

Monday, October Sixteenth

Read through the Bible



The Psalms: Book One
Week Four



**OUR
SAVIOR
LIVING
LOVE**

This past summer, U.S. soldier Dave Eubank received a call that ISIS fighters had ambushed a group of Iraqi civilians in West Mosul. When he and his fellow soldiers arrived at the scene, they noticed a few civilians caught between the gunfire. "There was no way to help them even though they were only 150 yards away," Eubank said. "They prayed and God opened a way." Dave and his crew would later give thanks to God for answering their prayers and allowing them to rescue these civilians. In today's psalm, the people of Israel give thanks to God for answering their prayers.

Read: Psalm 21

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Have you ever prayed to God and your prayer was answered? What did you do when you received His answer to your prayer? Did you give Him praise? Did you thank Him for His involvement in your life? In Psalm 20, the people of Israel prayed for God to deliver David and his men from their enemies as they went off into battle. In Psalm 21, the people now turn back to God with praise as they thank Him for bringing victory to David and his army. In this sense, Psalm 21 is a joyous response to the answered prayer of Psalm 20.

- In what ways did God answer the people of Israel's prayers for David? (see verses 1-6)
- What kind of example is David to the people of Israel? (see verse 7)

The people of Israel didn't just *think* King David trusted in God; they *knew*. By the way he spoke, by the way he acted, and by the way he led, David made it abundantly clear to those around him that in the midst of difficult times, he was not shaken from his trust in the Lord (v. 7).

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

Do those around you know that your trust is in the Lord? How might they be able to tell by the way you speak, act, and lead?

Tuesday, October Seventeenth

Imagine you are on a boat about 20 miles off the coast of Tampa Bay when your engine malfunctions and dies. Realizing there's no way you're going to be able to paddle to shore with the current winds, you pick up your VHF radio and call for help. An operator from Florida Fish and Wildlife answers and tell you she will send somebody to your location as soon as possible. But after a couple of hours of waiting and making more calls, you begin to wonder if someone is actually going to come and rescue you. In today's psalm, David wonders if God is actually going to rescue him.

Read: Psalm 22

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What concern does David have when writing this psalm? (see verses 1-2)
- Why were people mocking David? (see verses 6-8)

David was being mocked for trusting in the Lord to save him from this grim situation. In the New Testament, the crucified Jesus was also mocked in similar fashion – “Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!’ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself!’” (Mark 15:29-31). While no one likes to be ridiculed, we (like David and Jesus) will sometimes be mocked for our faith and trust in God.

- How does David describe his condition? (see verses 14-16)
- What does David conclude in verse 24? (compare to his original concern in verses 1-2)

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

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and thank Him for not abandoning us, especially in our moments of greatest despair.

Wednesday, October Eighteenth

If you've never read Psalm 23 before, you've probably heard it in songs, in speeches, in movies, and in TV shows. In fact, for thousands of years since the time King David first wrote it, Psalm 23 has served as a beautiful depiction of the relationship that our God has with us.

Read: Psalm 23

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How does David describe God? (see verse 1)

Back when David wrote this psalm, being a shepherd was one of the lowliest positions you could have. David would have known this firsthand, as he was first a shepherd before he became a hero and a king. So why does David describe God as a shepherd? After all, he could have described Him as King or Almighty or Ruler or Conqueror or any of the powerful terms that people often use to describe God. David depicts Him as ‘shepherd’ to show us and remind us that our great and mighty God stooped down – He took on the lowliest position – in order to take care of and watch over you and me. And notice, also, that He's not just *a* shepherd or *the* shepherd. He is what? *My* Shepherd. He is *your* Shepherd. He is the Shepherd specifically designed to watch over you!

- Why is David not afraid of difficult situations he may encounter throughout his lifetime? (see verse 4)

Even though we will go through difficult valleys throughout our lifetime, we do not have to be afraid because we have a Shepherd who is confidently guiding us through them. The Shepherd's presence doesn't eliminate the presence of evil, but it does eliminate the fear of evil.

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

Take a moment to praise the Shepherd for loving you and leading you through all kinds of weather and all sorts of circumstances.

Thursday, October Nineteenth

In the movie *Rear Window*, Jimmy Stewart plays a wheelchair-bound photographer named Jeff who keeps tabs on all of his neighbors from his apartment window. With his constant observations, he knows when people are coming, when they are going, and what they're doing throughout their day. Jeff's ability to keep track of everything going on in his cul-de-sac ends up serving him well, as he is later asked to help solve a neighborhood mystery. In today's psalm, David gives praise to our God who keeps tabs on everybody and everything within His creation.

