during a time when his life seems to be in a desert place (dry and weary) where there is no water. All of this is in the present tense. In verse 2, he speaks of some wonderful times in the sanctuary where he had sensed the presence and power of God. However, he speaks of those times in the past tense. Notice the words “have looked” in that verse. Yet, in verse 3, he speaks of God’s love in the present tense! Look at that verse again and see where David says, “Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise You.” One thing is for sure, David was not one to question God’s love for him when the times got tough or when things didn’t go his way. Verse 4 contains the ultimate vow of praise. David promised God that he would praise him for as long as he lived!

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to allow life’s trials and troubles to cause you to question God’s love for you! **Believe** that He loves you and that He is always working in your best interest. **Praise** God today for what you know and believe He will do for you in your future. **Know** in your heart that He will bring you through even the toughest of times.

Day 30: Psalm 64

“Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation; preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the rebellion of the workers of iniquity.” (Psalm 64:1-2)

David’s Conspiracy Theory

David asked God to hide him from the “secret plots of the wicked.” Some translations use the words “secret counsel” here in the verse while at least one translation uses the word “conspiracy.” David believed there were those who sought to do him harm by what they said (v. 3) and what they did (v. 4). David’s conspiracy theory is best seen in verses 5 and 6. Look again at those verses and see how often David refers to his enemies as “they” and how he quotes them as saying, “We have perfected a shrewd scheme.” He believed “they” literally teamed up or took sides against him and looked for ways to entrap him and shame him. He could envision his enemies meeting together to plot against him and to find accusations to bring against him. However, David had a second theory. He believed God would do his fighting for him and that God could, and would, handle his conspiring enemies (v. 7). He knew God would turn their own words against them and that his enemies would be brought to ruin by the very words, snares, and accusations that they had brought against him (v. 8). As a result, people would learn to fear God and proclaim His works (v. 9). David closed by saying, “The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and trust in Him” (v. 10).

Prayer Emphasis: Trust God even in the times that you feel that you can trust no one else. **Know** that God loves you and that He is always for you! In times of opposition, or when you feel that others are conspiring *against* you, imagine the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit conspiring *for* you.

Day 31: Psalm 65

“Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion; and to You the vow shall be performed.” (Psalm 65:1)

God’s Surprise Party!

Psalm 65 is a psalm of thanksgiving for the goodness of God. In it, He is praised for hearing our prayers and for His willingness to forgive our sins. He is praised for His house and for His presence that the people sensed when they gathered and worshipped there. He is praised for His awesome deeds of righteousness and for the hope that He instills in those who place their faith in Him. The last part of the psalm praises God for His creative power and for the many things that He provides for all creation. Perhaps the most intriguing verse in this psalm is the very first verse. There we are told that praise “is awaiting” God “in Zion”. (Zion is another name for Jerusalem.) The same word that is translated “awaiting” here is translated “waits” or “awaits” in other translations of the Bible. This same Hebrew word is also translated “silence” or “silent” in other places in the Old Testament. I know that our omniscient (all knowing) God is not surprised by anything, but the image that this verse brings to mind is that of God’s people waiting silently for Him in the temple of Jerusalem, poised to sing and shout His praises immediately upon His arrival!

Prayer Emphasis: **Come** to church ready to sing praises to God – like you have been waiting to praise Him publicly since the last time you left! **Watch** and **wait** for His presence and **appreciate** it when He makes His presence known to us. **Practice** praising God in your private time with Him, and you will find it easier to praise Him in public worship.

Day 32: Psalm 66

“Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.” (Psalm 66:5)

“Come and See”

Every time I read this psalm; I think about the first spoken command of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. If you have a red-letter version of the New Testament, these will be the first red words in that book of the Bible. In John 1:40 we are told that, “One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him (Jesus), was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.” On the day that Andrew and his companion first heard and began to follow Jesus, the Lord first asked them a question and then gave them a command. His question was, “What do you seek?” Their answer was, “Rabbi...where are you staying?” (John 1:38). His command was for them to “Come and see” (John 1:39). The most interesting thing about that command is that the word “come” is in a Greek tense that represents continuous or repeated action while the word “see” is in a tense that means a one-time event. What Jesus said to them was that, if they kept on, or continued to follow Him, they would soon come to a place where they could clearly see where He was from. Since Jesus quoted so much from the Psalms, I have often wondered if He was doing that in this situation. In Psalm 66, David asks his readers to, “Come and see the works of God”. He adds that it will be well worth the time because, “He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.” Is that not what the first disciples did when they first followed Jesus? Did they not see His awesome works (miracles) and believe? Isn’t that possible for those who follow Him today?

Prayer Emphasis: **Invite** someone to attend services with you this Sunday. **Encourage** them to come in faith, believing that God has something wonderful for them. **Share** with them what God and His church mean to you and **express** your confidence that it can mean just as much to them!

