

19 - Psalm

Psalm

Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS

The Psalms are Hebrew poetry. Many were written to be sung. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme; its chief characteristic is parallelism. In other words, ideas or thoughts which have nearly the same meaning--many times with a little progression added--are repeated (Psalm 4:1). Some psalms are like envelopes--they end with the same phrase with which they began (Psalm 103). Some are structured as acrostics--the beginning of each verse or section follows a letter in the Hebrew alphabet (Psalm 119).

King David wrote so many of the psalms that frequently he is spoken of as the author of Psalms. He is the one who brought music and psalms into temple worship. He organized the temple worship and appointed the Levites as musicians. Moses also wrote many psalms; others were written by the prophets, and others by various musicians serving in the temple.

The Psalms flow through the course of Israel's history. They constitute a kind of inner history which runs parallel to the recorded events. Most of them consist of prayers and praise to God. They tell us that God is intimately involved in Israel's history. He is the Creator of heaven and earth; he is the Redeemer; he is the Ruler of history; he is the one worthy of praise and honor and thanksgiving. As we study the Psalms, let us turn our hearts to him and learn from the Psalmists to praise and thank him and to lay before him all of our fears and anxieties. Let us worship God.

THE HAPPY MAN

Psalm 1:1-6

Key Verse: 1:2

1. A fruitful life (1-3)

This Psalm describes two kinds of people. The first is happy because he is fruitful. He does not accept the counsel of wicked men. He does not hang around people who are looking for trouble. He does not join in with the smart, sophisticated people who mock God or his people. Like a fruitful tree that puts down deep roots by a stream of water, he puts down roots in God's word. He fills his mind and heart with God's word. A tree bears fruit in season because its roots drink from an ever-flowing stream. A man bears good fruit if his roots are in the word of God.

2. Chaff (4-6)

The man without roots thinks he is smart and free--but he is neither. The Bible calls the rootless man wicked. He will perish in the judgment. Like the restless wanderer Cain, he is rootless, fruitless and miserable.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold your word in my heart until my life produces good fruit.

One Word: Like a tree by streams of water

I WILL MAKE THE NATIONS YOUR INHERITANCE

Psalm 2:1-12

Key Verse: 2:8

1. Why do the nations conspire? (1-3)

We are living in a world in rebellion against God. People who rebel against God mistakenly see his sovereign rule as chains and fetters. But rebellion against God's sovereignty is fruitless and finally leads to destruction. (5,9,12)

2. The Anointed One (4-12)

God's Anointed One is the Messiah, the Son of God. In Acts 4:23-28, Peter and John found strength and courage in the prophecy of Christ in this psalm, for they realized that God is sovereign, and the crucifixion of Christ and the persecution of his servants fulfilled the prophecy of God. This psalm does not stop with suffering; it looks forward to victory, and proclaims God's sovereignty. When the Christ sent his disciples into all the world to proclaim the gospel, he was claiming his inheritance.

Prayer: Lord, give us the nations as our inheritance and the ends of the earth as our possession, for the sake of your name.

One Word: Why do men rebel against God?

BECAUSE THE LORD SUSTAINS ME

Psalm 3:1-8

Key Verse: 3:5

1. How many are my foes! (1,2)

There are times when enemies within and without seem to overwhelm us. Those around us discourage us by saying, "God won't help you." What can we do? When David was in this situation, he prayed.

2. God is a shield around me (3-8)

A time of trouble is the very time to experience the love and power of God. He is our shield. He will not only protect us, but he will turn the time of adversity into a time of fruitful victory.

When I cry aloud to him, he answers from his holy hill. He gives such deep peace and security that fear is driven from my heart. I can lie down and sleep in peace, even if tens of thousands of enemies are drawn up against me on every side. I do not need to hate enemies or seek revenge because God himself will deal with them.

Prayer: Lord, I call on you in time of trouble. Remove fear from my heart and sustain me by your presence. Deal with your enemies in your own way.

One Word: From the Lord comes deliverance

THE LORD HAS SET APART THE GODLY FOR HIMSELF

Psalm 4:1-8

Key Verse: 4:3

1. How long will you love delusions?

There are times when we are angered and distressed by the ungodliness of society and the unfaithfulness of people. David felt this way, too. In verses 1-2 he is frustrated by those who dishonor God and proclaim lies as truth. He calls on the righteous God for relief.

2. The Lord has set apart the godly for himself (3)

We do not need to become angry because of godless men. We must know that God has set apart the godly for himself. We must be sure that we ourselves are not drawn into ungodly ways of thinking and acting.

3. In your anger, do not sin (4-8)

We must not give in to anger; we must not end the day and go to sleep with anger in our hearts. We must search our hearts and be silent, waiting on God. We must claim Jesus' sacrifice for cleansing and forgiveness and allow his joy to fill and satisfy our hearts.

Prayer: Lord, by your grace, help me to be a godly person, not an ungodly one. Come and dwell in my heart.

One Word: Set apart for the Lord

O LORD, LISTEN TO MY CRY

Psalm 5:1-12

Key Verse: 5:11a

1. Morning by morning (1-3)

King David was a man of prayer. He was a king, but he honored God as his King, and morning by morning came humbly into God's presence to lay his requests before him. He came just as a lowly subject goes before his king with his petition. He laid his requests before God, then waited in expectation for God's response.

2. Lead me in your righteousness (4-12)

His prayer is based on God's righteous character. He knows God. God hates proud and arrogant people; he abhors those who are deceitful and bloodthirsty, and he hates liars. Pride keeps men from repenting, and keeps them from God. David comes to God humbly, asking his mercy. He asks God to lead him in righteousness. He asks God to deal with rebellious men who speak lying words and whose hearts scheme evil. Then he confesses his assurance that those who take refuge in God find real joy.

Prayer: Lord, I lay my petitions before you and await your answer with expectation.

One Word: Pray and take refuge in God

SAVE ME, O LORD

Psalm 6:1-10

Key Verse: 6:9

1. In times of deep distress (1-7)

David was in great anguish of soul. Perhaps he was physically sick; perhaps he was harassed by enemies; perhaps he was tempted by his own sinful desires and knew that Satan was waging war on his soul. Perhaps he was overwhelmed by guilt. Whatever his problem was, he did not give up. He called on the Lord for mercy and deliverance. He asked God to save him because of God's love. He reminded God that dead men can't remember God or praise him from the grave. He wept like a child before God, and he didn't give up.

2. A sure sense of victory (8-10)

After his prayer, David shouted, "Away from me, all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping." He was confident that God heard his weeping prayer and accepted him. He was sure that God would give him victory.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to pray and not give up in times of deep distress. Help me to pray until you give me a sense of victory.

One Word: The Lord accepts my prayers

MY SHIELD IS GOD MOST HIGH

Psalm 7:1-17

Key Verse: 7:10

1. If there is guilt on my hands...(1-9)

Sometimes the world seems devoid of justice. Even though he was guilty of no disloyalty, David was pursued endlessly by King Saul. There were other times when he was misunderstood and accused unjustly. He had not been the aggressor, but his life was threatened. There was no one to defend him, so he laid his case before God. He discovered that he couldn't trust people. So he asked God who is righteous and who searches the minds and hearts of men to be the judge and bring an end to violence. He trusted God to make him secure.

2. God is my Shield (10-17)

God protects the innocent who put their trust in him. God is a righteous judge; he pursues and destroys those who are full of evil desires but do not repent. He allows violent men to fall into their own trap. He punishes the guilty and saves the upright, for he is just.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me from sin, so that I may be included among the righteous.

One Word: God is my shield

HOW MAJESTIC IS YOUR NAME IN ALL THE EARTH

Psalm 8:1-9

Key Verse: 8:1

1. Your glory is set above the heavens

David begins and ends with a shout of praise to the majesty of God. Perhaps the shepherd boy David welcomed the sun one glorious morning, and exclaimed, "You have set your glory above the heavens." Proud and rebellious men do not praise God, but little children look with awe at God's marvelous works of creation, and from their lips comes praise. Jesus remembered verse 2 when he entered Jerusalem triumphantly.

2. What is man?

When David looked up at the starry sky, he thought about the vastness of God's universe. Man is only a tiny speck. How could the great and glorious God care about him? If we ignore God, we become meaningless specks in the vast sea of the infinite universe. But when we acknowledge him as our Creator and Lord, we find that he created us for mission--to be stewards of his universe. He created us for his glory.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for caring about me and for creating me to do your good work.

One Word: Glorify his majestic name

YOU, LORD, NEVER FORSAKE THOSE WHO SEEK YOU

Psalm 9:1-20

Key Verse: 9:10

1. He will judge the world in righteousness (1-10)

Let us join the Psalmist and sing praise to God's name. Let us rejoice in God. God is a righteous judge. He upholds the cause of those who have a right relationship with him. He rebukes evil nations and destroys wicked men. He uproots cities and brings the enemies of his servant down to ruin. The Lord is righteous. He governs people with justice. He is a refuge for the oppressed and a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know his name trust in him; he never forsakes those who seek him.

2. Proclaim among the nations God's work (11-20)

God's people must proclaim his mighty acts among the nations. God is a just judge. He punishes evil men and evil nations. Men and nations who forget God and oppress people are evil. But God does not forget the needy or allow the hope of the afflicted to perish. Godless nations must some day learn that they are but men; but God is God.

Prayer: Lord, I seek you. Teach me your name. You never forsake those who seek you. I praise you with all my heart. Help me to tell what you have done among the nations.

One Word: Seek the Lord; praise his name.

ARISE, LORD! LIFT UP YOUR HAND

Psalm 10:1-18

Key Verse: 10:12

1. Why are you so far off, O Lord? (1,2)

The Psalmist struggles with his doubt and fear when he sees arrogant men who prey on the innocent and helpless.

2. No room for God in their thoughts (3-11)

Men are capable of any kind of evil when they have no room for God in their thoughts. Such a man is proud; he decides that the law is for someone else; he has no scruples about destroying weaker people for his own gain. It is hard for us to see such men from God's perspective, and easy to envy or fear them, or to become their prey.

3. Arise Lord! Lift up your hand (12-18)

The Lord sees and knows. He helps those who commit themselves to him. He hears the cry of those who call on him. He is King forever. Man is of the earth. When the Lord lifts his hand, man can terrify no one.

Prayer: Lord, help me to make room for you in my thoughts daily, so that I will not become proud. Help me to commit myself wholly to you and not fear evil men.

One Word: Arise, Lord! Lift up your hand

WHEN FOUNDATIONS ARE BEING DESTROYED

Psalm 11:1-7

Key Verse: 11:3

1. What can the righteous do? (1-3)

Secular humanists seem to be battering down the moral foundations of our nation. Satan chips away at the foundations of a person's life. He shoots from the shadows. What can we do? One cannot flee like a hunted bird to the mountains, for there is no place of refuge in the world. But God's people can take refuge in God.

2. The Lord is on his throne (4-7)

The Lord is holy; he dwells in his holy temple, and is seated on his throne. His eyes rove the earth; he sees everything. He sees the hearts of those who are upright. He sees the wicked and those who love violence, and his soul hates them. The Lord loves justice. He will surely rain fiery coals and burning sulfur on the wicked who do not repent. But the upright people will see his face and rejoice in his presence.

Prayer: Lord, when the foundations are being destroyed, only you can be my refuge. Let me not be like a foolish bird who seeks refuge in the mountains.

One Word: God rules history

WHEN WHAT IS VILE IS HONORED

Psalm 12:1-8

Key Verse: 12:6

1. Everyone lies to his neighbor (1-4)

We live in times when "the wicked strut freely about and what is vile is honored." (8) People say, "We own our mouths--we'll use them any way we please." People deceive each other with flattering words and lies. Television, advertising, even so-called works of art fill the atmosphere with unspeakable corruption and violence. We cry with the Psalmist, "Help, Lord!" Are there no more godly and faithful men? The real danger, however, is within our own hearts.

2. The word of the Lord is flawless (5-8)

The Lord protects the weak and the oppressed. He has given us his flawless word to guard our hearts and keep us from evil. What can we do? We can fill our hearts with his word and share it with others. God's word cleanses our hearts (Jn 15:3). His word builds up. We must hold God's word in our hearts and remember that the Lord owns our mouths.

Prayer: Lord, in times when what is vile is honored, help me to hold your word in my heart, and speak it with my mouth.

One Word: God's flawless word in my heart

MY HEART REJOICES IN YOUR SALVATION

Psalm 13:1-6

Key Verse: 13:5

1. How long, O Lord? (1-4)

When seemingly insoluble problems arise, we sometimes find that we must struggle not only with the immediate problem, but also with our own doubts and human thinking. Even King David tasted defeat and struggled with sorrow and with sinful thoughts. It may be that he is physically sick--or he may be sick at heart. He said, "How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and have sorrow in my heart?" But he did not give up; he struggled in prayer and cried out to God to give him victory over enemies within and without.

2. I trust in your unfailing love (5,6)

David remembered the great salvation work which God had wrought in his life. He knew that God loved him. When he affirmed God's love, his questions and doubts and sorrow melted and he was filled with songs of joy and thanksgiving and praise.

Prayer: Lord, I rejoice in your great salvation. I trust your unfailing love. Forgive me for moments of self-pity and doubt, and help me to sing your praises forever.

One Word: Rejoice in God's salvation

THE LORD LOOKS DOWN FROM HEAVEN

Psalm 14:1-7

Key Verse: 14:2

1. The heart of a fool (1-3)

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." When a man wants to do as he pleases, and live according to his sinful nature and do vile deeds, he tries to avoid God by saying, "There is no God." But this is foolish. Saying that there is no God doesn't change the fact that God looks down from heaven on all the activities of man. And God sees the heart. He continually looks for those who seek God, for he wants to strengthen their hearts and bless them. Those who seek God with all their hearts are wise.

2. God is present with the righteous (4-7)

Evildoers devour God's people as a man eats bread. They do not call on the Lord. Such people will be dismayed and overwhelmed when they confront the living God. God's people long for God's presence, and rejoice in him.

Prayer: Lord, when you look down from heaven, seeking those who seek you, look upon me. Grant that I may not be a fool.

One Word: Seek God; don't be a fool

LORD, WHO MAY DWELL IN YOUR SANCTUARY?

Psalm 15:1-5

Key Verse: 15:1

1. A blameless walk (1-2a)

What are the requirements for living in joyful fellowship with God? First, we must be blameless and righteous. For this, we need God's grace of forgiveness. We must walk with God in prayer and obedience every day.

2. Speaking the truth from the heart (2b-5)

God is Truth. There is nothing false in him. (Jn 18:37) The devil is the father of lies. If we dwell with God we must have his truth in us, and we must speak the truth. We must not use words to hurt others, and we must keep our promises, even when it hurts.

3. Honor those who fear the Lord

We are tempted to honor those who have money or high position. But if we dwell with God, we must honor those who fear the Lord. And we must use money wisely. God's servant must not manipulate people with money, nor allow himself to be manipulated by money.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me of sin and make me fit to dwell on your holy hill.

One Word: Dwell with God

I HAVE SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME

Psalm 16:1-11

Key Verse: 16:8

1. The Lord has assigned me my portion (1-6)

Everyone has a concern about his future security. Some people buy insurance; others put hope in their children. Some are only anxious and calculative. David tasted insecurity when he was a fugitive. But David found real security in God. He acknowledged God's sovereignty in life and in death. God gave him many good things, but nothing was so precious as God himself. David confessed, "Apart from you I have no good thing."

2. Therefore my heart rejoices (7-11)

David not only talked to God; he listened. He praised God and his heart rejoiced. And he obeyed God, so he could not be shaken. He did not set worldly goals before him; he set the Lord before him. He could rejoice because he had resurrection faith--the grave was not his destination. He had hope in the eternal kingdom of God. So he could walk the path of life, and overcome all the elements of fear and death.

Prayer: Lord, forgive me for putting my trust in people or things. Help me to set the Lord before me always. Thank you for giving me eternal life.

One Word: I have set the Lord before me

KEEP ME AS THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE

Psalm 17:1-15

Key Verse: 17:8

1. Kept by the word of your lips (1-5)

How can I keep my heart pure? Only when God searches and purifies my heart can I be pure. If I hide his word in my heart, he will lead me in the paths of peace.

2. Keep me as the apple of your eye (6-13)

God loves me. When I call on him in prayer, he is ready to help. He will keep me as the apple of his eye; he will hide me in the shadow of his wings. There were times when David's enemies were too strong for him. They were hard-hearted and proud. Like a crouching lion, they sought his life. But he found security in God, for God is stronger than all enemies.

