

Monday, October Ninth

Read through the Bible



The Psalms: Book One
Week Three



Think, for a moment, about a person in your life who you have looked up to over the years. What is (or was) this person like? What characteristics does she or he possess? What are the fondest memories of your time spent with that person? Oftentimes, you and I look up to people because we see positive and redeeming characteristics that they possess, and in many cases, we desire to mimic those traits and behaviors. In today's psalm, David describes a person that we all should strive to be like.

Read: Psalm 15

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What question does David ask of God? (see verse 1)
- How does he describe the person who is able to dwell in the presence of God? (see verses 2-5)
- What is the end result for someone who does these things? (see the end of verse 5)

Wait a second...Psalm 15 suggests that only people who do good things can dwell in God's presence. Is that really what we believe as Christians? Not necessarily. You see, back in David's day, the people of Israel were living under what we call 'the Old Covenant.' Under this covenant, God's blessing and grace were largely dependent on a person's obedience to Him. However, since the death and resurrection of Jesus, God's people now live under 'the New Covenant.' Under this covenant, God's blessing and grace are solely dependent on faith, not on our own performance. Therefore, while it's good that we strive to be like the person David describes in Psalm 15, it is only through Christ's perfect and completed work on the cross that we are able to dwell in God's eternal presence.

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

Take a moment to praise God for a new week, and thank Him for showing us grace through His own death and resurrection.

Tuesday, October Tenth

You hear it at a football game. You hear it at the Oscars. You hear it at a chili-cook off. You can even sometimes hear it at a high school graduation. What is it? People giving credit to God for their skills, talents, techniques, and acumen. For example, during an interview after winning a college rivalry football game, a star player might say, "I just want to thank God for all He has given me to allow me to get to where I am today. I know I made a lot of plays tonight, but I cannot take credit for them without first giving credit to God." In today's psalm, David gives credit to God for all the ways He has provided for him, even amidst an overwhelming circumstance.

Read: Psalm 16

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

The Apostles understood this psalm of David as speaking to Jesus' future resurrection in verses 9-11. Peter quotes it when speaking to the crowd after Pentecost (Acts 2:25-28), and Paul references it when speaking to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch (Acts 13:35-37).

- What plea does David make? (see verse 1)
- To whom does David give credit to for the blessings he has received throughout his lifetime? (see verses 2 and 5)
- In light of his present overwhelming circumstances, what does David decide to do? (see verses 7-11)

It can be difficult to praise the Lord when you're going through a tough time. After all, what exactly about your situation warrants praise? David suggests, though, that praising God isn't necessarily linked to our present circumstances. Instead, whether things are going great or things are going terribly, we praise our God all the same because apart from Him, we have no good thing (v. 2).

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

In light of all of the things you need to do (or already did) today, take some time in prayer to thank God for all He has given you.

Wednesday, October Eleventh

Once a semester, college students living in residence halls at the University of Tampa experience what is often referred to as 'health and safety inspections.' During these inspections, Resident Assistants (RAs) will go through student rooms looking for specific violations of housing policies. These violations include illegal substances, damaged furniture, messy floors, and even hidden pets ("That's weird...I don't know how this dog got into our room!"). At the end of the inspection, the RAs will inform the students as to whether or not they passed. In today's psalm, David invites God to inspect his life while he finds himself surrounded by enemies.

Read: Psalm 17

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did David invite God to do? (see verse 3) What did God find? (see verses 3-5)

Did David pass God's inspection? David certainly thinks so! As a young man under the Old Covenant, David felt he had done a pretty good job of keeping himself from wandering away from God's paths (v. 5). But as David would later discover, there were also times when he would find himself wandering away from God.

- What does David ask of God? (see verse 8-9)
- What does David ultimately wish to experience? (see verse 15)

While David presently wants to be delivered from his enemies, he ultimately wishes to experience God in His fullness. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, you and I can experience that fullness right now!

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

What might God find if He inspected your life right now? What areas would you be proud of? What areas would you not be so proud of? Thank Him that we have 'passed' because of Jesus!

Thursday, October Twelfth

Pick your favorite fantasy-action movie. *The Avengers*. *The Lord of the Rings*. *Star Wars*. *Avatar*. *Narnia*. *Harry Potter*. *Jumanji*.

Somewhere within your favorite film, there is likely a dramatic scene in which the hero is completely surrounded by the bad guys. It's looking grim for the hero, when all of a sudden, allies swoop in to save the hero from his almost certain-doom. In Psalm 18, David describes a similar rescue as he is surrounded by his enemies.

Read: Psalm 18:1-29

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

You may have noticed that Book One of the Psalms contains 41 psalms, but our devotional series is 42 days. That's because Psalm 18 is so long that we'll need two days to journey through it! In fact, there are only three psalms longer than this one (78, 89, and 119).