Day 33: Psalm 67

“God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.” (Psalm 67:1-2)

A Good Reason for God’s Blessings

The first two verses of Psalm 67 sound like they were plucked right out of the blessing that God instructed the Levites to pronounce over the people of Israel in Numbers 6:24-26. A careful reading of this psalm will certainly help us to understand why God blesses His people so abundantly. The author of this psalm is not known, but we can be assured that the God of Israel was known to this author! His prayer for God’s blessings was not about his own desires, needs, or comforts. Rather, he asked God to bless His people for a much more important reason. He clearly stated that reason when he said to God, “That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.” In other words, this unknown, unnamed psalmist asked for God’s blessings so that people would see how blessed Israel was and desire to know the God that they worshiped and served. The same thing seemed to work for the New Testament church. God worked among them in miraculous ways and people were drawn to their message because they saw the power and blessings of God at work upon the lives of the apostles and the early church members. You might say that blessings are God’s own version of “show and tell!”

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to empty you of selfish desires and fill you with the desire to see His name known by the peoples of the world. **Make** some personal sacrifice this week so that you can **give** something to help the gospel be carried to the remote regions of the world.

Day 34: Psalm 68

“God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.” (Psalm 68:6)

Families

The Holy Spirit directed my attention to two words as I last read through this psalm. Both of those words are found in verse 6. The first word is the word translated “solitary” in the NKJV and “lonely” in the NIV. This word is used only 12 times in the Old Testament and in the NKJV, it is elsewhere translated “only,” “only child,” and “only son.” The first time this word for “solitary” or “only” is found in the Bible is in the story of Abraham’s willingness to offer his “only son” (Isaac) to God in Genesis 22:2. The other word that the Holy Spirit highlighted for me was the word “families.” In the Bible, this word is used to describe any kind of structure wherein someone, or even something, might live. For example, it is used to describe the “houses” of the Hebrews in Exodus 12:7 and the “home” of a sparrow in Psalm 84:3. It is even translated “web” (Job 8:14) to describe the dwelling place of a spider and even the “house” of a moth (Job 27:18). God specifically mentions the “fatherless” and “widows” in verse 5 and then tells us in verse 6 that His desire is that they be provided a sense of family. The words, “those who are bound,” may very well refer to those whose “house,” at that time, was a prison.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for those in our church family and community who are now living alone. Ask God to bless our ministry to the widows and widowed, and to bless those who lead it. Encourage someone who is alone this week by doing something kind for them and letting them know that you are praying for them. These things are all a part of the basic function of a church family.

Day 35: Psalm 69:1-18

“Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me; let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.” (Psalm 69:6)

A Desperate Plea

I want to begin by telling you that you are reading a very important psalm. Other than Psalm 22, Psalm 69 is quoted more often in the New Testament than any other psalm. When Jesus ran the moneychangers out of the temple, it reminded the disciples of a quote from Psalm 69 (John 2:17). Jesus again quoted from Psalm 69 in John 15:25. In this very important psalm, we find David making a desperate plea to God. He had many enemies that hated him without just cause. He was accused of many things, one being stealing. In verse 4 he said, “Though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it.” This means that David was being accused of, and being punished for, things he did not do. Even though he was not guilty of all the accusations being brought against him, he knew that he was guilty of some and his sin brought great shame to his heart and mind. Verse 6 reveals a desperate plea that neither believers nor seekers be put to shame because of David’s sin. David made some very poor choices that caused even those closest to him to distance themselves from him. Verse 6 also reminds us that one of the devil’s biggest lies is that we are not hurting anyone but ourselves!

Prayer Emphasis: **Accept** God’s forgiveness for any and all confessed sin, but **acknowledge** that consequences may still follow. **Love** God enough to continue serving after a forgiven failure or lapse of faith. When others struggle with sin, **treat** them as you would want to be treated in the same situation. **Reach** out to someone who has been missing from our services and let them know that you love and miss them.

Day 36: Psalm 69:19-36

“But I am poor and sorrowful; let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.” (Psalm 69:29-30)

Turning the Corner

The first half of the last half (doesn’t that sound weird?) of this psalm is not the easiest to understand. While in a time of scorn, disgrace, and shame, David felt abandoned by his closest friends and family. His words became angry and resentful. He began to wish evil things on people and even asked God to not save some of them and to throw some of the saved ones out of the family (vs. 27-28). Then David took his eyes off others and looked at himself. In verse 29 he said, “I am poor and sorrowful” (NKJV) or “I am in pain and distress” (NIV). So, he decided that his “pity party” had run its course and he made a vow of praise. In our own vernacular, verse 30 could read, “I just decided to start singing praise songs and give God glory for all of the good things He has ever done for me!” When David did that, he turned a corner. He wisely realized that his heart attitude might be more important to God than any other thing that he might offer to Him. In our focus verse David basically says, “I will not allow what *I am* at this moment to affect what *I will* do when it is time to “magnify Him with thanksgiving.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God to protect your heart and to keep you focused on what is important to Him. **Guard** your attitude. **Refuse** to allow your sorrow to break you or to give birth to an angry spirit. **Sing** praises to God amid great trials and afflictions and you, too, will soon turn the corner!