3. Satisfied with seeing your likeness (14,15)

Those who put their hope in worldly things find that worldly success can never satisfy the hungry and thirsty soul. God stills the hunger of those he loves. I am truly satisfied when I see his face.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from sin; protect me from my enemy, Satan.

One Word: The apple of God's eye

I LOVE YOU, O LORD

Psalm 18:1-19

Key Verse: 18:1

1. I love you, O Lord, my strength

This Psalm is David's love confession to God. David had many enemies. King Saul put a price on his head and forced him to live as a fugitive, then as an exile. He was often just one step away from death. But he overcame fear of death and drove all the factors of death from his heart by taking refuge in God and calling on him for help. He experienced God's saving grace and he learned to live with God. He praised God and loved him with all the passion of his soul.

2. The Lord thundered from heaven

David saw the whole created world and all history from God's point of view. He worshiped the God of creation, and he saw the mighty acts of God in nature. The Creator God took hold of him to rescue him from the hands of his enemies. By faith, he was faithful to God; by faith, he kept his heart pure. He knew that it was God who kept his lamp burning.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to love you.

One Word: I love you, O Lord

THE LORD LIVES

Psalm 18:20-50

Key Verse: 18:46

1. I have kept myself blameless (20-29)

David had two opportunities to kill Saul (1Sa 24:8-13; 26:8-11). He would have been justified in doing so, because Saul was pursuing him like a dog looking for a flea. But Saul was the Lord's anointed, so David did not touch him. David feared God and kept his laws even when he was fleeing for his life. God rewarded him. To the faithful, God shows himself faithful; to the pure he shows himself pure. He saves the humble, but brings the mighty crashing down. God himself kept the lamp of David burning down through the generations to Jesus.

2. God's way and word are flawless (30-50)

When we take refuge in God, he equips us to fight our enemy Satan. He arms us with strength by making our feet like the sure-footed feet of a deer. When one's inner life and actions match like the feet of a deer, God's strength flows in. God promised that Abraham's descendants would possess the gates of their enemies; God kept that promise in David; he keeps it today when his servants conquer the strongholds of the nations of the world with the gospel.

Prayer: Lord, make my heart pure; make my feet like the feet of the deer. Help me to defeat Satan today.

One Word: The Lord lives; trust him wholly

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD

Psalm 19:1-14

Key Verse: 19:4

1. All creation declares God's glory (1-6)

The testimony of nature to the power, wisdom and glory of the Creator God is silent, but eloquent. The sun is one witness to God's glory. He comes out of his tent like a bridegroom arrayed in splendor. He paces steadily across the sky like a champion runner. He proclaims that the hand that made him is divine.

2. God speaks in his word (7-10)

The testimony of God's word enables us to know God personally. God speaks to our hearts and minds through his word. We can know and love God by keeping his commands and obeying his word. When we come to know him through his word, he gives joy to the heart and light to the eyes. God's word revives the soul, and makes wise the simple.

3. Forgive my hidden faults (11-14)

God's word warns us and exposes our sins so that we can repent. When we hold his word in our hearts, he keeps our thoughts pure and our steps sure.

Prayer: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."

One Word: Meditate on God's work and word; obey

WE TRUST IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

Psalm 20:1-9

Key Verse: 20:7

1. May the Lord grant all your requests (1-5)

The King and his army stand ready for battle. Our King is Jesus and our battle is a spiritual one. Our enemy is Satan. We need God's help in the fight. Our King Jesus offered himself as the perfect Sacrifice. We must learn the heart of our King Jesus. May his desires become our desires. May God give him the desires of his heart and make all his plans succeed. May God help us to fight his battles, pray according to his prayer topics, and lead us to victory.

2. We trust in the name of the Lord (6-9)

God hears and answers prayer, so we must call on him. Some people trust in their own ability; others trust in people or in technology. Some trust in chariots and horses--in military power. But we must trust in the name of the Lord our God. Then the enemy will fall. Those who trust in themselves will fail, but those who trust in the Lord will rise up and stand firm.

Prayer: Lord, forgive me for trusting in myself and not praying. Put your own desires in my heart.

One Word: May he give you the desires of your heart

LOVE GOD FIRST

Psalm 21:1-13

Key Verse: 21:6

1. Glad in the joy of God's presence (1-7)

King David loved God. He was a warrior, but he was also a man of prayer. His real joy did not come from victory in battle nor from the glory and honor which he received as a beloved and successful king. His real joy came from God's presence with him. God answered his prayers. Victory in battle brought joy because it made him aware of God's presence and power. Earthly

glory and honor paled to insignificance when he tasted God's love. God granted him eternal blessings and filled him with the joy of his presence.

2. The time of his appearing (8-13)

The unfailing love of the Most High is our bulwark. When Jesus comes again, he will destroy evil. At the time of his appearing he will burn up the enemies of God as in a furnace. David looked forward to the coming of the Lord. On that day, the Lord will destroy the wicked who have rebelled against him.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love you more than anyone else so that I may be ready on the day of your appearing.

One Word: Love God

DO NOT BE FAR FROM ME

Psalm 22:1-31

Key Verse: 22:19

1. My God, why have you forsaken me? (1-18)

This cry was on the lips of Jesus on the cross. When David wrote this psalm, he was in deep anguish and distress--perhaps during the time he was fleeing from Saul. He was being hunted down like an animal. He cried to God day and night, and it seemed that God did not answer him. But he did not become bitter or turn from God. He praised the God of Israel who had heard and answered the cries of his people who put their trust in him. He trusted God anyway.

2. All the ends of the earth will remember (19-31)

David was sure that God would answer. He would honor God before all the people. He would call on everyone to praise God who hears the cries of the suffering, who satisfies the poor and blesses those who fear him. Someday, all the families of nations will bow down before God. People yet unborn will hear of his righteousness.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for raising Jesus from death to give victory to your people and hope to all the people of all times.

One Word: Jesus is God with us

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23:1-6

Key Verse: 23:1

1. I shall not be in want (1-4)

Perhaps David sang this Psalm while he was watching over his sheep out under the sky. It is his love song to God. As he cared for his sheep, leading them to abundant pastures and quiet streams, so God cared for him. The rod and staff were for discipline, guidance, and protection. They bring order and security to life. God chose David to be the shepherd of his people Israel (2Sa 5:2b). Jesus is our Good Shepherd (Jn 10:10,11). He satisfies our deepest needs (Jn 6:35). He forgives all our sins and restores our sinsick souls and leads us in paths of righteousness. He helps us live for his glory, and he is with us in the valley of the shadow of death.

2. A table in the presence of my enemies (5-6)

God's enemies are our enemies. But we can sit down at God's table with him even though we are surrounded by enemies. He gives us joy and his anointing for his service. We have no future security problem, for his love will follow us all our days, and we have an eternal home in the house of our Lord forever.

Prayer: Lord, you are my Shepherd; help me to follow you closely, without fear.

One Word: The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want

THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S

Psalm 24:1-10

Key Verse: 24:1

1. Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? (1-6)

The Lord is the Creator and Owner of all things. All his creatures long to know him and dwell in his presence. Who may dwell with him? Those who seek him with pure hearts and clean hands, who repent of their spirit of compromise (which is idolatry), and who love the truth may come and stand before him to receive his forgiveness and blessing.

2. Lift up your heads, O you gates (7-10)

The gates guard the way into the city--or into the heart. The Psalmist addresses the gates. Each person decides when and for whom to open the gates of his heart. We must not open the gates for Satan, but for the King of glory. Then he will come in. Who is the king of glory? He is the Lord who gives victory. He is the Lord who brings glory and honor with him.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse my hands and heart by the precious blood of Jesus. Help me to guard the gates of my heart, and open them only for Jesus, the King of glory.

One Word: The King of glory will come in

MY HOPE IS IN YOU, O LORD

Psalm 25:1-22

Key Verse: 25:5

1. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul (1-3)

To lift up my soul to the Lord means that I put my trust in him alone; I become totally vulnerable to God, not to my enemies. My enemy Satan is always prowling around seeking a way to triumph over me, but my Lord will not let me be defeated.

2. Show me your ways, O Lord (4-11)

When I put my hope in God alone he will guide me in his paths of truth. He is my Savior; he forgives the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; he instructs repentant sinners and guides the humble in what is right. God's ways are loving and faithful to those who have a covenant relationship with him.

3. Who is the one who fears you, O Lord? (12-22)

To fear God means to love him and to have an awesome respect for him. God makes known his ways to those who fear him. He confides in those who fear him. Those who fear God prosper. He sets us free from anguish and cleanses us from sin. If we fear God, we need not fear anything or anyone else.

Prayer: Lord, I put my hope in you; forgive my sins and guide me in your ways of truth.

One Word: Put your hope in God alone

TEST ME, O LORD

Psalm 26:1-12

Key Verse: 26:12

1. I have trusted in the Lord (1-8)

The Psalmist was a spiritual man, and a man of high moral character. But he was severely tempted to compromise with the evil society around him. He asks the Lord to test him and examine his heart. He loves God and strives to walk continually in God's truth. He does not associate with deceitful men or make friends with hypocrites. He not only refuses to compromise with evil men, but he lives a positive life, praising God and telling his wonderful deeds. He is not bragging about his righteousness; he is fighting a spiritual battle and is asking God to help him stand on level ground with those who praise God.

2. Redeem me and be merciful to me (9-12)

Even though he tries to live a pure and pious life, he knows that he is a sinner who needs God's mercy, so he asks God to redeem him so that he may not be swallowed up by the wicked schemes of evil men.

Prayer: Lord, help me to walk in your truth and to proclaim your wonderful deeds.

One Word: Proclaim God's wonderful deeds

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION

Psalm 27:1-14

Key Verse: 27:1,14

1. Whom shall I fear? (1-3)

Fear is a disease. It is the opposite of faith. Fear robs one of strength and joy. When I know that the Lord is my light and salvation, the stronghold of my life, then my fear problem is solved.

2. Seek the Lord (4-14)

Therefore, I must seek the Lord. When David lived as a fugitive, then as an exile, he sought God with all his heart. This is why he longed to dwell in the house of the Lord and gaze upon his beauty. He longed to make sacrifices to the Lord in his temple, and to shout and sing and make music there. He was confident that even though his mother and father abandoned him, God would not forsake him. As he waited for the Lord, his heart grew strong. He was confident that he would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. He did not wait on victory or on the crown of Israel; he only waited for the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, you are my light and salvation. Teach me to wait for you.

One Word: Take heart and wait for the Lord

LORD, BE MY SHEPHERD FOREVER

Psalm 28:1-9

Key Verse: 28:9

1. To you I call, O Lord (1-5)

The psalmist cries out to God for mercy. He has suffered enough from smooth-talking people whose hearts are full of malice. He does not fight with them any more; he prays for himself and asks God to deal with such people. When he began to do this, he realized that the root problem of

such people is that they do not recognize or respect the work of God. Godless people who do their own thing and despise God's work will be torn down, never to be rebuilt.

2. The Lord is my strength and shield (6-9)

Praise God who hears our prayers. He always hears a plea for mercy. When my heart trusts in him, I am helped. The Lord is the strength of his people and a fortress for his flock. He is our shepherd who saves his people and blesses his inheritance forever.

Prayer: Lord, in times of deep distress, teach my heart to trust in you. You are my shepherd forever.

One Word: A heart that trusts in the Lord

THE MIGHTY VOICE OF THE LORD

Psalm 29:1-11

Key Verse: 29:2

1. The splendor of his holiness (1-2)

No matter how powerful and great a man is, he must worship God. God is holy. He is the Creator; we are his creatures. He is splendid and beautiful beyond our imagination. We are created to glorify him. We must worship him in the beauty of holiness.

2. The voice of the Lord (3-9)

God spoke and the world came into being. He speaks to us in his written word and in his incarnate Word. The psalmist watched with awe as God displayed his majesty in a thunder storm. He sweeps away cedars of Lebanon like match sticks and shakes Mount Hermon. Fire from heaven strikes the earth; the psalmist cannot but join in the cry, "Glory!"

3. The Lord is enthroned as king forever (10-11)

God is king. He presides over history and nature. He blesses his people with strength and peace.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to see your hand and hear your voice, and give you the praise and honor due your name.

One Word: Worship the Lord

HIS FAVOR LASTS A LIFETIME

Psalm 30:1-12

Key Verse: 30:5

1. Sing to the Lord you saints of his (1-5)

The Psalmist sounds like a former depression patient. Many enemies were out to get him. He cried out to God from the depths. God lifted him up from the pit and healed him. He learned that God's anger lasts for only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime. God punishes us when we sin, but when we call on him for mercy, he forgives. If we weep tears of repentance at night, rejoicing comes in the morning. Enemies cannot gloat over one who humbles himself before God.

2. You made my mountain stand firm (6-12)

The Psalmist learned that the only real security in life is the security that God gives. He thought he was secure; then God hid his face. He realized that only God could make his mountain stand firm. So he cried out to God for mercy; God turned his wailing into dancing and clothed him with joy. All of God's saints are only forgiven sinners whom he has rescued from the pit. Let us sing songs of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Prayer: I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths.

One Word: God's favor lasts a lifetime

MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HANDS

Psalm 31:1-24

Key Verse: 31:14,15a

1. In you, Lord, I have taken refuge (1-13)

David was God's anointed servant, but there were times in his life when he was surrounded by enemies. He prayed that the righteous God might deliver him for the sake of God's name. He committed his spirit to God in an act of complete trust (5). Jesus on the cross and Stephen being stoned breathed the prayer in verse 5. God is the God of truth. Idols are Satan's lies. It may seem that Satan and his cohorts win the day, but God's servant loves and trusts God. He rejects the help of all idolaters (6).

2. My God, my times are in your hands (14-24)

God's face shines upon his servant (16). His love is unfailing. His goodness is great (19). He hides his saints in the shelter of his presence (20). The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full (23). When our times are in his hands, we wait on him in patient trust. Be strong all you who hope in the Lord.

Prayer: You are my God, O Lord. Let your face shine on me. Hide me in your presence. My times are in your hands.

One Word: My times are in your hands

GOD'S BEST BLESSING

Psalm 32:1-11

Key Verse: 32:1

1. I confessed; you forgave (1-6)

David was a king. He was a successful general and a national hero. He was loved and respected by his subjects. He was also a talented musician and poet. But these did not make him happy. When he sinned and tried to cover it up, he became sick. He had no strength. He was miserable. Then he sought God. He confessed his sin, and God forgave him. He found that the happy man is the man whose sins are forgiven, so he urges men to seek God and be happy.

2. The unfailing love of the Lord (7-11)

He found that though his enemies were still many and the burden of his responsibilities was just as great, the Lord was his hiding place. His heart was filled with songs of deliverance. He could rejoice and sing. He realized that he had been like a horse or mule when he had clung to his stubborn pride with an unrepentant heart. Mules have no understanding. They are controlled by the bit and bridle. Those who come to God for forgiveness can rejoice in God.

Prayer: Lord, I come to you with a repentant heart. Have mercy on me and forgive my sins. Restore the joy of my salvation.

One Word: The forgiven sinner is happy

THE LORD'S UNFAILING LOVE

Psalm 33:1-22

Key Verse: 33:18

1. The word of the Lord (1-11)

By faith we know that the universe was formed at God's command. Praise the Creator God for he is righteous and just; he is faithful in all he does. The earth is full of his unfailing love (5). God created the heavens and the earth by his word (6-9). His word has absolute authority. Men's plans never work out as they intend, but the Lord's plans and the purposes of his heart stand firm forever. We must accept his love and seek to fit into his plans. We must obey his word.

2. Those who hope in his love (12-22)

Armies and nuclear capability cannot save us. The Lord is ready to deliver those whose hope is in his unfailing love. He who created men's hearts looks down from heaven and sees all mankind. Human freedom has not brought true happiness to our nation. The blessed nation is the nation whose God is the Lord (12). In him only is real freedom and real peace. Our hearts rejoice when our hope is in God.

Prayer: Lord, turn our nation from the false freedom of hedonism to you. Teach us to fear you and set our hope on your unfailing love.