Read: Psalm 24

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Scholars believe David wrote the psalm in reference to the occasion when the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Jerusalem during his reign as king (see 2 Samuel chapter 6). As you can see from the words of Psalm 24, praise and honor is given to God as the founder of all people and things we experience on this earth.

- In light of David's proclamation in verses 1 and 2, what question does he ask? (see verse 3)

David asks an important question – who is worthy of standing before our great and mighty God? If we try to answer this with God's standard, then the answer is...none of us! But as the author of Hebrews reminds us, because the resurrected Jesus is our high priest, we can "approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (4:16). In other words, Jesus alone makes us worthy to stand before our great and mighty God.

- How does he describe the person who is able to stand in God's presence? (see verses 4-6)

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

Either today or tomorrow, let someone know how much you value them, and how much God values them too.

Friday, October Twentieth

If you've ever told a young child not to do something before, how did she respond? Chances are, she did exactly what you told her not to do! Why is that? For some reason, children are curious to see what will happen if they disobey your order. But once they get placed in 'time-out' as punishment for not doing what you asked of them, that curiosity quickly fades away. Eventually, the child learns the greater benefit in following your rules than in experiencing your punishments. In today's psalm, David speaks as someone who has learned from the rebellious days of his youth.

Read: Psalm 25

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- In what ways does David want to learn from God? (see verses 4-5)
- What does David want God to remember, and what does he want Him to forget? (see verses 6-7)

I'm sure if you looked back on the days of your own youth, there would probably be a few things you wouldn't be too proud of! Whether you snuck out of the house, pulled a practical joke on your teacher, or even prank called a local restaurant, you would probably prefer these memories not be recounted or shared in front of people you are trying to impress. Much in the same way, David pleaded with God to not count the sins of his youth and his rebellious ways against him. At the same time, though, David understood that he was still responsible for these sins, and needed to address them in a meaningful way...

- What does David ask God to do in verses 11 and 18? Why do you think he asks this?

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

Repentance is an important aspect of our relationship with God. Like David in Psalm 25, take some time to bring your sins to Him.

Saturday, October Twenty-First

If you ask musicians when they write their best songs, they'll likely tell you that it's during or shortly after a difficult time in their life – a bad breakup, a family fight, an ongoing battle with addiction, or even an unforeseen financial hardship. The late Tom Petty, for example, wrote the song "I Won't Back Down" shortly after an arsonist set fire to his home and destroyed it in 1987. In today's psalm, David writes about a difficult time in his life – a time that left him questioning God's fairness and justice in the world.

Read: Psalm 26

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

As you've seen throughout this week, David often wrote psalms when he was in great distress. His pattern gives us a little bit of insight into the human condition – we are often more likely to plead with God than praise Him.

- Why does David feel he should be vindicated? (see verse 1)
- What does David attempt to do by comparing himself to the wicked? (see verses 4-8)

In Psalm 26, David is coming to grips with a series of questions that have plagued the hearts and minds of people throughout time – "Why do bad things happen to good people?" and "Why do good things happen to bad people?" In other words, David didn't understand why he was devoting his life to God when he wasn't receiving any more favor or mercy than the wicked. David even went as far as to challenge God to examine his heart and mind to prove that he was worthy of His favor. But since the coming of Jesus, we have come to understand that God's favor is not based on what we do, but rather on what Christ has already done for us!

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

Think about a person you normally turn to for help. Consider a creative and meaningful way you can thank them in the next week.

Sunday, October Twenty-Second

Around 4:30 pm today, families will converge on Our Savior's annual Trunk-or-Treat event. While Halloween is typically a spooky and scary time of the year, the children going to Trunk-or-Treat have nothing to fear. In fact, that's exactly why Trunk-or-Treats began a few years back – parents wanted a safe place to take their kids where they wouldn't feel scared or worried (as was typically the case on Halloween). In today's psalm, David assures his listeners that with God, they have nothing to be worried about.

Read: Psalm 27

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How does David describe God, and how does that description give him confidence? (see verse 1)
- What is David's ultimate desire? (see verses 4-6)
- How does David describe God's timing in an overwhelming situation? (see verse 14)

One of the worst things you can hear on a Friday evening as you've just walked into your favorite restaurant is, "Right now, we're at a 45-minute wait." In an age where everything is immediately at our fingertips, our minds don't like to hear that we're going to have to wait for something we want right now. And yet, waiting is exactly what David calls on his listeners to do. When we "wait for the Lord," we surrender our lives to His will, and trust in His timing. In fact, that's exactly what Jesus did when He surrendered His own life on the cross, and placed His trust in His Father's timing. But just a few days later, on the Easter morning, it was well worth the wait!

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

What do you find yourself worrying about? Make a list of your worries, take them to God in prayer, and wait for His reply (v. 14).

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