- Who did David sing this song to, and what was the occasion for doing so? (see introduction to Psalm 18)

Right before David died, he sang a song to the Lord that is almost identical to Psalm 18 (see 2 Samuel 22). Scholars believe David wrote this psalm shortly after he became king, and then recounted it decades later in his final moments on earth.

- What sort of trouble was David experiencing? (see verses 4-5) How did God respond to David's cry? (see verses 6-19)

David's imagery describing God's rescue is breathtaking, isn't it? Smoke. Fire. Blazing coals. Cherubim. Darkness. Rain. Thunder. Lightning. Trembling. Quaking. Soaring. Advancing. David's point is clear in these verses: his enemies were great, but God was greater.

- Where does David find his strength? (see verses 28-29)

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

Think of a recent time when God rescued you from a terrifying or difficult situation. How did you respond to Him?

Friday, October Thirteenth

Ah, yes. Friday the thirteenth. A day that fills some people with superstition, uneasiness, and uncertainty. You're probably familiar with some of the folklore surrounding days like today. "Don't cross a black cat on Friday the thirteenth!" "Just watch! People are going to be acting strangely today!" "Did you see the full moon? How unlucky can we get?!" For centuries, superstitious individuals have viewed Friday the thirteenth as a day filled with unlucky and unfortunate circumstances. The fact that we're also in the month of October makes today even more uneasy and uncertain for some. However, in today's psalm – the second half of Psalm 18 – David displayed no uncertainty when it came to his fateful day of battle. He knew exactly who he could rely upon as he made his way out to face his enemies.

Read: Psalm 18:30-50

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- Why is David able to battle his enemies? (see verses 32-36)
- How does David describe his victory? (see verses 38-42)

These verses vividly remind us how gruesome and horrific war is. As he fought this battle, though, David understood that delivering justice would ultimately bring about peace in the region. Similarly, when Jesus died a gruesome and horrific death on the cross, God the Father delivered His divine justice upon God the Son so that you and I can experience eternal peace by His resurrection.

- How did David become king of Israel? (see verse 43)

Even after leading his army to victory and being hailed the new king of Israel, David did not forget how he got there. God, his rock and deliverer, had brought him from a young shepherd to a great ruler.

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

How has God brought you through this past week? Spend some time in prayer giving thanks for the ways He has provided for you.

Saturday, October Fourteenth

If you've been to many outdoor events throughout your lifetime, you've probably seen at least one small plane flying overhead with a message like this - "B A D C R E D I T ? N O C R E D I T ? G E T A C A R N O W A T 1 8 0 0 - 5 5 5 - 5 5 5 5." When people hear the engine of the plane, they start to look up, then point, and pretty soon, everybody at the event has seen the flying banner (especially if the plane keeps flying overhead for quite some time!). And while you may not remember the phone number, there is no doubt that the advertising plane got its message across. In today's psalm, David illustrates how God gets His message across to His people.

Read: Psalm 19

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Over the centuries, many people have been awestruck by the beauty and splendor portrayed in this psalm. C.S. Lewis, for example, said, "I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." What do you think?

- Whose voice can be heard throughout the earth? (see verses 1-4) What does this voice proclaim? (see verse 1)

If we stop for a moment and look around us, we can vividly see God's glory and majesty displayed in His creation. As creatures designated by God to rule over His creation, we see His glory and His mighty work firsthand in all we experience each and every day.

- What descriptors does David use to depict this voice? (see verses 7-10)
- What does David pray for protection from? (see verse 13)

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

How often do you pray for God to protect you from sinning? Most of the time, we think we can handle that department ourselves, but David shows us a simple way to ask God to keep us from willful sins that aim to rule over us (v. 13). Add this to your prayers today.

Sunday, October Fifteenth

When the men and women of our military head off to battle, their family and friends often gather around the departure site to wish them well on their upcoming mission. While they are there to show support, these wives, husbands, children, and parents are also praying that this will not be the last time they see their loved one. As a result, many military families spend time in prayer each day asking God to protect these brave men and women, and to bring them home safely. In today's psalm, King David receives a similar kind of reception as he departs on his upcoming mission.

Read: Psalm 20

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Psalm 20 takes on a different form than the ones we've read so far. Unlike the singular voice of David we're used to, this psalm also includes the words of the people of Israel. While it is uncertain as to when this psalm was written, it was likely later recorded by King David as a remembrance of a sendoff he received from the people of Israel as he headed off into battle.

- How do the people of Israel want God to respond to David as he heads into battle? (see verses 1-4)
- What is the difference between the army of Israel and the other armies in terms of who or what they place their trust in? (see verse 7)

David may have used chariots and horses to win the battles of his day, but they were not what he placed his trust in. As he continued to face danger of many kinds, His trust was firmly in God.

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

Take some time on this Sunday to pray for those in harm's way. Ask that God protect them and bring them home safely.

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