One Word: Hope in God and his love

LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER

Psalm 34:1-22

Key Verse: 34:3

1. The Lord delivers those who fear him (1-10)

It is right to praise the Lord and exalt his name. When we seek him, he answers and sends his angels to encamp around us. He is ready to deliver and save those who fear him and call on his name. The faces of those who know his deliverance are radiant. Those who fear God lack nothing. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

2. I will teach you to fear the Lord (11-22)

We must use our tongues to praise and exalt God; not to speak lies or stir up evil. He wants us to seek peace and pursue it. His eyes are on the righteous to deliver them; he is close to the broken-hearted. But his face is against those who do evil. We must seek him and thank him and praise him and serve him with heart and mouth and hands and feet.

Prayer: Lord, we glorify you and exalt your name together. Teach us to fear you.

One Word: Taste and see that the Lord is good

THE LORD RESCUES THE POOR AND NEEDY

Psalm 35:1-28

Key Verse: 35:27

1. The angel of the Lord (1-10)

When the Psalmist is hard pressed by enemies, he asks God to fight for him. And he asks the Lord to reassure his soul, saying, "I am your salvation." Then he can overcome his strong urge to use human means to defend himself. He asks God's angel to drive his enemies away, to pursue them down a dark and slippery path until they fall. When the Lord rescues him, his soul will rejoice, and his whole being delight in the Lord's salvation.

2. Vindicate me, O Lord (11-28)

The ruthless witnesses who press false and malicious charges against the Lord's servant were the very ones whose pain and grief he had shared. He had prayed for them when they were in trouble. Now they slander him without ceasing. They gloat over his distress. The Lord's servant depends on the Lord to rescue him. He exalts and praises the Lord who delights in the well-being of his servant.

Prayer: Lord, protect my heart from bitterness and my hands from vengeance. Remind my soul that you are my salvation.

One Word: Praise God all day long

MAN'S WICKEDNESS; GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Psalm 36:1-12

Key Verse:36:7

1. The wicked man (1-4)

The wicked man does not fear God. He does not know himself. He flatters himself so much that he cannot detect or hate his own sins. His words cannot be trusted, for they are full of deceit. He ceases to be wise, and he does no good. Rather, he plots evil and commits himself to a sinful course (4). The Psalmist asks God's protection from the hand of the wicked (11).

2. God's unfailing love (5-12)

God's love is measureless. It reaches to the heavens. His righteousness is strong and sure like the mighty mountains; his justice is as deep as the sea. God cares for all who seek shelter in the shadow of his wings. We may feast on the abundance of his house and drink from the river of delights. God owns the fountain of life, and in his light our darkness is dispelled.

Prayer: Lord, I seek you, the fountain of my life. In you alone is such great love and faithfulness. You are righteous and just, and you will deal with the wicked.

One Word: In the shadow of his wings

DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD

Psalm 37:1-40

Key Verse: 37:4

1. He will give the desires of your heart (1-8)

God promises to change my dirty desires into his pure and holy desires when I delight myself in him (4). How can I learn to delight myself in the Lord? First, I must commit my way to him (5). Second, I must be still before him and wait patiently for him, especially when evil men seem to be winning the day (7,8). Third, I must refrain from anger and put my hope in God.

2. Hope in the Lord; inherit the land (9-40)

Evil men seem to flourish, but like the beauty of the fields, they will perish (20). The righteous man gives to others; the evil man tries to get some free benefit (21). But the one the Lord blesses will inherit the land. Read verses 9,18,22,27,29,34. When we trust in the Lord and do good (3), and wait for the Lord and keep his way (34), he will protect us and give us the best inheritance. Let us hope in the Lord and wait on him.

Prayer: Lord, change my desires to your desires. Help me to put my hope in you and wait patiently on you. Satisfy me with your good gifts.

One Word: The gifts of the Lord are best

A MAN SUFFERING IN HELPLESS AGONY

Psalm 38:1-22

Key Verse: 38:15

1. A burden of guilt (1-14)

King David committed a sin. Sin separates us from God, and unrepented sin may make a sincere man sick. David was such a man. His guilt overwhelms him. He is physically sick because of his sin. He is not only separated from God, but he is alienated from his friends and neighbors because of his sin. His enemies gloat over his weakness and plot his downfall.

2. I wait for you, O Lord (15-22)

He cannot say or do anything; he can only wait on the Lord. He is confident that God will answer him. He confesses his sin, believing in God's forgiveness. When he sets his direction toward God and begins to pursue what is good, many enemies rise up to slander him. He prays that God may protect him from his enemies and come quickly to help him. God is not far from one who comes to him seeking mercy and help. He always answers such prayers.

Prayer: Lord, I come to you for mercy and help this morning. Do not be far from me.

One Word: The Lord alone forgives and heals

HOPE IN GOD ALONE

Psalm 39:1-13

Key Verse: 39:7

1. I will muzzle my mouth (1-6)

The Psalmist has encountered personal tragedy, but he made up his mind not to complain against God before unbelievers and wicked men. He does not want to be unfaithful to God, so he decided to muzzle his mouth and say nothing. But fire burned in his heart, and finally, he came before the Lord himself to ask about the end of his life. Would he continue to suffer all the rest of his days? As he prayed, he realized that in the light of eternity, life is but a breath.

2. My hope is in God (7-13)

Through suffering, he realized that men who strive to heap up wealth do not know who will get it. The only hope that a man can have is hope in God. So he asks God's forgiveness for his sins; he asks that God have mercy on him and restore his joy of life. Through suffering, he realized what is really valuable.

Prayer: Lord, remove from me a complaining heart; help me to put my hope in you alone.

One Word: Hope in God alone

HE PUT A NEW SONG IN MY MOUTH

Psalm 40:1-17

Key Verse: 40:3

1. Wait patiently for the Lord (1-5)

David found that his time of deepest distress became the time of greatest grace when he waited on God and put his trust in him. In times of trouble, we are tempted to put our trust in some seemingly strong and wise person, but we are blessed if we wait on God and put our trust in him.

2. I desire to do your will (6-10)

When God's word is in our hearts we can discover God's will and do it (8). He does not want us to hide his righteousness and faithfulness in our hearts; he wants us to speak of his salvation to the great assembly of his people.

3. May all who seek you rejoice (11-17)

Many worldly people oppose God and seek to destroy his servants, but all who seek God and love his salvation will rejoice and exalt his name.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your great salvation and for the new song you have put in my mouth. Help me to exalt your name.

One Word: Sing a hymn of praise to our God

BLESSED IS HE WHO REGARDS THE WEAK

Psalm 41:1-13

Key Verse: 41:1

1. He who has regard for the weak (1-3)

David was the shepherd of Israel. He protected and cared for weak people. He believed that God blesses the person who cares about the weak, for God is a compassionate shepherd. He himself had experienced times of both physical and spiritual weakness, and he knew God's healing and forgiving touch.

2. O Lord, have mercy (4-13)

David himself experienced sickness; he found that when he was weak, his enemies attacked him and his friends betrayed him. But he found the way of victory. He repented and turned to God, seeking his mercy. He longed to live in the presence of God forever. He trusted God and believed that God would forgive his sins and heal his body. He experienced God's victory, for he asked God's mercy.

Prayer: Lord, have mercy on me. Forgive my sins and give me your shepherd heart so that I can care about the weak and the helpless.

One Word: God, the compassionate shepherd

MY SOUL PANTS FOR GOD

Psalm 42:1-11

Key Verse: 42:1

1. My soul pants for you, O God (1-4)

A deer running from the hunters longs for water, for he cannot stop to drink from cool streams. Men who are harassed and driven by the world become like a hunted deer. Their souls are thirsty for God. The Psalmist had been a servant of God, but personal problems or national tragedy or family troubles had cut him off from God. [He may be a captive in a foreign land.] Tears are his

food day and night, and godless men mock him. Still he knows that the only solution is to meet the living God.

2. Why are you downcast, O my soul? (5-11)

He rebukes his soul for despairing amid the pressures of life. He knows that he must not despair, but put his hope in God. God is our hope, for he is our Savior. He is our God. He is our Rock; by day his love directs us, and by night his song is in our hearts. He is the God of my life; I must pray to him and not despair.

Prayer: Lord, I put my hope in you. My soul longs for you like a thirsty deer.

One Word: My soul thirsts for God

SEND FORTH YOUR LIGHT

Psalm 43:1-5

Key Verse: 43:3

1. Send forth your light and truth (1-4)

The Psalmist is living in an ungodly nation, among deceitful and wicked people. The darkness around him is tangible. It sometimes makes him feel that God is far away. He prays that God may send forth his light and truth. God's light dispels the deepest darkness; God's truth washes all of the world's lies from our hearts. The word of God is the light and truth that leads us to God himself.

2. Put your hope in God (5)

The people of an ungodly nation put their hope in many things, and God's people are always tempted to adopt the value system of the world. But the Psalmist puts his hope in God. At the altar of God he finds forgiveness of sins. He meets God and offers to him sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. When God's people glorify and enjoy God, they find meaning and hope, even while living in a dark and uncertain world.

Prayer: Lord, teach me the spiritual joy of the Psalmist. Through your word, send your light and truth to me so that I may be led into your presence.

One Word: Guide me by your light and truth

THE LORD GIVES VICTORY

Psalm 44:1-26

Key Verse: 44:3

1. We have heard from our fathers (1-8)

The Psalmist has a sense of history. He knows that the victories of the past came from God. God's people did not prosper because they were skillful warriors but because the Lord himself crushed their enemies, planted his people in the land and made them flourish in the land. It was God's right hand and the light of his face that gave them victory, for he loved them. So, the Psalmist does not trust his own bow or sword. He looks to God for victory. He will praise the name of the Lord forever.

2. But you crushed us (9-26)

So, what's the problem? God is not with our armies. Even though we have tried to be faithful to God, he has allowed our enemies to devour us like sheep and scatter us among the nations. The Psalmist cries out to God in his distress. "Rise up and help us; redeem us because of your unfailing love." Sometimes God humbles us so that we may remember who he is, and call on him for help.

Prayer: Lord, victory does not come by human achievement. Teach me to pray and seek your help in every battle.

One Word: Victory comes from God

YOUR THRONE, O GOD, WILL LAST FOREVER

Psalm 45:1-17

Key Verse: 45:6

1. The King rides forth (1-7)

This is a song for a royal wedding, but it is also a description of the Messiah. The King girds his sword on his side and rides forth to fight for truth, humility and righteousness. Our Lord Jesus left the ivory palaces and the glories of heaven to come and do battle with God's enemy. His word is his sword. He is working through his word to plant truth, and to establish his kingdom in men's hearts.

2. The King's bride (8-17)

The Old Testament speaks of God as Israel's husband (Isa 54). The New Testament speaks of the Church as the Bride of Christ (Eph 5). This psalm reminds us of what an honor it is to belong to Christ (9). For him we should gladly forsake all lesser loves (10), and honor him as the Lord of our hearts. When we commit ourselves to Jesus, our true bridegroom, he makes our lives fruitful (16,17).

Prayer: Lord, I love you and worship you. You are the King and Lord of my heart. Help me to hold your truth in my heart and live with you forever.

One Word: Jesus, my King

GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH

Psalm 46:1-11

Key Verse: 46:1

1. God is an ever-present help (1-7)

Fear is the devil's most effective weapon. He uses it to make men his prisoners. But we do not need to fear, for God is our refuge and strength; he is ever-present. No matter how big the problem, it is not too big for God. Neither natural disasters nor wars nor inner anxieties can terrify us when we trust in God. When his kingdom is in our hearts, streams of living water flow from his throne to revive our souls.

2. Come and see the works of the Lord (8-9)

God is in control of events. He brings desolation on the earth to humble us and make us turn to him; he makes wars cease; he brings peace to troubled hearts.

3. Be still and know that I am God (10-11)

The Almighty God invites us to stop our busy-minded rushing around and be still. He wants all people of all nations to know that he is God and worship him--then there will be peace on earth.

Prayer: Lord, help me to wait quietly before you until I can see your hand at work.

One Word: Be still and know God

GOD IS KING OVER ALL THE EARTH

Psalm 47:1-9

Key Verse: 47:7

1. God has subdued the nations (1-6)

God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the world (Ro 4:13; Ge 22:18). God is keeping that promise through his people whom he sends to proclaim the gospel to all nations, calling people of every tribe and tongue and nation to the obedience that comes from faith (Ro 1:5). He wants his people to be a kingdom of priests. May God hasten the day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess him as Lord and King. "Clap your hands, all you nations; sing praises to God, sing praises to our King."

2. God reigns over the nations (7-9)

The God of Abraham is the Sovereign Ruler of all the earth. The kings of the earth belong to him. Let us sing his praises.

Prayer: Lord, hasten the day when the Son of Man comes to establish his perfect reign on earth. Hasten the day when all creation is released from its bondage to sin and death and decay, and your image is completely restored in all people.

One Word: Praise the King of all the earth

THE CITY OF OUR GOD

Psalm 48:1-14

Key Verse: 48:9

1. God makes her secure (1-8)

Jerusalem was the city of God. It was situated on top of a high mountain. King David had conquered it and made it his capitol. Jerusalem was the center of the nation's spiritual life, for the temple of the Lord was there on Mount Zion. God dwelt in his city, so she was secure. Even powerful aggressors fled from the gates of Jerusalem in terror. When God is in the midst of his people, the enemy Satan trembles, for God himself is a strong fortress (3).

2. We meditate on your love (9-14)

The temple is a place of prayer for all nations. When we gather in God's house to pray and study the Bible and meditate on God's unfailing love, then God is in our midst. When God's people pray for the nations of the world and seek to share his love with all people, God is pleased to bless and help and protect his people. Let us rejoice in God and tell his works to the next generation. He will be our guide even to the ends of the earth.

Prayer: Lord, dwell in our midst to be our source of life and power for the proclamation of your gospel to the world.

One Word: Pray together for world mission

GOD WILL REDEEM MY LIFE FROM THE GRAVE

Psalm 49:1-20

Key Verse: 49:15

1. No man can redeem the life of another (1-11)

Those who trust in wealth are foolish, for no payment can ransom a man's life from the grave. Even though one lives in a fine house and has highways and streets named for him, still a tomb

will be his house forever. The man who trusts in himself and in his wealth will die, leaving his wealth to others. He can take nothing with him.

2. God will redeem my life (12-20)

Indeed, "the ransom for a life is costly, and no payment is ever enough--that he should live on forever and not see decay" (8-9). But the Psalmist looks forward to Jesus. Verse 15 says, "God will redeem my life...he will surely take me to himself." The eternal God, the Creator of life, paid the ransom with the blood of his Son. When we put our trust in him, he redeems us from the grave and from hell, and takes us to himself. It is foolish to envy the proud, wealthy men who trust themselves and their riches.

Prayer: Lord, I put my trust in you, not in wealth or fame or human success.

One Word: God will redeem my life

GOD JUDGES THE EARTH

Psalm 50:1-23

Key Verse: 50:23

1. God shines forth in beauty (1-15)

The Mighty God comes in beauty. He summons all the earth to come before him. To his own covenant people he speaks first. He does not need their gifts and offerings, for he owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He wants his people to offer to him the sacrifice of thanksgiving. He wants us to call on him in the day of trouble. He promises to deliver us. And we must honor him.

2. To the wicked God says:... (16-23)

The wicked have no claim on God's covenant promises. They break God's Ten Commandments: they steal, commit adultery, tell lies, slander brothers. They do not obey the word of God or even study it. In fact, they put the word of God behind them. God wants all people to sacrifice thank offerings to him and keep their promises. Those who forget God will be torn to pieces with none to rescue them. God will show the way to those who thank him.

Prayer: Lord, have mercy on me and teach me your word. Help me to honor you as God, and call on your name, and offer to you sacrifices of thanksgiving.

One Word: Do not despise the Law of God

CREATE IN ME A PURE HEART, O LORD

Psalm 51:1-19

Key Verse: 51:10

1. Against you only have I sinned (1-6)

David committed a despicable sin--he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed to cover it up. But when God's servant confronted him, he did not try to cover up his sin any more. He realized that he had sinned against God. He humbly repented. God is compassionate and loving. He desires truth, and teaches wisdom in the inmost heart. Repentance is true wisdom. May God grant our leaders such wisdom.

2. Cleanse me and I will be clean (7-19)

David repented, but he knew that he could not cleanse himself. He needed God's cleansing and healing. He could not fix up his corrupted heart, so he asked the Almighty God to create in him a pure heart. He longed for his broken relationship with God to be restored; he longed for the Holy Spirit, and for the lost joy of salvation. Then he could teach others. One cannot purchase forgiveness with money or good deeds; one must come to God with a broken heart.

