

Monday, October Second

Read through the Bible



The Psalms: Book One
Week Two



Have you ever gone out to St. Pete Beach, looked out into the vast and seemingly never-ending Gulf and thought, “Wow! The world is so big and I am so small”? We typically don’t think these types of thoughts when we’re going about our day and accomplishing our daily routines. But if you travel to places like the beach or the Grand Canyon or the Blue Ridge mountains, suddenly, your perspective begins to change. In today’s psalm, David’s perspective changes when he compares himself to the rest of God’s creation.

Read: Psalm 8

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What is David astonished by in verses 3 and 4?

From our own perspective, it’s easy to think the world revolves around us (wait...it doesn’t?!). But imagine how David must have felt when he tried to look at things from God’s perspective: “God created all sorts of marvelous things – massive oceans, huge mountains, mammoth planets, endless stars. And yet amidst all of that, God cares about *me*? Tiny, insignificant *me*?” You see, David came to the humbling conclusion that God didn’t have to care about such insignificant creatures as us, but He did so anyways. Through Jesus, God has made the insignificant significant!

- What all has God given humankind dominion over? (see verses 5-8)

God’s plan for us from the very beginning was to rule over His creation – “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’” (Genesis 1:26)

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to praise God for a new week, and thank Him for giving us with the responsibility of watching over His creation.

Tuesday, October Third

Imagine you're at Walmart on a Saturday afternoon to get a few things for the upcoming week. After picking up those items, you make your way over to the checkout lines. You check the 30 lines to see which ones are open, and only 3 are lit up. You begrudgingly make your way to the closest open checkout line, which now has over 20 people waiting in it. All of a sudden, a woman talking loudly into her cell phone walks past the entire line and puts her items down on the conveyor belt. Another customer tries to tell her she needs to get to the back of the line, but the woman ignores him. At this point, the person in front of you starts to yell, "Manager!", hoping that a Walmart employee will come over and handle this unfair situation. Similarly, in today's psalm, David cries out to God in the hopes that He will handle an unfair situation.

Read: Psalm 9

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

If you remember the nursery songs from your childhood, you probably realized at some point that "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," "Baa Baa Black Sheep," and "ABCs" are all sung to the same tune. When David wrote this psalm, he asked that it be played to the same tune of what was likely a popular song at the time – "The Death of the Son."

- What did God do to David's enemies? (see verses 3-6)
- How does David describe God in verses 9 and 10?

David experienced many troubling times throughout his lifetime, but he did not forget who he could turn to in those moments. When we experience troubling times of our own, it is comforting to know that we can seek refuge in our God who does not forsake us.

- What does David suggest as to why these bad things have happened to his enemies? (see verses 15-16)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a few minutes to do what David says in verse 1.

Wednesday, October Fourth

People are fascinated with villains. For decades, Disney spent significant time and money promoting the heroes of their animated movies. But over the past few years, the company has started to catch on that fans are also enthralled by the movies' villains. This has led to nighttime "Villains" events at the Disney theme parks, and even the creation of a line of merchandise centered around the Disney villains. In today's psalm, David shares in this curiosity of the wicked as he tries to understand their character, decisions, and motives. He also wonders where God is when these villains terrorize the weak and helpless.

Read: Psalm 10

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

As you read this rather grim psalm, you can tell that David spent quite some time observing and analyzing the ways of the wicked. In fact, Martin Luther commented that "there is not, in my judgment, a Psalm which describes the mind, the manners, the works, the words, the feelings, and the fate of the ungodly with so much propriety, fullness, and light, as this Psalm."

- What is a wicked man's relationship with God? (see verses 3-5)

David paints a vivid depiction of who the wicked are focused on – themselves. They trample over the weak and the helpless, and they laugh and boast in the face of God. How could God allow such people to prevail?

- What does David call on God to do to the wicked? (see verses 12 and 15)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). Think of people who have wronged you this past week, and spend some time praying for them and considering how you can love them in their shortcomings.

Thursday, October Fifth

If you had to make an important life decision and reached out to your friends for advice, you'd probably get a variety of differing opinions: "You should go for it!", "I don't think that's a good idea. I'd not do that.", "Hmm...I could see both sides to this one.", or even "Follow your heart and it will lead you where you need to go!" With so many different thoughts and opinions, though, sometimes you may actually find your friends' advice to be not as helpful as you initially thought. David faced a similar issue in Psalm 11, and as a result, had to figure out who he was going to listen to.

Read: Psalm 11

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

David wrote Psalm 11 while he was on the run from King Saul (1 Samuel 16-24). Because he had an army chasing him, David had to rely on the Lord as his refuge and compass. His friends, however, had some other suggestions as to what he should do next.

