

# Read through the Bible



## The Psalms: Book One Week Five



**OUR  
SAVIOR  
LIVING  
LOVE**

*Monday, October Twenty-Third*

If you've ever been to a fancy dinner party before, you probably remember having to navigate through a sea of social exchanges with other guests. *Shake this person's hand. Compliment her on her dress. Bow. Curtsy. Tell him what a pleasure it is to be here.* By the end of the evening, people have given out so many compliments to one another that you begin to wonder how many of them are actually sincere. In today's psalm, David questions the motives of those who speak cordially with their neighbors.

*Read:* Psalm 28

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What does David ask God not to do? (see verses 1-3)

David reminds us that evil is not just demonstrated by what we do on the outside, but also who we are on the inside. For example, a friend of yours could speak kindly of you to your face, but then turn around and wish misfortune upon you. Jesus also pointed out this masked hypocrisy with the religious leaders of His day - "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matthew 23:27-28). Both David and Jesus ask their listeners to consider their hidden motives when interacting with others.

- What does David ask God to do? (see verses 4-5)
- How does David's heart respond to his answered prayers? (see verse 7)

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

What personal motives drive your conversations with others? How can you guard against harboring malice in your heart?

## Tuesday, October Twenty-Fourth

When people often describe nature, they primarily speak of its beauty. “These mountains are breathtaking!” “These Fall leaves are beautiful!” “This sunset is truly a sight to behold!” Beyond beauty, though, people also describe nature in terms of its power. “These winds are so strong!” “These lightning strikes are terrifying!” “These waves are unbelievable!” In today’s psalm, David describes God’s power through the imagery of nature.

*Read:* Psalm 29

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- Based on verses 1-2, what appears to be the primary purpose of this psalm?

The last few psalms we’ve read have consisted of pleas from David for deliverance from his enemies or from his current situation. In Psalm 29, though, David focuses solely on praising God. Sometimes, it’s good for us to pause from our petitions and praise God for the mighty ways we see Him at work in our lives.

- What kinds of imagery does David use to describe God’s power? (skim through the psalm to get a general sense)

The vast amount of nature imagery – thunder, water, cedars, lightning, desert, oaks, forests and even the Great Flood – show us just how powerful and mighty God’s voice is. For example, the cedars of Lebanon (v. 5) were well known throughout the region for being tall, strong trees. However, God’s voice is so powerful, that it can easily break them into splinters. David’s message here is clear - when God speaks, things happen! As a result, we can always be assured that God remains in control.

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

Take a moment to reflect on God’s power, and praise Him for the ways He is at work in your life.

## Wednesday, October Twenty-Fifth

Parenting provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate both God’s justice and grace. For example, if a young child throws his broccoli at his sister while sitting at the table, a parent might make him get out of his chair and pick the broccoli up off the ground. Upset he has to do this, the child then has to put the broccoli into the trashcan and apologize to his sister. When his sister forgives him, though, he begins to understand the grace that follows his discipline. In today’s psalm, David recognizes this pattern.

*Read:* Psalm 30

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

As the description suggests, Psalm 30 was written for the dedication of David’s palace. Notice, though, that the psalm doesn’t talk about David; it speaks of God and His wonderful ways.

- What is David’s main purpose in writing this psalm? (see verses 1-3)
- How does David compare God’s discipline with God’s mercy? (see verse 5)

Nobody likes to be disciplined or experience hardship, but they are necessary components of how we grow and learn to be more like Christ. For example, it is very difficult for us to understand God’s grace when we don’t see a need for His grace. David takes time in Psalm 30 to remind his listeners that while God may discipline us for a moment, His mercy and grace consistently stay with us throughout our lifetime. As Paul noted, “where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20).

- How did God change David, and how did David respond to these changes? (see verses 11-12)

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

How does God’s discipline help you to see His grace? In what ways can you model this pattern for others as Christ did for you?

## Thursday, October Twenty-Six

In the TV series *The Golden Girls*, Rose Nylund (played by Betty White) dates a man named Miles who is wanted by a mobster known as “The Cheese Man.” Rose’s dangerous entanglement with Miles causes the other Golden Girls to cautiously distance themselves from Rose for fear they too might fall victim to the Cheese Man. While Dorothy, Blanche, and Sophia want to be supportive of their naive friend, they also understand that this was not a situation they signed up for. In today’s psalm, David describes his present circumstance as so dire that even his friends stay away from him on account of his enemies.

*Read:* Psalm 31

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

The verses of Psalm 31 are quoted or referenced by many other authors throughout the Bible – Jonah, Jeremiah, Paul, and even Stephen. But perhaps most notably, Jesus quotes the words of Psalm 31:5 as His final words before His death on the cross (see Luke 23:46). Clearly, David struck a chord in describing the trust we place in God even in the midst of trials and tribulations.