Prayer: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

One Word: God accepts a contrite heart

LIKE A FLOURISHING OLIVE TREE

Psalm 52:1-9

Key Verse: 52:8

1. The man who was uprooted from the land (1-7)

The man who does not make God his stronghold, but trusts in wealth will be uprooted from the land. Doeg the Edomite (1Sa 22:6-23) was such a man. He was a man who grew strong by destroying others. He boasted of being a mighty man, but his might was based on evil plots and on destructive lies. God will deal with such men in his own time and in his own way. God's people do not have to seek revenge, nor do they need to harbor hatred in their hearts.

2. Like a flourishing olive tree (8-9)

The man who trusts in God's unfailing love will flourish like a fruitful olive tree. David was such a man. He was a fugitive, constantly hunted and harassed by King Saul, but he could say, "I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever. I will praise you forever for what you have done"; his hope was in God.

Prayer: Lord, I trust your unfailing love. Let me flourish like an olive tree.

One Word: Be like a flourishing olive tree

THE FOOL SAYS THERE IS NO GOD

Psalm 53:1-6

Key Verse: 53:1a

1. God seeks those who seek him (1-3)

The man who says in his heart, "There is no God" lives as if he is not accountable to anyone, so he is corrupt and his ways are vile. He is a fool. God looks down from heaven, seeking those who seek him. He longs to forgive and bless those who seek him. But no one is righteous; everyone has turned from God and become corrupt (Ro 3:10-20). Evildoers are godless people try to devour God's people as men eat bread.

2. O that salvation would come! (4-6)

Those who forget that God is there are full of dread when there is nothing to dread. Evildoers will learn that God exists and that he is righteous. God himself will punish those who harass his people. The salvation for which all sinners wait is Jesus, the promised Messiah.

Prayer: Lord, I turn my heart to seek you this morning. Drive out all the darkness of fear. Thank you for Jesus, the salvation from Zion who comes with forgiveness, healing and love.

One Word: The fool says there is no God

SURELY GOD IS MY HELP

Psalm 54:1-7

Key Verse: 54:4

1. Save me, O God! (1-3)

Saul envied David and sought to kill him. (See 1Sa 23:13-29.) During his years as a fugitive in the desert David learned to depend on God. He didn't know what to do, so he cried out to God for help. The wilderness life became a time of God's training. Because he cried out to God in time of trouble, he grew in his inner man. God's training helped him grow as a great king and shepherd for his people.

2. He has delivered me (4-7)

When we depend wholly on God, he is always faithful to help. David experienced the saving grace and help of the Lord. He never forgot to offer a thanksgiving offering, and to praise and thank God who delivered him from all his troubles. Hard problems are opportunities to pray; God's deliverance is an opportunity to praise and thank God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for hearing and answering my prayers when I call on you with all my heart. Help me to offer to you an offering that expresses my thanks.

One Word: God is my help; he sustains me

CAST YOUR CARES ON THE LORD

Psalm 55:1-23

Key Verse: 55:22

1. Violence in the city (1-11)

Perhaps Jesus thought about this Psalm as he approached his death in the city of Jerusalem. The Psalmist is troubled and full of anguish as he thinks about enemies who seek his life. He would like to leave the city and fly away to the desert on the wings of a dove!

2. A friend who betrays (12-14; 20-21)

His greatest sorrow is not caused by enemies, but by a friend, a close companion who betrays him (13,14). His friend greets him with a kiss, but death is in his heart (20,21). Could this be Judas?

3. Cast your cares on the Lord (16-19; 22-23)

He does not flee; he does not fight. He prays (1). The Psalmist cries out to God in the evening, in the morning and at noon. Jesus forgave his enemies; the Psalmist couldn't quite do that. But he praises God who is enthroned forever, and casts his cares on him.

Prayer: Lord, take fear and anxiety from my heart; I cast my cares on you.

One Word: The Lord will sustain you

IN GOD I TRUST; I WILL NOT BE AFRAID

Psalm 56:1-13

Key Verse: 56:13

1. When I am afraid (1-11)

Fear is Satan's gift. Fear makes us helpless. When fear comes into our hearts, we can't think. Sometimes even a brave warrior is afraid. Fear itself is a more deadly enemy than mortal man. David fought the fear in his heart with faith and with the word of God. He said, "When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise...I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?" (3,4,10,11)

2. I will present thank offerings (12-13)

David knew that it was not a lucky accident that he was delivered from his enemies. God had heard and answered his prayer. "You have delivered my soul from death and my feet from stumbling..." (13). God delivers sinners from death so that we may walk before him in the light of life (13; Jn 8:12). We must present thank offerings to God who delivers us. And we must learn to walk before God in the light of life.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage not to hide in the darkness of fear and anxiety, but to walk before you in the light of life.

One Word: Walk before God in the light of life

PRAISE GOD AMONG THE NATIONS

Psalm 57:1-11

Key Verse: 57:9

1. God will fulfill his purpose for me (1-5)

The Psalmist is in great distress. He is attacked by men whose tongues are sharp swords. They tear him apart with criticism and slanderous lies and insults. He feels that he is among ravenous lions, but he calls on God for mercy. He takes refuge in God. He cries out to God who has a good purpose for his life, and he is sure that God will protect him and rescue him and fulfill that good purpose in and through him. He prays that God's glory may be over all the earth (5,11).

2. I will praise you among the nations (6-11)

God's purpose is a world mission purpose. The enemies who sought the life of the Psalmist life fell into their own trap. God saved him so that he could praise God's name among the nations. Now, he will tell of the great love and faithfulness of God to all the people of the world. His heart is steadfast; his joy overflows from his heart in a joyful song.

Prayer: Lord, rescue me from my enemy the devil and use me to make your love and faithfulness known among all the nations.

One Word: Praise God among the nations

THERE IS A GOD WHO JUDGES THE EARTH

Psalm 58:1-11

Key Verse: 58:11

1. Is there any justice in the earth? (1-5)

The earth seems to be full of injustice. Wicked men vent their evil and apparently nothing can stop them. They are like a cobra that has stopped its ears and refuses to respond to the charmer's pipe. Sweet talk doesn't stop men who plot evil and speak lies. God's servants can't fight with Satan's tools. So what can we do?

2. God is a Righteous Judge (6-11)

When he was helpless to stop injustice and evil, David prayed. He prayed that God might disarm his enemies; that they might be like a slug that melts as it moves along, and that their evil plans might never see fruition--like a stillborn child that never sees the light of day. He believed in God's justice. He did not harbor grudges or plan human ways of revenge, but trusted the righteous God who judges all men. Jesus forgave his enemies; David committed his anger to the righteous God.

Prayer: Lord, remove from me all grudges and help me to pray when I am angry. Give me Jesus' spirit to go one step beyond, and forgive.

One Word: Vengeance belongs to God

A SONG ABOUT GOD'S STRENGTH

Psalm 59:1-17

Key Verse: 59:16

1. Like snarling dogs (1-8)

David was a national hero. He loved Israel and defended her when powerful enemy nations attacked. But he had a personal enemy. King Saul, in his jealousy, sought David's life. He sent fierce and bloodthirsty men to lie in wait to kill him. They were like snarling dogs who return at evening to prowl around the city (6,14). They also spread vicious lies and slander about him. He could not fight back because he could not fight the king.

2. O my Strength, my loving God (9-17)

David asks God's help, for he himself is helpless. He can't fight his enemy, but he prays that the strong hand of God who loves him might be his shield (11). He asks God not to kill his enemy, nor the enemy's agents, but to expose them for what they are (12), and make them wander about helplessly (11). Then all the world would know the power of Almighty God. God is a strong God. He loves his servant, and his servant's desire is to honor and glorify God.

Prayer: Lord, you are my refuge and my Strength; help me to glorify your name in any situation.

One Word: Praise God, my Strength

VICTORY WITH GOD

Psalm 60:1-12

Key Verse: 60:11,12

1. You have been angry, now restore (1-4)

Israel had been weak and disunited, and had suffered defeat in the last days of Saul. The deep fracture in the land continued for seven years after Saul's death. Then David was crowned king of the united kingdom. David loved God, and God gave him victory wherever he went. God raised a banner of victory (4) over him. David united the northern and southern parts of Israel to make one united kingdom, then he secured his borders and expanded the empire (1Ch 18 & 19). This Psalm celebrates his victories. David was God's appointed shepherd for his people.

2. With God we will gain the victory (5-12)

God blessed his servant David with victory. God spoke from his sanctuary about his people: "Ephraim (Northern Israel) is my helmet; Judah is my scepter." God's enemies who had harassed the people for so long--Moab, Edom, Philistia--were defeated. David concluded, "Man's help is worthless; with God we will gain victory." God's people need a shepherd who loves God.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my foolishness in looking to weak human beings for help. You alone give victory.

One Word: With God we have victory

THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I

Psalm 61:1-8

Key Verse: 61:2

1. Hear my cry, O Lord (1-5)

David was a king. He was a leader of men and a powerful warrior. But he knew that there was a Rock that was higher than he. He called on God for help. He asked to be led to the "rock that is higher than I." Truly great men are humble men who call out to God in prayer. David committed his life to God. He was powerful and wealthy, but he valued most the "heritage of those who feared the Lord." God establishes the king who fears God and makes vows before him.

2. Protected by God's love and faithfulness (6-8)

God promised to enthrone King David forever. He would fulfill this promise in Jesus, the descendant of David who would reign forever (Lk 1:32,33). Because Jesus our King is enthroned forever, we must praise God and fulfill our vows to him every day.

Prayer: Lord, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. I am weak, but you are strong. Help me to fulfill my vows to you today.

One Word: Jesus is my Rock

GOD IS MY ROCK AND MY SALVATION

Psalm 62:1-12

Key Verse: 62:1,2

1. Rest for the restless soul (1-10)

Rest for the restless soul can be found in God alone. Because David was a leader, he was the target of many attacks. People blessed him with their mouths and cursed him in their hearts. David learned that although he could not trust even those closest to him, God was a rock that could never be shaken. He found rest and salvation in God. Because he put his trust in God, he could say, "I will not be shaken." People spoke lies about him, so he learned to depend on God alone for honor. He found that lowborn men are but a breath and highborn men a lie. Even if they are weighed on a balance together, they are nothing. Riches cannot satisfy the heart nor do they give security to life.

2. Two things to know about God (11-12)

God is strong and God is loving. So we can trust him. We can come to him and pour out our hearts. God is ready to help. God is able to help. He alone is our refuge.

Prayer: Lord, I fix my heart on you, for you alone are my rock and my salvation.

One Word: In God alone I find rest

GOD'S LOVE IS BETTER THAN LIFE

Psalm 63:1-11

Key Verse: 63:5

1. Your love is better than life (1-5)

This is a love song. David was a fugitive, hiding in the desert. But he did not long for the palace or for human comfort or human love. He was thirsty for God. "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." God's love is better than life. Human glory and success without God can never satisfy the soul. God's love satisfies my deepest need.

2. I remember you on my bed (6-11)

Some people have nightmares. Others watch T.V. all night. But those who remember God and think of him and talk with him through the watches of the night, find peace and joy and freedom from fear. He puts a song in our hearts.

Prayer: Lord, I cannot satisfy my soul on the husks of the world. I seek you. My soul and body long for you alone. Your love is better than life. My lips glorify you.

One Word: God's love is better than life

PONDER WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Psalm 64:1-10

Key Verse: 64:9

1. Those who sharpen their tongues (1-6)

Men in leadership positions are vulnerable to attack. The psalmist is especially aware of the evil plans which crafty men devise against him. Satan is always seeking an opportunity to destroy God's servants with words. He uses gossip, lies, half-truths, slander, etc.

2. God will shoot them with arrows (7-8)

God is wiser than men. No matter how much evil men encourage each other in evil or how perfect are the plans they make, they cannot defeat God. God will shoot them with arrows; he will turn their own tongues against them.

3. All mankind will fear the Lord (9-10)

When God defeats the enemies of his servants, all people will fear God's name; the wicked will tremble; the righteous will rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in him.

Prayer: Lord, protect your servants from Satan's attack. Let all mankind fear you and proclaim your mighty works.

One Word: Ponder what the Lord has done

THE HOPE OF ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Psalm 65:1-13

Key Verse: 65:5

1. God forgives our sins (1-4)

Men's lives are empty because their sins have cut them off from God, the source of life. We are powerless to solve our own or anyone else's sin problem. But God hears our prayer. He invites all people to come to him. When we come, overwhelmed by sins, God forgives us and removes the burden of guilt. God himself made atonement for our sins (Jn 1:29). He invites forgiven sinners to come and dwell with him. This is the greatest blessing of life.

2. God's awesome deeds (5-13)

The Creator God formed the mountains; he stills the roaring sea and the turmoil of the nations, for he is Sovereign Ruler of all his creation. He takes care of the land and the water and enriches the earth with rain. He makes men and nations fruitful and joyful. Indeed, all the ends of the earth may hope in God our Savior and Sustainer.

Prayer: Lord, my Creator and Savior, thank you for choosing me and bringing me near to you to forgive my sins and give me hope. You are my hope and the hope of all the earth.

One Word: God is the hope of all the earth

GOD HAS SURELY LISTENED

Psalm 66:1-20

Key Verse: 66:18,19

1. How awesome are your deeds! (1-12)

Almighty God has done great and awesome deeds. Praise be to his great name! His enemies cringe before him. All the earth bows down to him. Yet he has done great things for his people. He divided the waters of the Red Sea and the people walked out of slavery on dry ground. He trained his people in furnace fires to refine their faith until it became more precious than silver. Refined and purified faith is needed to bear God's blessings. Let us praise and thank God for his training.

2. Let me tell you what he has done for me (13-20)

The mighty God, Lord of nature and history, hears and answers prayer. But there are conditions: I must keep the promises I made to him when I was in trouble; I must thank him; I must not cherish sin in my heart. Praise God who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me.

Prayer: Lord, help me to pray. Cleanse my heart of hidden, cherished sin. Help me to keep my promises to you. Fill me with thanksgiving.

One Word: God answers prayer

SALVATION AMONG THE NATIONS

Psalm 67:1-7

Key Verse: 67:2

1. A channel of blessing (1-2)

God blesses his people so that he may be glorified. He wants his blessing to flow through his people to the whole world. We seek his blessing so that his ways may be known on earth and his salvation among all nations. To use God's blessing selfishly is to invite its loss.

2. God's just and righteous rule (3-4)

When God rules a nation, its people are truly blessed. They sing for joy because he rules the people with justice. God guides the nations of the earth in ways of peace and righteousness. May he come quickly to establish his righteous rule.

3. Then the land will yield its harvest (5-7)

When all the people worship and praise God, he will bless the land with fruitfulness and with abundant harvest. When the ungodly people of the world see God's blessing on his people, they will fear God and turn to him.

Prayer: Lord, bless us so that we may be a blessing. Let your ways be known on earth and your salvation come to all the nations.

One Word: May all the nations fear God

THE TRIUMPH OF OUR GOD

Psalm 68:1-35

Key Verse: 68:1

1. God triumphs and blesses (1-10)

Each time the Israelites broke camp and set out in their journey from Mt. Sinai to the promised land, Moses repeated the prayer of verse 1. God destroys his foes but lovingly cares for his own. He is a father to the fatherless; he sets the lonely in families; he gives prisoners real freedom. But the rebellious live in the desert of their own sin.

2. God triumphs through his word (11-14)

God triumphs through his word. He announced his word; great is the company of those who proclaim it. His enemies hear it and flee. He gives victory to his people, even while they sleep in camp.

3. God's triumphal procession (15-35)

The majestic mountains of Bashan look with envy on Mount Zion, where the Lord dwells. These verses look forward to Jesus who rose from death and ascended into heaven to save us from our enemy Satan (18; Eph 4:8). Our Savior daily bears our burdens (19). He defeats all the enemies of God. His victory procession stirs the heart.

Prayer: Lord, come and dwell with me to give me victory in life and death.

One Word: Our God gives victory

GLORIFY GOD WITH THANKSGIVING

Psalm 69:1-36

Key Verse: 69:30

1. Save me, O God (1-18)

Sometimes we suffer for our sins (5); sometimes we suffer unjustly (4); sometimes we suffer because we are God's people (7). Jesus suffered because he loved God and loved mankind (9). The psalmist prays that his suffering may not discourage God's people (6). He himself does not doubt God's love; he calls on God for strength and help. Suffering for Jesus' sake helps us to know him better.