- What advice do David's friends give to him? (see verses 1-3)

Sometimes, our friends' advice can be well intentioned but not very helpful. Suppose you're at Mazza's Italian Market and you're trying to decide whether you should get the beef lasagna or the baked ziti. You ask your friend for advice and she says, "Whatever you're hungry for!" 😊 Well intentioned, but not very helpful!

- What is David's response to their concern? (see verses 4-7)

This is the point where belief and action collide. If David really believes that God will protect him in the coming battle, why should he flee from it? It was at this point that David had to decide whether he was going to heed the advice of his friends or trust in the promises of God. Fortunately for him, he chose the latter!

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Who do you get your advice from? Consider how the promises of God in Scripture can inform and direct the decisions you make on a daily basis.

Friday, October Sixth

Remember this story from 2005? A woman walked into a Wendy's in San Jose, Nevada and allegedly found a human finger in the chili she ordered. News quickly spread of this outrageous incident, causing some customers to boycott the popular restaurant chain. At the same time, though, something about the story wasn't quite adding up, but the detectives couldn't quite put a finger on it. Finally, about a month later, police determined that the woman who made the complaint actually planted the finger in the chili in order to launch a lawsuit against Wendy's. While the woman was eventually caught in her own lie, her false witness against Wendy's damaged the company's reputation for many years. In today's psalm, David speaks out against those who are bearing false witness against him and his people.

Read: Psalm 12

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

You've probably noticed by now that quite a few of David's psalms were written "for the director of music." Some believe this title speaks about an actual conductor or chief musician like Asaph, while others propose the idea that he is referring to God.

- What is David's concern? (see verses 1-2)
- How are the lips of the wicked compared to the words of the Lord? (see verses 3-4 and 6)

When a jury hears from both witnesses who speak for the defendant and those who speak against him, it's sometimes hard to tell who is telling the truth and who is not. David reminds us, though, that even when we don't know whose words to believe, we can believe the words of God. They are "flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times" (v. 6).

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Ask God to guard you from deceiving others and speaking falsely against them. Give thanks that Christ spoke truthfully for us!

Saturday, October Seventh

When Hurricane Irma came through in September, it knocked out power to over 80% of residents in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. As the affected residents woke up Monday morning after the storm, they were faced with the realization that they might not have power for many days or even weeks. Attitudes about the outage started off strong – “Ok we can do this. We’re just going to open some windows and get a little air circulation in here.” But by the time 2 am rolled around and many Floridians were laying in their beds dripping with sweat, their hopeful attitudes began to change. By the end of the week, those without power were left anxiously wondering, “When will this nightmare end? This is miserable!” In Psalm 13, David also experiences a situation that left him anxiously wondering, “God, when will this hardship end?”

Read: Psalm 13

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What is David’s concern about God in verse 1?
- David was experiencing many burdens as he wrote this psalm. What were they? (see verse 2)

When it rains, it pours. David was experiencing all kinds of issues when he wrote this psalm to God – he was uncertain of the future, he was emotionally fatigued to the point of despair, and his enemies were constantly gaining an advantage over him. With so many things not going David’s way, it’s easy to see why he wondered if God had forgotten him (v. 1). However, this was not the final conclusion that David came to...

- What does David decide to do in spite of his present circumstances? (see verses 5-6)

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Consider your present overwhelming circumstances, and then pray through this psalm (try reading a verse, then praying, reading a verse, then praying, etc.).

Sunday, October Eighth

In *The Book of Eli*, Denzel Washington plays a character who roams the ravaged wastelands of Earth after 30 years of war and destruction. While the remaining survivors have all turned from God, Eli carries with him the last known copy of the Bible. *The Book of Eli* is a fascinating story of what happens when a culture turns from God and seeks its own fame and fortune. In today’s psalm, David depicts his current culture as one similar to what you might see and experience in this movie.

Read: Psalm 14

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What does the Lord find when He looks down from heaven? (see verses 2-3)

If God looked down from heaven today, what might He see? Would He see a culture actively seeking God and showing love to others? Or would He see a destructive and divisive culture that no longer seeks Him? While David’s time period was certainly different from ours, you can see that many of the issues he was illustrating in his psalms are many of the same issues we are dealing with today.

- Why are the evildoers “overwhelmed with dread”? (see verse 5)
- What was David hoping God would do? (see verse 7)

Like many others in his day, David was looking for salvation for Israel. He was looking for a Savior who would come and defeat the powers of evil in this world. Whether he realized it or not, a Savior was indeed coming through David’s own lineage - one who would defeat the enemy and “restore the fortunes of his people” (v. 7).

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

In what ways do you seek God throughout your day?

Questions? Comments? Contact Vicar Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 531-2761