Day 37: Psalm 70

“Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say continually, ‘Let God be magnified!’” (Psalm 70:4)

“Continually”

The word translated “continually” (NKJV) or “always” (NIV) in Psalm 70:4 is one of the most interesting words that I have studied in quite some time. I was surprised to discover that this word is a noun that means “continuity” or “perpetuity.” Even though it is most often translated “continually,” “daily,” or “always” in the Bible, this word actually represents the “duration” of time where some believers refused to do anything but exalt God – even when they did so in spite of their difficult circumstances. Many of us will exalt God *because* of some wonderful thing He has done for us or for some recent blessing He has bestowed upon us. But God is most honored in the lives of those who will exalt Him on an *in spite of* basis. If we have a true love and appreciation for our salvation, and the price that God paid for us to have it, then we will find ourselves always exalting God and our witness being constant and clear to the world around us no matter our circumstances or situation. Psalm 70 may be *short* lengthwise, but it stands *tall* as it teaches us to always stand tall for God! Try David’s prescribed program. Next time you are troubled or down, “rejoice” and “be glad” while “continually” saying, “Let God be magnified!”

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to serve God on a conditional basis. **Commit** to serve God even if He does not give you exactly what you want exactly when you want it. **Remember** that God’s children have more to praise God about in our bad times than some people do in their best times!

Day 38: Psalm 71:1-12

“I have become a wonder to many, but you are my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.” (Psalm 71:7-8)

All Day Long

We have read in the psalms where David asked God to help him to be faithful in all that he *did*. But here, in Psalm 71:8, we find David asking God to help him to remain faithful to Him in all that he *said*. That is what he meant when he said, “Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with your glory”. But there is more to David’s request than might first meet the eye. His prayer was that his “mouth” might “be filled with” God’s “praise and with” God’s “glory *all the day*.” The word translated “mouth” here is a Hebrew word that is used to represent the mouth or opening of anything. In Genesis 29, it is used three times to describe the “mouth” of a well. In Genesis 43, it is used to describe the “mouth” of a sack. In Exodus 28:32 and 39:23 it is translated “hole” – and that is exactly what it meant! In every one of those places in the Bible, this word is used to refer to the opening of something that was to be filled with something. The same is true about our mouths. God’s design for our mouths is that they be filled with praise and that they be declaring God’s glory all day long. The things that come out of our mouths originate in our heart. If our speech is going to be consistently praising God all day long, then we need to be thinking of Him and praising Him in our hearts all day long.

Prayer Emphasis: Meditate on some part of God’s Word today. **Respond** to life situations in a biblical and Godly manner. **Review** Psalm 19:14 and **meditate** on this: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”

Day 39: Psalm 71:13-24

“But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits.” (Psalm 71:14-15)

More and More

Although the writer of this psalm is not identified, it is assumed that it was written by an older Christian who was in the latter years of his life. In verse 17 he said, “O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works.” In verse 18, he speaks of being “old and gray headed” yet still having a burning passion to declare God’s power to the generation among whom he now lived. In that same verse we see him looking into the future and planning on praising God in the presence of “everyone who is to come.” His desire was that God would continue to use him to reach future generations to come. Here was a person who had served God for a long time and still desired to be growing in his service to the Lord. In verse 14, he stated that his desire was to praise God “yet more and more.” The word translated “more” twice in that verse is a word that is translated “add” or “increase” in 44 other places in the Old Testament. What a blessing to see a person in the latter years of their life that is still growing in knowledge and service. God was still teaching him, and as a result, he was still excited about serving God. His ministry was not diminishing but increasing.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask yourself these hard questions: “Am I still growing in my knowledge of God and His Word?” “Am I growing in my desire to serve Him?” “Am I as excited about God today as I was at some time in my past?”

Day 40: Psalm 72

“And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen..” (Psalm 72:19)

“Amen and Amen”

You may very well hear the word “amen” more times in one church service than you would if you listened to the entire Old Testament being read from beginning to end! The Hebrew word translated “amen” is only found around 30 times in most Bibles and only about 27 of those times is it translated “amen.” When you consider the fact that the word is found 12 times in Deuteronomy 27:15-26 alone (the only 12 times that it is found in the entire book), then you have only 15 other occurrences throughout the rest of the Old Testament. In some translations the word translated “amen” here is translated “truth” twice (Isaiah 65:16) and “so be it” once (Jeremiah 11:5). So, when you are sitting in church and you hear someone respond to the preaching with an “Amen!” you are hearing them say, “So be it!” or “Truth!” When the writer penned the final words to Psalm 72, he desired so much that “the whole earth be filled with His glory” that he added, “Amen and Amen.” As we conclude another 40 days in God’s Word together, let us pause to say, “Amen and Amen!” “Truth!” “So be it!”

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for the many people who wrote the psalms and for those who were faithful to make sure that this book was preserved for people like you and me. **Read** some from this book every day, and you will find that it will help you to keep a song in your heart through even the darkest times. If we can minister to you in any way, please contact us at gary@seminolebc.com or 850-562-8069.