2. When God's servant is rejected (19-29)

David experienced rejection; Jesus was scorned and rejected by his own people. When God's love is rejected, it turns into wrath. Jesus experienced verse 21, and Paul quoted verses 22-23 (Ro 11:9,10) to warn the Jews who rejected God's Messiah.

3. I will praise God (30-36)

The bitter heart cannot remain bitter when one lifts it to God in praise.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to thank you in all circumstances.

One Word: Glorify God with thanksgiving

THOSE WHO SEEK GOD

Psalm 70:1-5

Key Verse: 70:4

1. Come quickly to help me (1-3)

The psalmist was in a great battle. Some were seeking his life. Some were seeking his ruin. Some were waiting to gloat over his failure. He called on the Lord to come quickly to save him. I am also in a great battle. My enemy Satan is always seeking a way to defeat or destroy me by any means. I can only call on the Lord, "Come quickly, O Lord, to help me."

2. Those who seek God (4)

There are also those who seek God. To know God and glorify him must be our chief goal in life. All those who seek God may rejoice and be glad in him. Those who love his salvation can always say, "Let God be exalted."

3. Yet I am poor and needy (5)

God is more than willing to help us when we confess that we are poor and needy and that we long for his help. He is ready to save all who call on his name (Ro 10:13).

Prayer: Lord, come quickly and help me!

One Word: Those who seek God will find him

GOD IS MY ROCK AND MY FORTRESS

Psalm 71:1-24

Key Verse: 71:3

1. Serve God in the days of youth (1-17)

David loved God and served him when he was just a shepherd boy. He put his hope in God. God was his rock of refuge, one-to whom he could always go. Throughout his lifetime he was attacked by many enemies. Some wanted to kill him; some sought to discredit him and smear his reputation. Some said that God had forsaken him. But he continued to praise God and to proclaim his mighty acts, his righteousness and his salvation all day long.

2. Praise and serve God in old age (18-24)

When his strength was gone and enemies still surrounded him, he continued to trust God. He asked God to help him declare God's marvelous deeds to the next generation and to generations to come. He had encountered many bitter trials, but he had resurrection faith (20). He continued to sing God's praise and shout for joy, and to make music on the harp and lyre.

Prayer: Lord, you have taught me since my youth; help me to declare your marvelous deeds to the next generation.

One Word: Friends for life; friends forever

THE WHOLE EARTH IS FILLED WITH HIS GLORY

Psalm 72:1-20

Key Verse: 72:19

1. He will judge in righteousness (1-4)

David wrote this prayer for his son, Solomon. It is also a prophecy about the coming Messiah. A righteous king brings blessing to his people. He rules with justice. He defends the helpless, crushes the oppressor, and saves the children of the needy. God blesses the land he rules by making it prosperous and fruitful.

2. He will endure as long as the sun (5-7)

We live in a world limited by time and space, but God's kingdom is eternal. During our short time on this earth, we must live as citizens of God's kingdom--then we may live under his righteous rule forever.

3. All nations will be blessed through him (8-20)

When the King reigns from sea to sea, all nations will bow down and worship him. His rule is righteous and just, and all nations will be blessed through him. May the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Prayer: Lord, may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven.

One Word: The earth is full of his glory

WHY DO THE WICKED PROSPER?

Psalm 73:1-28

Key Verse: 73:17

1. My feet had almost slipped (1-16)

The psalmist believed that God is good to the pure in heart, but when he looked at the world, it seemed that evil people prospered, while good men suffered. His godless neighbor was a man of violence who oppressed the weak. He was unbearably arrogant and deliberately defiant toward God. Yet he was healthy, carefree, wealthy, and popular. On the other hand, the psalmist had struggled to keep his heart and hands pure, but he was weighed down with burdens and problems. He envied the godless man, and he began to doubt God's love. What was worse, he didn't want to be a bad influence, so he couldn't talk to anyone.

2. God is my portion forever (17-28)

Then he went into the sanctuary; he prayed and met God. He saw himself and the world from God's point of view. He repented (21,22). He realized that a just God would deal with the wicked. He rejoiced in God and found peace and true hope in him.

Prayer: Lord, you are the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

One Word: Enter God's sanctuary

GOD IS MY KING AND SAVIOR

Psalm 74:1-23

Key Verse: 74:12

1. Is God's hand in his pocket? (1-11)

The psalmist looked at his devastated land and remembered the time when people had worshiped God and God had loved and protected them. Godless men had invaded the land and destroyed the temple. How long would God hold back his hand from destroying them? Today, also, godless people try to remove the worship of God from our land. When will God take his hand out of the folds of his garment (11)?

2. God is King and Savior (12-17)

Even though God is silent, the psalmist knows that he is in control. He is all powerful and he uses his power to bring salvation to all people.

3. Remember us, O Lord! (18-23)

He prays that God may remember his covenant, take note of the noisy enemies of God, and rise up to defend his cause.

Prayer: Lord, when godless people seek to remove the worship of God from our land, turn our hearts to you. Rise up and defend your cause.

One Word: God alone is our Savior

IT IS GOD WHO JUDGES

Psalm 75:1-10

Key Verse: 75:7

1. God holds up the pillars of the earth (1-3)

Let us give thanks to God. His deeds are awesome and wonderful. He is the one who appoints the time of judgment. The world and history as we know it will end on his time schedule. Each of us will stand before his judgment throne at his appointed time--no sooner, no later. He judges justly. When the world is in moral chaos and everything seems to be collapsing, God holds the pillars of the earth steady.

2. Praise the Sovereign God (4-10)

"Horn" represents power. Arrogance is wickedness. Men who believe in their own ability and defy God, who speak boastfully, from proud hearts, are wicked. God is the one who lifts men up; he is the one who brings men down. He cuts off the horns of the wicked and lifts up the horns of the righteous. He is the Judge, and the cup of his wrath is in his hand. When he pours it out, the wicked must drink it. As for me, I will sing God's praise forever.

Prayer: Lord, take the root of pride out of my heart; teach me to fear you alone.

One Word: God lifts up and God puts down

YOU ALONE ARE TO BE FEARED

Psalm 76:1-12

Key Verse: 76:7a

1. Who can stand before the God of Israel? (1-10)

God's people know that he is great, for they have seen his mighty works. He is glorious and majestic, resplendent with light. He breaks the weapons of the enemy. Enemy warriors, no matter how valiant, perish at his rebuke. He alone is the one-to be feared. When he rises up to judge, the land waits in silence. His judgment not only punishes the wicked; it saves the afflicted and helpless. The survivors of his wrath, the remnant, know and fear him.

2. Gifts for the one-to be feared (11-12)

To fear God means to love and respect him. When we fear the Lord, we are set free from fear of men. Those who fear God must make vows to him and keep them; we must share the knowledge of God with the world, so that all people may fear God and worship him. People who fear and honor God must bring him gifts.

Prayer: Lord, let every knee bow before you and every tongue confess your name. Teach all people to fear and serve you.

One Word: Fear God; keep your vow

REMEMBER THE MIGHTY WORK OF GOD

Psalm 77:1-20

Key Verse: 77:12

1. My soul refused to be comforted (1-9)

The psalmist was in distress. He could not sleep; so he prayed all night. He remembered better times and wondered if such times would ever come again. His distress was so great that he began to question God's love. Then he decided to think about God instead of about himself.

2. Meditate on God's mighty works (10-20)

God's ways are holy. He has done great and mighty deeds. He redeemed the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt. All nature trembles before her Creator God. The waters of the Red Sea writhed before him, and opened to make a path for God's people through the sea. God's lightning lights up the world; his thunder shakes the earth. God uses his mighty power to lead his people through this wilderness world like a flock of sheep.

Prayer: Lord, when my heart is distressed and I cannot sleep, turn my thoughts from myself and my problems to you and your mighty deeds of love and power.

One Word: Meditate on God

DO NOT FORGET WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE

Psalm 78:1-39

Key Verse: 78:7

1. Tell the next generation (1-8)

The psalmist teaches his children about God's mighty works of salvation and judgment. He teaches them God's laws, so they may keep them, and in turn, teach their children. If our hearts are loyal to God and our spirits faithful to him, then our children will believe what we teach them, put their trust in God, obey his laws, and live.

2. Failure in the desert (9-39)

Israel rebelled against God on the borders of the promised land. ("Ephraim" refers to Northern Israel.) The Israelites forgot God's mighty acts of judgment on Egypt. Though they were armed for battle, they were afraid of the Canaanites; they turned back. They continued to sin against God in the desert. God gave them manna and quail and water from the rock. But they complained about the food. He punished them for their ungrateful hearts and complaining mouths, but they kept on sinning. Even though they were not loyal to his covenant, he was merciful.

Prayer: Lord, help us to teach your laws and your grace and power to our children.

One Word: The high cost of forgetting God's grace

A SHEPHERD WITH INTEGRITY OF HEART

Psalm 78:40-72

Key Verse: 78:72

1. They did not remember his power (40-55)

God's people grieved God because they forgot what he had done. He redeemed them from the oppressor Egypt by ten mighty acts of judgment. Just as a shepherd leads and protects his flock, he led them through the sea and desert to the border of his holy land. He drove the Canaanites out of the land and gave it to them as an inheritance.

2. As unreliable as a faulty bow (56-64)

They knew his laws but they did not keep them. A man with a faulty bow thinks he is armed for battle, but in the crucial time, he finds himself weaponless. God's anger was aroused by their unfaithfulness, so he allowed the Philistines to overrun them, even sending the ark of the covenant into captivity.

3. He chose the tribe of Judah (65-72)

God did not give up his redemptive purpose. He chose the tribe of Judah and appointed a true shepherd David to shepherd his people with integrity of heart.

Prayer: Lord, forgive our sins and raise up shepherds with integrity of heart.

One Word: God's love is a shepherd's love

HELP US FOR YOUR NAME'S SAKE

Psalm 79:1-13

Key Verse: 79:9

1. We are in desperate need (1-8)

God's people sinned and he punished them by removing his hand of protection from them. So the enemy invaded and destroyed even the holy temple. Our enemy and oppressor is the devil. Let us join the psalmist and cry out to God, asking his forgiveness, his mercy and his help.

2. For the glory of your name (9-13)

The psalmist knew that God alone could save his people. He asked God to forgive their sins and help them for his own name's sake. When God's people are defeated and shamed, the godless nations of the world mock God and deride his holy name. The psalmist asked God to punish the godless oppressors, and to deliver his own people by the strength of his arm. The psalmist promised that if God would defeat his enemies and save his own sheep, his people would praise his name forever.

Prayer: Lord, forgive our sins and turn our hearts to you in repentance so that you may defeat the devil and heal our land.

One Word: God alone is our Savior

GOD'S VINEYARD

Psalm 80:1-19

Key Verse: 80:19

1. You fed us the bread of tears (1-7)

The psalmist calls on the Lord three times: "Restore us, O God; make your face to shine upon us, that we may be saved." (3,7,19) God, the Good Shepherd, led his people in love, but they rebelled against him and he punished them with the bread of tears. They come to him, begging mercy.

2. Lord, you planted the vine (8-16)

They are God's people. He is like a farmer who brought a vine out of Egypt, cleared the land, and planted it. It flourished under his blessing and filled the land. But his people became idolatrous and corrupted, so he removed his hand of protection, and the vine was ruined.

3. The son of man at your right hand (17-19)

Restoration will come when God raises up the Son of Man to be the Savior and Shepherd of his people.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for Jesus the true vine. Help us to remain in him until we bear good fruit.

One Word: God's face has shined on us

IF MY PEOPLE WOULD BUT LISTEN

Psalm 81:1-16

Key Verse: 81:13

1. Sing for joy (1-7)

God wants his people to be joyful. When he redeemed them from bondage in Egypt, removing the burden from their shoulders, he ordained a time of feasting and celebration. He maintained a loving relationship with them (7). This joy belongs to everyone who has been set free from bondage to sin by the grace of God.

2. Hear, O my people (8-16)

When God's people listen to his word, he continues to bless them and satisfy all their needs. But God hates idolatry. Idolatry is unfaithfulness to the covenant relationship. God does not want our hearts to be divided. If God's people refuse to listen to his word, he will give them over to follow their own ways. This leads to disaster. When they listen to his word and follow his ways, he subdues their enemies and gives them peace and abundance.

Prayer: Lord, tear the idols from my heart; forgive me for following my own ways. Help me to listen to your word and obey you, and rejoice.

One Word: Listen to God's word, obey, and rejoice

THE NATIONS ARE YOUR INHERITANCE

Psalm 82:1-8

Key Verse: 82:8

1. When injustice reigns (1-5)

God himself brings the unjust judges of the earth to trial. They are called "gods" because they sit in judgment over other men. But when they show partiality to the wicked and render unjust judgments, the weak and poor suffer. The foundations of society are shaken when men who are responsible for justice are themselves corrupt.

2. God is the judge of all the earth (6-8)

All nations belong to God. He wants all people treated justly. Unjust judges, who are like "gods" in rendering judgments, will all die like men--for they are mere men. God himself will preside over the final judgment, and everyone must stand before his judgment seat to receive what is due him for things done while in the body (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Prayer: Lord, we live in an unjust world, but we all deserve your wrath. Judge us by the mercy of Christ, and hasten the day when your justice and righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

One Word: God is the judge of nations and people

O GOD, DO NOT KEEP SILENT

Psalm 83:1-18

Key Verse: 83:1,18

1. They seek to destroy God's people (1-8)

All the traditional enemies of Israel--Moab, Edom, Ammon, Philistia, Midian, Amalek, the Ishmaelites and even Assyria--joined together to destroy God's people Israel. When the forces of the devil gain strength in our land, and join together to remove the worship of God, to call evil, good and good, evil, what can we do? The psalmist tells us. We too can have a sense of history, remembering what God has done. And we can pray.

2. So that men will seek your name (9-18)

The psalmist remembers how God fought for his people in the past. He raised up one man Gideon to destroy the Midianites (Jdg 7,8). He saved his people from Sisera through Deborah and Barak (Jdg 4). He prays that God would make his enemies like tumbleweed, that he would terrify them with his storm, and cover their faces with shame so that they would turn and seek God.

Prayer: Lord, you have heard our prayers and rescued us from Satan's grip; again have mercy on us. Grant us repentance and faith, and heal our land.

One Word: Let all men know that God alone is God

THOSE WHOSE HEARTS ARE SET ON PILGRIMAGE

Psalm 84:1-12

Key Verse: 84:5

1. My soul yearns for the living God (1-4)

The psalmist's deepest desires are spiritual desires. When worldly desires occupy my heart, my heart and flesh cannot cry out for God. My deepest desire must be to know God and to dwell in his presence. Those who are really blessed are those who dwell with the living God.

2. Set your heart on pilgrimage (5-12)

Life is a pilgrimage toward God's eternal city. When we set our hearts on this pilgrimage, God strengthens and blesses us. As we travel through the desert-like world, we become a blessing to those whom our lives touch. But we must trust God and know that a day with God is better than a thousand days of worldly life. It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell

in the tents of the wicked. God does not withhold any good thing from those whose hearts are set on this holy pilgrimage.

Prayer: Lord, purify my desires and give me strength for the holy pilgrimage.

One Word: Set your heart on pilgrimage.

WHERE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE KISS

Psalm 85:1-13

Key Verse: 85:10

1. Remembering God's grace (1-3)

The Psalmist remembers how God restored the fortunes of his repentant people--perhaps by bringing them back from captivity. I must remember the basic grace of God's forgiveness in my life.

2. Revive us again (4-7)

The Psalmist pleads for God's grace and mercy to

be shown once more. God grants his salvation because he loves us. We are revived when we taste his unfailing love. Joy in God is real joy.

3. I will listen to what the Lord says (8-13)

God gives peace to those who repent. He saves those who fear him, so that his glory may dwell in the land. God's love and faithfulness meet in Jesus. In him, righteousness and peace kiss each other. God's righteousness and peace belong to those who are in Christ. We must show his love and faithfulness to others.

Prayer: Lord, clothe me in your righteousness and give me your peace so that my life may reflect your faithfulness and love.

One Word: Repent and taste God's peace

FOLLOW TRUTH WITH AN UNDIVIDED HEART

Psalm 86:1-17

Key Verse: 86:11

1. A prayer for himself and for the world (1-10)

David does not come to God as a proud king or a victorious general. He comes as a poor and needy servant, seeking God's mercy and forgiveness. God is the source of his joy. God cares about one person who comes to him humbly seeking his mercy. But God whom David worships is not just there to serve David; he is the Creator of all people and nations. David prays for the day when all nations will come and worship him and bring glory to his name.