- What is David asking God to do, and what does David promise to do in return? (see verses 1-4, then verse 5)

David demonstrates an important aspect of prayer in these opening verses. When we present our requests and concerns to God (verses 1-4), we also submit our will to His (verse 5).

- How do David’s friends view him because of his enemies? (see verses 11-12)
- How did God help David through a difficult situation? (see verses 21-22)

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

Take some time in prayer to commit your spirit to God (v. 5). Consider how this commitment guides your prayers to Him.

## Friday, October Twenty-Seven

For the past two decades, Perry Noble had pastored a fast-growing megachurch in South Carolina. Everything was going great – the Gospel was being shared, folks were coming to faith in Jesus, and people were filling the seats each Sunday to hear more. But in 2016, Noble was removed from his pastoral role by the leadership of the church. Their issue? Noble’s secret life of alcoholism. For many years, Noble had carried the weight of this problem around while, at the same time, appearing to have no problem at all. But once his struggle with alcoholism came out into the open and he repented of his sin, Noble would be reminded of his words he posted on Facebook just a few years before – “Confession and repentance breaks the power of sin in our lives!” In today’s psalm, David shows us the relief we experience when we confess our most hidden sins to God.

*Read:* Psalm 32

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What happened to David when he tried to hide his sin from God? (see verses 3-4)

When we hold in our dark secrets and sinful behaviors, we begin to experience harmful changes to our mind and body. We break out into sweats, we can’t sleep, we don’t eat, we look over our shoulder at every turn, and we disengage from relationships we once held dear. In other words, when we hide our sin from God and others, we carry a burden that we cannot sustain on our own.

- What happened after he confessed his sin? (see verse 5)
- What does David instruct his listeners to do in light of the grace he experienced? (see verses 6-7)

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

What dark secrets or sinful behaviors might you need to acknowledge before God? What relief does His forgiveness bring?

## Saturday, October Twenty - Eighth

If you ask someone why she believes God doesn't care about her, she might tell you that God is just too busy with all of the problems in the world to care about her own problems. For example, she might point to issues like world hunger and widespread violence as reasons for why God doesn't have time to personally deal with her. In today's psalm, though, David shows us that we serve a God who personally cares for us and our problems.

*Read:* Psalm 33

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What does David encourage his listeners to do? (see verses 1-3) Why are they to do this? (see verse 4)

At Our Savior, we follow David's example by singing new songs to God (v. 3). Whether they are time-tested hymns, popular praise songs, or compositions written by our worship leaders, we sing these songs as "new" just as we are made new each day in Jesus.

- How did God create the heavens and earth? (see verses 6-9)
- How does David show God as an active God who is personally interested in us? (see verses 13-15)

If you've ever been asked to keep track of a few kids at a park or outdoor event, you know how difficult it can be to keep tabs on all of them at the same time! One runs this way, another runs that way, and still another is now nowhere to be found. Fortunately, our God is able to keep track of all of us. He watches us, He forms our hearts, and He considers all we do (verses 14-15). When we pray to God, we don't have to wonder whether He is too busy to listen. Instead, we can pray with confidence, knowing that he hears our prayers because "He is faithful in all He does" (v. 4).

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

God knows you personally. Do you know Him personally? Consider how you can spend intentional time each day getting to know Him.

## Sunday, October Twenty - Ninth

As we celebrate Reformation Sunday, we are reminded how much Martin Luther was influenced and comforted by the Psalms and other forms of praise: "Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us." As you reflect on Psalm 34 today, may Luther's words ring true for you!

*Read:* Psalm 34

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

David wrote this psalm in reference to the time when he was a fugitive on the run from King Saul. In this particular instance, he fled to the nearby region of the Philistines, but was recognized by the ruler's servants (see 1 Samuel 21:10 – 22:1). To keep them from capturing him and turning him over to King Saul, David pretended to act insane in front of the Philistine ruler. This prompted the ruler to send him away, thus sparing David's life. Psalm 34 records David's praise to God for delivering him from this rather precarious situation.

- What does David vow to do in verse 1?

David reminds us that in both good time and bad times, our praise to the Lord remains constant. To praise God only in the good times is to deny how God is working in the bad times. After all, the worst instance in history (Jesus' death) brought about the best instance in history (Jesus' resurrection). We praise God in all kinds of weather!

- What does David ask his listeners to do? (see verse 8)
- What elements of the Gospel are present in verse 22?

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

Take David's vow in verse 1 and try it out for yourself today. Consider how easy or difficult it is for you to do this.

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