2. Give me an undivided heart (11-17)

David is severely attacked by his enemies. He prays for strength and victory (16,17). But he is more concerned about the enemy within, so he prays for an undivided heart to fear and praise God. He longs to know God's truth and walk in God's way, for he knows God's grace; God has loved him and saved him. He wants to praise God with his whole heart and glorify him forever.

Prayer: Lord, teach me your ways so that I may walk

in truth with an undivided heart.

One Word: Walk in truth with an undivided heart

THIS ONE WAS BORN IN ZION

Psalm 87:1-7

Key Verse: 87:6

1. Glorious things are said of Zion (1-3)

Zion is the hill on which the temple in Jerusalem was built. It was the place where one might come to have his sins forgiven by the blood of sacrifices, and the place where the merciful and righteous God made this people to give them life and mission.

2. The Lord will write in his register (4-7)

God spoke a world mission message through the psalmist. To be born in Zion meant to be one of God's own chosen and loved people. Here God says that people from the Gentile nations would be called and would become the people of God. God would write in his register concerning Egyptians and Babylonians, Romans, Greeks, Chinese, Americans and Koreans: "This one was born in Zion." Through Jesus he calls people from all nations to become part of his covenant people. Anyone who believes in Jesus can be born again into God's family--born in Zion.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for including even me in your

book of life. Help me to share the good news of Jesus with the world.

One Word: Good news for all people

I CRY TO YOU IN THE MORNING

Psalm 88:1-18

Key Verse: 88:13

1. My soul is full of trouble (1-9a)

This is the prayer of a man in distress. His life is in danger (3). He is powerless. And he is lonely. Perhaps he lives in exile in a foreign country (8). He is full of sorrow, so he cries out to the Lord day and night. He knows that God is sovereign and God is the one who saves. His time of sorrow is the time to meet God.

2. I cry to you for help (9b-18)

Grief, fear of death and despair close in on him like darkness. He remembers the suffering of his youth. But he cries out to God in the morning. He asks God to spare his life so that he may praise God and testify to his wonderful deeds. How can a dead man praise God? Or preach the gospel? The Psalmist is lonely; he says that God has taken away his friends. But in his loneliness he draws close to God. God is ready to answer those who cry out to him.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to seek you in times of suffering or in loneliness. Darkness is not my closest friend--you are.

One Word: Don't despair--pray!

GOD'S LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS ARE FOREVER

Psalm 89:1-18

Key Verse: 89:2

1. God's love is forever (1-4)

God loved the shepherd boy David. God's love does not change. God is faithful to keep his promises. He kept his covenant with David to establish David's line forever when he sent the savior King Jesus, whose throne is established forever.

2. Power and faithfulness surround him (5-13)

There is no one who can compare with God. His mighty hand crushes and scatters (10). God created the world and all that is in it. He rules with righteousness and justice. He is almighty: He rules the heavens, the seas and the earth; he rules history and all the nations of men. He is fully able to keep his promises.

3. Walk in the light of his Presence (14-18)

Those who have learned to acclaim God and walk in the light of his presence are blessed. They exult in his righteousness. He is our glory and our shield. Prayer: Lord, teach me to live like a child of your covenant and walk in your light.

One Word: Sing of the Lord's love forever

THE ANOINTED ONE

Psalm 89:19-52

Key Verse: 89:29

1. I will establish his line forever (19-37)

God chose the young shepherd boy David and raised him up to be the king of his people. David loved God. God strengthened and protected him and gave him victory over all his enemies. He promised that David's descendant would call God "Father", and would be his firstborn son, and that his kingdom would be established forever. God kept his promise and sent Jesus, the descendant of David and Son of God, to be Messiah and eternal King. God is faithful to keep his promises.

2. O Lord, where is your former love? (38-51)

The Psalmist was living in a time of national distress and personal suffering. Perhaps he was a king, a descendant of David. It seemed to him that God had forgotten his promises. He reminded God of his covenant and laid his agony and sorrow before God. Then he said, "Praise be to the Lord forever." Let us also come to God and claim his promises and praise his name.

Prayer: Lord, your promises and your love are unchanging. I hold onto you alone.

One Word: God's faithfulness is forever

THE LORD IS OUR DWELLING PLACE

Psalm 90:1-17

Key Verse: 90:17

1. God is eternal (1-6)

God is eternal. He is from everlasting to everlasting. He is not bound by our petty human limits of time and space. He is the sovereign God who holds the whole world in his hands.

2. Teach us to number our days aright (7-12)

Because of our sins, we live under God's sentence of death. After a few years, at God's command, our bodies will return to dust. God knows all about us. Even our secret sins are exposed in the light of his presence. We must fear God to have a heart of wisdom. We need God's help and training to number our days aright.

3. Establish the work of our hands (13-17)

God is angry because he loves. He punishes in order to save. Only he can establish the work of our hands. Only he makes our lives worthwhile.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to number my days aright so that I may have a heart full of wisdom. Let me dwell in your presence.

One Word: Establish the work of our hands

THE SHELTER OF THE MOST HIGH

Psalm 91:1-16

Key Verse: 91:2

1. Make the Lord your dwelling (1-13)

People seek security in other people, or in education or jobs or savings accounts. But even if they have these things, their hearts are full of anxiety, for they realize that these things do not give security. There is no security except security in God. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High God finds peace and freedom from fear, no matter how terrifying the circumstances may be. God saves us from the traps the devil sets for us. His faithfulness is our shield. We may see with our eyes the punishment of the wicked, but it will not come near us. His angels protect us in the day of terror.

2. I will show him my salvation (14-16)

God promises to rescue and protect those who love him. He promises to answer those who call on him and bless those who acknowledge his name. He kept his promise to show us his salvation when he sent Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, let me dwell under the shadow of your wings and depend on you alone as my security.

One Word: The Lord is my dwelling place

MAKE MUSIC TO THE LORD

Psalm 92:1-15

Key Verse: 92:1

1. It is good to praise the Lord (1-8)

God wants us to praise him in the morning and in the evening. He wants us to sing and make music on instruments. When my spiritual eyes are opened, I can see God's hand working among us. His great deeds and the work of his hands fill me with joy. How profound are his thoughts! People without spiritual eyes cannot see what God is doing; they do not know that though the wicked flourish for a moment, they will be destroyed forever.

2. The righteous will flourish like a tree (9-15)

Those who have tasted God's grace and have a right relationship with God will be renewed continually. They will even bear fruit in old age. Let us, too, sing, "The Lord is upright; he is my rock." (15) Let us proclaim his love in the morning and his faithfulness in the night (2).

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see your work; open my eyes and ears to see and hear about the defeat of your enemies; open my lips to sing your praise.

One Word: Make music to the Lord

THE LORD REIGNS

Psalm 93:1-5

Key Verse: 93:4

1. The Lord's throne is established (1-2)

The Lord God is the Sovereign Ruler. He is armed with strength. He is the one worthy of all our praise and worship. To know him and obey him is the chief purpose of life. His throne is eternal; he was before, is now, and ever will be.

2. Mightier than the seas (3-5)

Perhaps the Psalmist wrote this psalm while looking out over the vast expanse of the sea. No one can tame the sea. Sometimes it is gentle and peaceful and looks romantic. But sometimes it is a raging, foaming torrent that overwhelms everything and defies all man's efforts to keep it in check. The sea roars with a mighty voice, but the Lord on high created the seas. He is mightier than the roaring, pounding sea. Once his Spirit hovered over the waters, and he brought order out of chaos by his word of power. His laws make an orderly and secure environment for all his creatures.

Prayer: Lord, I reflect on the laws which you wrote

into the book of nature and I praise you for your wisdom and might.

One Word: The Sovereign Lord reigns

THE LORD DISCIPLINES AND COMFORTS

Psalm 94:1-23

Key Verse: 94:12

1. Arise, O Judge of the earth (1-15)

When evil and injustice seem to crush God's people and evil men proudly flaunt their evil deeds, what can God's servant do? He can pray. For, contrary to the ideas of godless men, God who made the ear hears; God who formed the eye sees. He disciplines men and nations to teach them his laws. Blessed is the one whom God disciplines and teaches his word.

2. When anxiety was great within me (16-23)

The world seems to be totally in the control of wicked men. God's people are few in number and helpless to defend themselves. But the Psalmist discovered that though he was helpless, God is not. He found help when he turned to God. When his foot slipped, God's love supported him; when anxiety filled his heart, God's consolation brought him joy. He confessed, "God is my fortress and the rock in whom I take refuge. God will repay the wicked for their sins."

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your unfailing love; discipline me in love according to your word and support me when my foot slips.

One Word: The Lord's love supports me

LET US COME BEFORE HIM WITH THANKSGIVING

Psalm 95:1-11

Key Verse: 95:6,7

1. Let us kneel before our Maker (1-7a)

Thanksgiving is not an option. It is God's command. Our God is the great God. He is the great King above all gods (3). He holds the whole wide world in his hand. And he is our Shepherd. We are the flock under his care. We are not orphans in the universe, wandering without purpose or meaning. Our Maker loves us and made us for a purpose. Let us bow down and worship the Lord our Maker. Let us come before him with joy and with thanksgiving.

2. Do not harden your hearts (7b-11)

The Israelites whom God rescued from slavery in Egypt did not thank God for his amazing grace; instead, they complained about the food and water. They had no joy. Because they were

not thankful, their hearts became hard; their hearts went astray. God was angry with that generation. They could not know God or his ways. They could not enter the promised land. Ingratitude is a serious sin.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for saving me from the power of sin and death. Teach my heart to praise your name every day.

One Word: Worship your Maker with joy

DECLARE HIS GLORY AMONG THE NATIONS

Psalm 96:1-13

Key Verse: 96:3

1. Sing to the Lord a new song (1-10)

Our God is the Creator of all the earth. He is the one worthy of our praise and adoration. We must worship him in the splendor of his holiness--have a holy fear of God and a holy love of God in our hearts, and a song of praise on our lips. We must proclaim his salvation to all the families of the nations, until all people everywhere repent and acknowledge God as Creator and Lord of all things. We must bring him our offerings and glorify him forever.

2. All the trees of the forest will sing for joy (11-13)

All creation eagerly awaits the Lord's coming, for he will restore all things. He will restore the broken creation order. The trees of the forest, as well as the flowers and birds, the lions and elephants will shout for joy, for they have been groaning, waiting for him to come and lift the curse and restore the world (Ro 8:21-22). The Lord alone can judge, for he is the one who judges according to truth.

Prayer: Lord, help me to worship you in the beauty of holiness and to proclaim your salvation to all nations.

One Word: Declare his glory among the nations

THE LORD REIGNS

Psalm 97:1-12

Key Verse: 97:1

1. All peoples will see his glory (1-7)

When the Lord reigns, the whole earth rejoices. The Lord is holy; clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. All his enemies will be

consumed by fire. His lightning lights up the whole world, exposing all darkness. All people of the earth will see his glory. All those who worship false gods should tremble and repent, and worship him alone.

2. He guards the lives of the faithful (8-12)

The mighty Creator God who rules with power and justice also guards the lives of his faithful ones. He delivers them from the hands of their enemies. His light strikes the earth like lightning. His light not only exposes sin and evil; it also sheds light on the righteous. His joy fills the upright in heart.

Prayer: Lord, shine the light of your gospel on the whole world, so that all people may know you and praise you. Shine in my heart today.

One Word: God's light floods the earth

SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG

Psalm 98:1-9

Key Verse: 98:2

1. Salvation revealed to the nations (1-3)

Let us sing a new song of praise to God who has done marvelous things, for he has made his salvation known to all nations. When God chose one man and trained him in faith, God had the whole world in his heart. He showed love and faithfulness to his chosen people; he wanted to bless them and make them a blessing to all nations. He wanted to use them in his salvation work. This psalm looks forward to Jesus, through whom God keeps all his promises.

2. Shout for joy, all the earth (4-9)

Let us join all nature in thanking our God for his mighty work of salvation. Let each of us thank him and sing to him a new song of praise for his work in each of us. Let us praise him for his salvation which extends to the ends of the earth. Let us participate in his saving work through prayer and praise morning by morning.

Prayer: Lord, you have done marvelous things. I praise you and worship you. Let all the earth rejoice in you.

One Word: Shout for joy in the Lord

PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Psalm 99:1-9

Key Verse: 99:8

1. The Lord is holy (1-5)

The Lord reigns. He sits enthroned between the cherubim, full of righteousness and mercy. Great is the Lord; he is exalted over all the nations. Holy is the Lord who loves justice. He alone is worthy of all praise and honor. Let us come humbly to worship at his footstool; he is holy.

2. Those who called on his name (6-9)

Moses and Aaron and Samuel obeyed God's word. They prayed for God's people. Moses prayed for his people when they sinned; God heard and forgave them. Aaron was the high priest who interceded for the people day and night. Samuel prayed for his people during the time of the Judges, when they had no king. Later he anointed Saul, then David king. But he served his people best by praying for them (1Sa 12:23). When we call on God and ask his forgiveness, he hears and answers.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be a prayer warrior on behalf of your people in my time. Help me to call on your name day by day.

One Word: Call on the Lord; he answers

WE ARE HIS SHEEP

Psalm 100:1-5

Key Verse: 100:3

1. It is God who made us (1-3)

The Lord God who made us is the Creator of all the earth. He is worthy of our worship and adoration. We can shout for joy because we belong to him. We are his because he made us. We do not belong to ourselves, or to our parents, or to any person. We belong to God. When we know this, and worship him with humbleness and joy, we are truly free. We are God's sheep and he is our true shepherd. He provides for our needs and watches over us to keep us in safety. He leads us in the way of life.

2. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving (4-5)

When we come to the Lord, our Good Shepherd, we should come with glad and joyful hearts. We should come with thanksgiving. God is good, and his love endures forever. He is faithful from generation to generation.

Prayer: Lord, I belong to you. You made me and you bought me with your blood. Help me to hear your voice and follow you today and forever.

One Word: God is my shepherd

WHEN WILL YOU COME TO ME?

Psalm 101:1-8

Key Verse: 101:2

1. I will sing of your love and justice (1-2a)

Even though David was a king, he did not find real joy in ruling others; nor did he find joy in worldly pleasure. He longed to be close to God--so he sang songs to God, praising his love and justice, and he tried to live a blameless life. He waited on God to come to him.

2. How can one live a blameless life? (2b-8)

King David tried in several ways: i) by keeping his heart pure; ii) by hating what God hates; iii) by not listening to gossip (5); iv) by not hanging around with proud people who despise others. He sought to honor faithful men, and not to give responsibility to deceitful or dishonest men. He tried to keep wicked men and evildoers out of his city and country. No one, however, can live a blameless life; we all need God's mercy and forgiveness. We need Immanuel Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live close to you. Teach me to sing your praise; help me to keep my heart pure. Come to me, Lord Jesus.

One Word: When will you come to me?

THE ETERNAL GOD

Psalm 102:1-28

Key Verse: 102:27,28

1. Hear my prayer, O Lord (1-11)

This is the prayer of a man who is suffering. He is in distress of soul--perhaps because of physical sickness, but more likely, he has a broken shepherd's heart for his people who are suffering in exile under the rod of an oppressor. In his pain and loneliness he recognizes how temporary our physical lives are.

2. The Lord will rebuild Zion (12-22)

The Psalmist is confident that God will answer his prayer. So he wants his words written down. He wants to teach a sense of history to his own times and to future generations.

3. They will perish, but you will remain (23-28)

The Lord God is eternal; all of his created world will perish, but he will remain. His children share his glory and eternity.

Prayer: Lord, put your eternal word of promise in my heart.

One Word: Hope in the eternal God

PRAISE THE LORD, O MY SOUL

Psalm 103:1-22

Key Verse: 103:2

1. Remember God's grace (1-18)

The Psalmist praises God with all his heart and soul for his wonderful grace. What does God do for me? He forgives my sins; he heals my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit. He crowns me with love and compassion and satisfies me with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's. His blessings are not only personal--his throne is established in the heaven and he rules over all. He works righteousness and justice for the oppressed. God makes himself known in the Bible. His way of dealing with his sinful children is described in verses 8-14. He is a compassionate Father who knows our weakness, and he loves us anyway. He forgives those who fear him and buries our sins in the bottom of the sea. Man's days vanish like grass, but God is eternal.

2. Let all creatures praise God (19-22)

God created all things for his glory. Let all creatures join in praising him.

Prayer: Lord, teach my heart and soul to praise you every day.

One Word: Praise the Lord, O my soul

PRAISE THE CREATOR GOD

Psalm 104:1-35

Key Verse: 104:31

1. The greatness of my God (1-30)

God who created the heavens and the earth and said, "It is good" still reigns over and sustains his creation. All creation proclaims his glory and power. He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent. The clouds are his chariot. When he rebuked the waters, they fled, and the dry land appeared. Once he judged the earth with a flood--but he promised not to do it again. God the Sustainer waters the earth and makes it fruitful; he makes an

appropriate environment for his creatures. When God withholds his favor, man and beast are terrified. When he takes away their breath, they die. When he sends his Spirit, they are created. He alone renews the earth.

2. May the glory of the Lord endure (31-35)

The Lord rejoices in his works. I too will rejoice in God and sing praises to him all the days of my life. I don't want to be among the wicked who will be destroyed.

Prayer: Lord, may your glory endure forever. May my meditation be pleasing to you, as I rejoice in you.

One Word: I will praise the Lord

HE REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT FOREVER

Psalm 105:1-45

Key Verse: 105:8

1. Bible teachers to the nations (1-7)

Let us give thanks to the Lord and call on his name. The hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Let us make known to all the nations what he has done, so that all people everywhere may worship and obey him.

2. God remembered his covenant (8-45)

God who created the heavens and the earth made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. God remembers his promises. He promised to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham. In order to do this, he sent them to Egypt to become a great multitude, then he delivered them from Egypt by mighty acts of judgment. Then he brought them through the desert to train them and teach them his love. Finally, he gave them the promised land. He did these things so that they might keep the commandments, and become a holy nation, a kingdom of priests for the world.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for remembering all of your promises. Help me to obey you by faith and claim your promises.

One Word: God keeps his promises.

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD

Psalm 106:1-48

Key Verse: 106:1

1. Though we fail, God does not (1-22)

God's people's history is a history of failure. The psalmist confesses, "We have sinned, even as our fathers did.. Yet, God saved them for his name's sake..." He led them through the Red Sea-- but they quickly forgot and complained about the food. He fed them. They rebelled against his servant Moses; They forgot God and worshiped a golden calf.

2. God's great mercy to save (23-48)

God heard Moses' prayer and saved them (Ex 32). They did not have faith to claim the promised land, so God trained them in the desert for 40 years (Dt 1). They compromised with the Baal worshipers in Moab, but Phinehas intervened and they were saved (Nu 25). They were unfaithful to God in the promised land, so God sent them into exile in Babylon. But he heard their cry of distress and because of his great love, he saved them.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your love and mercy to save sinners.

One Word: Praise & thank God for his saving grace

LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD SAY SO

Psalm 107:1-22

Key Verse: 107:2

1. Some wandered in deserts (1-9)

Once I was lost in the desert of life with no direction and no destination. I was spiritually starving. But when I cried out to the Lord, he set my feet on the path of holy pilgrimage. He fed me with the bread of life and brought me to his city.

2. Some suffered in iron chains (9-16)

Rebellion against the word of God leads to slavery. Slavery to sin is terrible. I could not help myself; no other person could help me. But when I cried out to the Lord, he forgave me and saved me. He broke the chains of sin and set me free..

3. Some became fools (17-22)

Those with a rebellious spirit are fools. I was once sick with sin because of my rebellious ways. I could not but die in my sins. But when I cried out to God, he saved me. He sent me his word and healed me. He rescued me from the grave.

Prayer: Lord, I give thanks to you for you are good. You redeemed me from the hand of my foe, Satan.

One Word: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so

CONSIDER THE GREAT LOVE OF THE LORD

Psalm 107:23-43

Key Verse: 107:43

1. God's wonderful deeds in the deep (23-32)

The Lord stirred up the tempest and those sailing in mighty ships could not endure. Their courage melted. They were seasick. When they called on the Lord for help, he calmed the sea. God teaches us about himself and his great love through the storms of life--when we let go of ourselves and cry out to him for his help.

2. God's blessing and punishment (33-43)

God sees the wickedness of men and turns fruitful land into a desert--so that men might repent. This is God's tough love. God also turns deserts into pools of water; and brings the hungry there to live. He increases the numbers of his people. He humbles the proud and lifts up the needy. He uses every means to draw men to himself to worship, to obey, and to love him. This is his blessing and his love.

Prayer: Lord, teach my heart to love you and my hands and feet to serve you.

One Word: Consider the great love of the Lord

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND LOVE

Psalm 108:1-13

Key Verse: 108:4

1. I will awaken the dawn (1-5)

God is faithful, and he wants his people to be faithful, too. We must awaken the dawn with hearts and souls full of praise to God. Let us praise him for his faithfulness and for his gracious work among the nations. Praise God for his work among the people of Korea, Russia, China, the USA, Germany, South America, Africa and all the world. His loving heart is big enough to love all people, for his love reaches to the heavens and his faithfulness to the skies.

2. Victory over his enemies (6-13)

David was an able king, but he did not depend on his ability. He called on God for help. He knew that the help of man is worthless (12). His cry to God for help is based on God's love for

his people. God says of the people, "They are mine" (7-8). Those who are enemies of God's people (9-10) are God's enemies. When God's people seek his help, he gives victory.

Prayer: Lord, save us and help us with your right hand, that those you love may be delivered (6).

One Word: Great is his faithfulness and love

A MAN OF PRAYER

Psalm 109:1-31

Key Verse: 109:4b,26

1. Attacked without cause (1-20)

Perhaps David wrote this psalm when Saul was seeking his life or perhaps it was when Absalom led a rebellion against him (2Sa 15). There may be times in a person's life when enemies try to destroy him--perhaps by spreading evil stories about him; perhaps by accusing him in court. What does God's man do? He should not use the same tactics as his accuser. He must pray. The prayer of the psalmist does not reach New Testament standards, but it is honest. When anger is brought to God, he takes it away and heals the heart.

2. My heart is wounded (21-26)

The psalmist accepts the sovereignty of God. He trusts God's love. He acknowledges that he cannot help himself. He lays his wounded heart before God and prays for deliverance. He wants all the world to know that it is the Lord who delivers him. The Lord delivers him so that he may praise and extol the name of the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to pray in every situation. Thank you for your faithfulness to answer my prayers.

One Word: Lord, help me to pray

CHRIST IS LORD

Psalm 110:1-7

Key Verse: 110:1

1. Seated at God's right hand (1-3)

Jesus quoted this psalm (Mk 12:36) to teach the Pharisees that the Christ was not just David's son--he is David's Lord. The Lord God Almighty promised the Christ victory over his enemies--including the last enemy, death (1Co 15:24-28). He is the King who defeats Satan's power in our

lives when we welcome him into our hearts. He will come again in power and glory to rule, and God's kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven.

2. You are a priest forever (4-7)

Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek, the mysterious priest of God Most High, when he came to give Abraham spiritual counsel after the battle of the kings (Ge 14). Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:6). He went to heaven to be our intercessor before God's throne. We may draw near to God only through our high priest, Jesus. Someday Jesus will come again as the righteous judge of all men and nations.

Prayer: Lord, come and rule my heart. Defeat your enemies within and without.

One Word: Christ is Lord

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Psalm 111:1-10

Key Verse: 111:10

1. He provides food for those who fear him (1-8)

Let us ponder the works of God and worship him with all our hearts. His glorious deeds reveal him to be righteous, gracious and compassionate. God is love. He provides food that sustains life for all those who fear him. So, fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (10). God is faithful. He keeps his promises. His laws are given for the best and highest good of man, so they are trustworthy (7). The person who flaunts God's laws is inviting misery.

2. He provided redemption for his people (9-10)

God knows that just as man's body needs food, his soul needs salvation. Times and customs may change, but God's laws and precepts stand forever. When people disobey God's laws, they become slaves of sin, and desperately need redemption. Those who fear God and follow his laws have understanding. He gives his people the nations of the world as their inheritance (6).

Prayer: Lord, I extol you with all my heart, and ponder your wonderful works.

One Word: Fear God and obey his laws

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO FEARS THE LORD

Psalm 112:1-10

Key Verse: 112:1

1. The blessed man (1-9)

The person who fears God loves God's word and obeys his commands. Such a person is blessed. His children will be successful and influential; he and they will have spiritual wealth. Sometimes bad news will come, but even in the darkest times, light will dawn. The blessed man is a blessing to others; he is generous and fair, gracious and compassionate. He gives to the poor. Fear of the Lord takes away all other fears and makes the heart secure. This sense of security is a blessing which no money can buy.

2. The wicked see and are vexed (10)

When the righteous man is honored, the wicked will see and be vexed. He will gnash his teeth, but to no avail. The man who abandons God to pursue his own pleasures is wicked. His longings will never be satisfied.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to delight in your word and walk before you with awesome respect. Thank you for setting me free of fear and giving me your peace.

One Word: Fear God, love his word

GOD STOOPS DOWN TO LOOK

Psalm 113:1-9

Key Verse: 112:7

1. The One who sits enthroned on high (1-4)

Let us praise the name of the Lord now and forever. Let the name of the Lord be praised in every place under the sky. He is exalted above the heavens. He created all things and he rules over his creation.

2. He stoops to look; he sees everything (5-9)

God who is enthroned in the highest heavens stoops down to look at his creatures. No problem is too big for him to handle and no problem is too small for his caring heart. No one should be fatalistic about his situation. We can pray about everything. God lifts the poor from the dust and seats them among princes (7,8). He solves the marriage problems of those who trust him and he makes barren women fruitful (9).

Prayer: Lord, I praise your name--both now and forever, for you are exalted over all nations, and your glory spreads from horizon to horizon. Thank you for stooping down to see my deepest needs and thank you for answering my prayers.

One Word: God in heaven knows what's going on

GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE MIDST

Psalm 114:1-8

Key Verse: 114:2

1. Judah became God's sanctuary (1-2)

God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt so that he could come and dwell in their midst. He wanted them to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:5,6). God is an awesome God. He brought his people through the Red Sea as on dry ground; he rolled back the waters of the Jordan River so that they could cross over into the promised land. He put his temple in Jerusalem so that he could dwell with his people there. God's people are holy because God dwells with them.

2. God's holy presence is a blessing (3-8)

All nature is awed by God's presence. The sea looks and flees; the mountains skip like playful sheep. The earth trembles at the presence of the Lord. But the Lord uses his mighty power to protect his people and supply their needs. When he is present, no one can be thirsty, for he turns the rock into a pool of water.

Prayer: Lord, come and dwell in our midst. Help us to fear you and love you and obey your command to be a kingdom of priests.

One Word: God dwells with his people to bless

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

Psalm 115:1-18

Key Verse: 115:1

1. Those who trust in idols (1-8)

People become like the idols they worship. Those who put their trust in what they can see and touch are idol worshipers. They ask mockingly of God's people, "Where is their God?" Our God is in heaven and he does whatever he wants to do, but idols made by men's hands cannot speak or see or hear. They can do nothing. Those who make them and those who put their trust in them will be like them.

2. Those who trust in God (9-18)

God is the help and shield of all who fear him and put their trust in him. He blesses those who trust him--small and great alike. The highest heavens belong to him, but he has given the earth to man. He wants mankind to be good stewards of the earth. He wants all his creatures to praise him

and glorify his name. He is the living God and he wants us to live and to praise his name both now and forevermore. God blesses those who put their trust in him.

Prayer: Lord, help me to put my trust wholly in you, and not in any kind of idol.

One Word: To God be the glory

I WILL LIFT UP THE CUP OF SALVATION

Psalm 116:1-19

Key Verse: 116:13

1. He saved me (1-11)

We must love God and call on him as long as we live, for he hears prayer. When we are overwhelmed by sorrow and by the power of death, we must call on the Lord, for he will hear and save. We must call on him with childlike faith, for he protects the simple-hearted. He delivers the soul from death and the eyes from tears. We cannot trust people (10,11), but when we call on the Lord, he delivers our feet from stumbling, so that we can walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

2. How can I repay the Lord? (10-19)

The psalmist mentions three things we who have tasted the Lord's grace can do. First, we can lift up the cup of salvation--acknowledge his grace and drink deeply of it. Second, we can fulfill our vows to the Lord--take seriously whatever promises or commitments we have made to him. Third, we can thank him and continue to call on his name.

Prayer: Lord, I lift up the cup of salvation to drink deeply, and praise you.

One Word: The Lord hears prayer

PRAISE THE LORD, ALL YOU NATIONS

Psalm 117:1-2

Key Verse: 117:1

1. Praise the Lord all you nations (1)

This is the shortest chapter in the Bible, but its message is very big. It is a call to all nations to praise God. This message undergirds the task of world evangelism, the task to which God calls his people. God wants all people everywhere to worship and obey him. This is God's desire. It is the prayer topic Jesus taught his disciples: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

2. His faithfulness endures forever (2)

God is not only the God of world mission, who extends his concern and care to the people of all nations, he is also the God of history. His faithfulness and love are revealed in the promises which he makes and keeps. He does not change. He loves us forever. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Lord, I praise you. Hasten the day when all people of all nations worship you and praise your name. Use me in your world redemptive work. I praise you for your faithfulness which endures forever. Help me to be faithful.

One Word: Let all the people praise God

HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

Psalm 118:1-29

Key Verse: 118:1

1. Give thanks to the Lord (1-16)

God's people Israel, his servants the priests and those who fear God can say with one voice, "His love endures forever." When we cry out to the Lord, he sets us free. The Psalmist had many enemies, but our enemy is Satan. God gives victory over enemies within and without. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men, for man's love and power are limited and partial, but God's love endures forever. When we are harassed on every side, the Lord is our strength and our salvation.

2. Proclaim what the Lord has done (17-29)

The Lord has made the rejected stone the foundation stone of his house, the capstone of his redemptive history. He has opened the gates of righteousness for those who put their trust in him. Jesus, the Rejected Stone, has become the cornerstone. He was welcomed into Jerusalem by crowds singing God's praise and waving palm branches. He alone saves us from sin and gives us eternal life. Give thanks to the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your redemptive love which endures forever.

One Word: The Lord is good; his love endures

HIDE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART

Psalm 119:1-16

Key Verse: 119:11

1. The blessed person (1-3)

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is a devotional poem which is an acrostic (in Hebrew). It is focused on God who speaks and works through his word. Every verse contains some reference to the word of God. The first three verses are an introduction to the whole. They tell us that the blessed person is the one who seeks God with all his heart by obeying God's word.

2. A prayer for mercy (4-8)

Verses 4-8 are a prayer. The psalmist knows that God's laws are to be obeyed, but he is aware of his weakness and failure to do so. He longs to please God by a life of obedience and asks God's mercy and help.

3. How can a young man keep his way pure? (9-16)

The secret of keeping one's heart pure is to hide God's word in one's heart. We must seek God by obeying his word. We can delight in the word of God, for it is our wealth.

Prayer: Lord, help me to seek you by hiding your word in my heart to obey it.

One Word: Hide God's word in your heart

OPEN MY EYES TO SEE WONDERFUL THINGS

Psalm 119:17-32

Key Verse: 119:18

1. Your statutes are my delight (17-24)

When we ask him, God opens our spiritual eyes to see the wisdom and truth of his word--if we ask with a sincere desire to obey him. He opens our eyes to see ourselves. We are really strangers on earth. Sometimes God's people look foolish and are objects of the scorn and contempt of worldly people. But when we thirst for God's word and delight in it, slander and scorn cannot harm us. God himself--through his word--is our counselor.

2. You have set my heart free (25-32)

Sometimes our human circumstances make us sorrowful and tired. We are tempted to follow a worldly way of life like that of those around us. At such times, we must meditate on God's word (27) and pray (26, 28), then choose the way of truth (30). When we do this, we find that God strengthens us and sets our hearts free, and this is the only real freedom.

Prayer: Father, thank you for setting my heart free; continue to open my eyes to see the wonderful things in your word.

One Word: Spiritual sight sets us free

TURN MY EYES FROM WORTHLESS THINGS

Psalm 119:33-48

Key Verse: 119:36,37

1. Turn my heart toward your word (33-40)

Because we are naturally selfish, our hearts easily turn toward selfish gain. The cravings of sinful man and the lust of the eyes are not from God but from the world (1Jn 2:16). We must turn our eyes away from the TV to God's word. When we turn our hearts toward God's word, he cleanses us of our desires for worthless things and preserves our lives according to his word. Let us hold God's word of promise in our hearts, for God keeps his promises to us.

2. I will walk about in freedom (41-48)

God's love is unfailing; he promised us salvation in Jesus. He puts the word of truth in our mouths when we trust in his word and put our hope in his promises. When we walk according to his laws we are free. When we seek human freedom by trying to be free from God, we become slaves of people and/or material things. Only in God's love and in obedience to his laws is there real freedom.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to seek selfish gain. Preserve and renew my life according to your word.

One Word: Turn my eyes from worthless things

THE LORD IS MY PORTION

Psalm 119:49-64

Key Verse: 119:57

1. In the night I remember your name (49-56)

There are two verses in this passage which speak about remembering God's word in the night (55,62). When we are away from friends and God's family, alone in some far place, we are vulnerable to temptation, especially at night. But no matter where we may be, we are never away from the protecting care and all-seeing eyes of God. Sometimes even in a familiar environment we are troubled and cannot sleep. The psalmist tells us that this is a good time to get up and pray. It is a good time to remember God's grace and give thanks.

2. You are my portion, O Lord (57-64)

When we obey God's word, and seek him with all our hearts, he meets us and gives us inner peace and joy that no person or circumstance can take away. When the Lord is my portion, I know that all the earth is filled with his love.

Prayer: Father, help me to remember you in the night and seek your face with all my heart for you are my portion and my very great reward.

One Word: The Lord is my portion

GOD IS GOOD

Psalm 119:65-80

Key Verse: 119:68

1. God's training (65-72)

The psalmist learned to love and trust God in times of suffering. He could say, "It was good for me to be afflicted." Before he was afflicted he went astray; but through suffering he learned to obey God's word. He learned that God is good. He found that by taking hold of God's word in a time of suffering, the callouses were removed from his heart. He grew in love for God and for God's word. He found that God's word is more precious than gold.

2. God's comfort (73-80)

The psalmist accepted the sovereignty of God his Creator. He put his hope in God's word of promise and discovered that God is faithful and righteous. He found that God's unfailing love was his comfort and God's compassion brought him life. He learned these things by meditating on God's word in times of suffering. He did not waste time hating those who mistreated or misused him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your unfailing love. You are good and what you do is good. Thank you for your life-giving word. Teach me more of its meaning.

One Word: Accept God's training with joy

GOD'S WORD IS ETERNAL

Psalm 119:81-96

Key Verse: 119:89,90

1. I have put my hope in your word (81-88)

God is a God of promise. When we trust his promises and wait on him, we grow in faith. We, like the psalmist, find waiting hard, but when we put our hope in God's word, we experience

God's love and faithfulness. When we love God and seek to obey his word, adversaries will surely arise. But we must not forsake God's precepts. This is the time to hold more firmly to the promises of God.

2. Save me, for I am yours (89-96)

God's word is eternal; his faithfulness endures throughout all generations. When we delight in his word and seek to live by it, we can know and love God. His word is like his love letter to us. The world may fall apart, but God will save those who love him and walk according to his word. There is a limit to all human perfection, but God's word is boundless.

Prayer: Lord, I have put my hope in your word of promise. I am unfaithful, Lord, but you are faithful. Save me, for I am yours.

One Word: God's faithful promise is my hope

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET

Psalm 119:97-112

Key Verse: 119:105

1. God's word makes me wise (97-104)

When we love God's word and meditate on it all day long, when we hold it in our hearts even while we are doing many other things, we become wiser than our enemies, and wiser even than our teachers. When we obey God's word and walk according to it, he keeps us from every evil path. God's word is sweeter than honey. We must prayerfully read and study God's word until its truth and wisdom fills our hearts.

2. God's word is a lamp for my feet (105-112)

There are treacherous paths, snares set by the wicked, and unseen potholes in the road of life. All people travel this road, but God has given his people his word to be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Sometimes the way seems dark and the road uncertain, but when we resolve to follow God's word no matter what, he shines his light on the way.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for giving me a lamp for my feet in this dark world. Help me to set my heart on your word.

One Word: God's word is my lamp

GIVE ME DISCERNMENT

Psalm 119:113-128

Key Verse: 119:125

1. I stand in awe of your laws (113-120)

God hates double-mindedness. James 1:8 says that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Selfish people are naturally double-minded. But if I repent of my selfishness, love God's law, seek refuge in him alone, and put my hope in his promises, then my double-mindedness is cured. God rejects those who stray from his decrees and become deceitful and double-minded. We must have a holy fear of God and stand in awe of his word so that we may study the Bible with the right attitude.

2. Give me discernment (121-128)

God's servants look foolish because they are out of step with the world. Arrogant people oppress God's people in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. What can we do? The psalmist renews his hope in God's salvation and prays for discernment so that he can better understand the word of God. He renews his confidence in God's word.

Prayer: Lord, take away all my double-mindedness and give me discernment so that I may know your will and do it.

One Word: Fear of God gives discernment

THE UNFOLDING OF YOUR WORDS GIVES LIGHT

Psalm 119:129-144

Key Verse: 119:130

1. Make your face shine upon me (129-136)

Men live in darkness because they do not have the word of God. Most people in America have Bibles, but to many, the Bible is a closed book--because they do not read it or obey it. The psalmist wept because God's law was not obeyed. But when the truth of God's word is unfolded by prayerful study, light comes into dark hearts, and into a dark society. People who had no understanding of the world nor of themselves find that things begin to make sense. Sin cannot rule over a person whose footsteps are directed by God's word.

2. God's promises are trustworthy (137-144)

God is righteous and faithful. His promises are fully trustworthy. Our zeal wears out--and wears us out-- but God's word lasts forever. His promises have been thoroughly tested by many believers down through history, and they are true. Even when trouble and distress come, God's word gives peace.

Prayer: Lord, let your face shine upon us to unfold your word. Let the light and truth of your word enlighten our darkness.

One Word: God's word gives light and life

THE LORD PRESERVES LIFE

Psalm 119:145-160

Key Verse: 119:159

1. I put my hope in your word (145-152)

God's promises and commands are true; they are eternal. Even in the long watches of the night, when God seems far away, he is near and ready to help us. But we must call on him. God is the preserver of life (149, 154, 156, 159). He preserves life according to his word. He loves those who love and trust and obey his word. When we meditate on his promises and put our hope in them, he is near to us and he answers our prayers. The psalmist set an example: he meditated on God's word all night and rose before the dawn to pray.

2. Preserve my life according to your love (153-160)

Salvation is far from those who despise the word of God, from those who devise wicked plans instead of following God's word. All God's words are true and all his laws are eternal. Faithless people do not obey God's word. They cannot be saved. But the lives of those who call on the Lord for help will be preserved according to his promise.

Prayer: Lord, you are my hope and my salvation. Help me to obey your eternal word.

One Word: In love the Lord preserves life

GREAT PEACE HAVE THOSE WHO LOVE GOD'S LAW

Psalm 119:161-176

Key Verse: 119:165

1. I loved truth and hated falsehood (161-168)

The psalmist was criticized and persecuted without cause, but he did not tremble before the powerful rulers who attacked him. He trembled before the word of God. He refused to compromise with his accusers because he loved truth and hated falsehood. He rejoiced in God's promises like one who has found a hidden treasure. Even in the midst of persecution he had great peace because God's word was in his heart.

2. I have strayed like a lost sheep (169-176)

We live in times when many people have no direction. One who has no direction has lost the way--he is lost, like a lost sheep. The psalmist longed for God's salvation and delighted in God's word. He found that the Good Shepherd was seeking his sheep; he is ready to hear and help all who call on him. He delivers his people according to his promise.

Prayer: Lord, you are my Shepherd. Help me to hold your word in my heart and have your peace and direction.

One Word: Love God's word; have his peace

SAVE ME, O LORD

Psalm 120:1-7

Key Verse: 120:1

1. Save me from deceitful tongues (1-4)

This psalm is the first of 15 songs of ascents sung by pilgrims going to Jerusalem. We are also pilgrims, traveling toward the heavenly Jerusalem. The psalmist has suffered in the world because of deceitful people who spread lies about him. This is no small matter: The 9th commandment is about false witnesses; Jesus called the devil a liar and a murderer. Lies and deceit can kill the soul. The psalmist seeks only God's help.

2. Woe to me that I dwell in Meshech (5-7)

Meshech is a distant country in what is now southern Russia; Kedar, a wandering tribe of hostile Bedouins. They represent a hostile, dog-eat-dog world. The psalmist had been a part of this world, but he made a decision to return to God. He longs for God's peace.

Prayer: Lord, I cannot overcome the world with my human skill. I cannot defend myself against slander and lies. I can only turn to you and call on your name.

One Word: Save me, O Lord

WHERE DOES MY HELP COME FROM?

Psalm 121:1-8

Key Verse: 121:2

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills (1-2)

This is sometimes called the travelers' psalm. As we pilgrims travel toward the heavenly kingdom, we encounter unknown paths and hostile environments. Familiar places and people pass from sight. We cannot put our trust in people or in material things. Our help cannot come

from the hills, but the hills remind us of our Creator, the eternal God who made heaven and earth. He is our only source of help.

2. The Lord watches over us (3-8)

The Lord is on 24-hour duty. He does not sleep; he watches over us all the time. No one can be such a shepherd. He knows my weaknesses, and he keeps my foot from slipping. He knows that I travel through a hostile world, so he protects me from the sun by day and the moon by night. My life is in his hand until I reach my final destination--his heavenly kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, I lift my eyes to the hills. My help comes from you, the Creator of heaven and earth. I will not fear, for you are watching over my comings and goings.

One Word: My help comes from the Lord

LET US GO TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Psalm 122:1-9

Key Verse: 122:1

1. Let us go to the house of the Lord (1-5)

Jerusalem was the city David had conquered and made his capital. The temple was there. It symbolizes our eternal destination. Jerusalem was the city of pilgrimage, the place where the faithful came to offer sacrifices and to worship God. For us, it symbolizes the place where we meet as God's people to worship him. Corporate worship is important. When we worship with God's people, spiritual order is restored in our lives, for we listen to his word and acknowledge him as the Lord and King.

2. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (6-9)

God designated Jerusalem as the place for all Israelites to go and worship him. God's people need a specific place of worship and a particular body of God's people with whom they worship. To pray for the peace of Jerusalem is to pray for our spiritual brothers and friends, those with whom we worship and serve God.

Prayer: Lord, give peace to your people. May those who love you be secure.

One Word: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

TO YOU, O LORD, I LIFT MY EYES

Psalm 123:1-4

Key Verse: 123:2

1. As the eyes of slaves (1-2)

God calls us to serve him. A servant of God does not act on his own--he tries to do his master's will. A slave watches his master's hand to see what he is doing. Then he participates in his master's work. I can be God's servant when I lift up my eyes to the throne of God, looking away from myself, giving up my own strong ideas. I wait on God. And when God shows me what he is doing and what he wants me to do, I do it with all my heart, for his glory. Jesus said, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (Jn 5:17--RSV).

2. Have mercy on us, O Lord (3-4)

When we come to God in prayer, we should not bring a shopping list. We come to serve him, not to seek small benefits. He has set us free from bondage to sin. We belong to him. When we live as God's people and serve him, many times we suffer because of worldly people. So we need his mercy.

Prayer: Lord, I lift my eyes to you as a servant watches his master's hand. Show me how to serve you, and grant me your mercy.

One Word: Lift your eyes to the Lord

“To Thee, O Lord, I raise my eyes

O Thou enthroned above the skies;

As servants watch their master's hand

Or maid by mistress waiting stand,

So to the Lord my eyes I raise

Until his mercy he displays.”

From the Psalter

LIKE A BIRD OUT OF THE SNARE

Psalm 124:1-8

Key Verse: 124:8

1. If the Lord had not been on our side (1-5)

We live in a world in rebellion against God, and God's people are not exempt from suffering. But when God's people call on him for mercy, he always answers. He is on the side of his people

who put their trust in him. We should neither look for nor expect any mercy from the world or from worldly people, but we may be sure that the Lord is on our side (See Ge 26:3).

2. The snare has been broken (6-8)

God broke the snare and delivered his people from their oppressors (Jdg 6:7). By the hand of Cyrus the Persian, he delivered them from Babylonian captivity (2Ch 36:22, 23). Satan is always busy laying traps for God's people; he seeks to ensnare us with fear and doubt, and hold us as his slaves. But our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He is the God who raised Jesus from the dead.

Prayer: Lord, you have delivered us from the power of sin, and from death. Praise the Lord our Maker.

One Word: The snare has been broken

AS THE MOUNTAINS SURROUND JERUSALEM

Psalm 125:1-5

Key Verse: 125:2

1. Like Mount Zion (1-2)

Mount Zion was a high hill, an impregnable fortress in the city of Jerusalem. David captured the city in 1000 B.C. and made it his capital. He put the ark there. Sometimes the whole city is called "Mount Zion," sometimes only the temple area. It was called the dwelling place of God; it was the destination of pilgrims. God surrounds and protects his people as the mountains surround Jerusalem. Those who trust in the Lord become stable and strong, like the stronghold of Zion.

2. The scepter of the wicked (3-5)

When people are under an evil ruler, even the good they try to do becomes evil. When we are not under the righteous rule of God, then we are in Satan's kingdom, for he is the prince of this world. But when God's kingdom comes in our hearts, the scepter of Satan is broken. When God's kingdom comes, evildoers are banished, and God's peace and righteousness reign.

Prayer: Lord, I call on your name. You are my security and my fortress. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth.

One Word: Worship God our Fortress

SOW IN TEARS; REAP WITH JOY

Psalm 126:1-6

Key Verse: 126:5

1. The Lord has done great things (1-3)

When the captives returned to Zion after a long exile, it was like a dream. But their captivity was indeed over. They were free. The Lord did great things for them. They were filled with unspeakable joy. We Christians are joyful because we who were slaves of sin and death have been set free by God's grace. The Lord has done great things for us. His name is glorified among all who see our changed lives.

2. Those who sow in tears (4-6)

Although God's people never lose their basic joy, there is a time for weeping. When we become aware of sins that hurt God's heart, it is time to weep and to repent. When we see how sin devastates those for whom Christ died, it is time to weep and to plant gospel seed. Sometimes we experience painful rejection or indifference. But if we go out weeping, carrying the seed of the word, we will return with songs of joy.

Prayer: Lord, help me to sow your word of life and trust you for the harvest in your own time.

One Word: Sow in tears; reap with joy

UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE

Psalm 127:1-5

Key Verse: 127:1

1. When the Lord builds (1-2)

Even though we work hard to build a happy home and a secure life, we work in vain if we leave God out. Without God's blessing, our happy home becomes a miserable home. We want to live in peace and security. Peace and security come from God—not from insurance or a big bank account or a job with good benefits. No family can hold together and be fruitful unless God watches over and establishes it.

2. Sons are a heritage from the Lord (3-5)

God is the one who gives children. They belong to him. He gives physical children and he gives spiritual children. It is not easy to raise children in a crooked and corrupt world, but God's blessings are not necessarily easy to bear. There are many enemies who would destroy God's children. We need God's help to raise children to be a blessing to us and to their generation.

Prayer: Lord, you are building your house; let me be a part of your work. Help me to bear the blessings you give so that your name may be glorified.

One Word: Unless the Lord builds the house

BLESSED ARE ALL WHO FEAR THE LORD

Psalm 128:1-6

Key Verse: 128:1

1. Blessed are all who fear God (1)

To fear God means to love and respect him. Proverbs 9:10 says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To fear God means to honor him and obey him by walking in his ways. His ways are the ways of truth and life. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life..." (Jn 14:6). To fear God means to acknowledge his sovereignty and lordship in my life. Fearing God is not just an inner attitude; it is a way of life.

2. A fruitful life (2-6)

God promised to bless those who fear him and walk in his ways. His blessing is to make our labor and our lives fruitful. His blessing is not only a personal, family-centered blessing; it is a blessing on the whole community of God's people, and through them, a blessing to the world.

Prayer: Lord, teach my heart to fear you, and help my feet to walk in your ways. Grant that I may be a good steward of your blessings.

One Word: Fear God; bear his blessings

CUT FREE FROM THE CORDS OF THE WICKED

Psalm 129:1-8

Key Verse: 129:4

1. Victory from God (1-4)

Israel was born in slavery. She was oppressed by hostile neighbors or by superpowers during much of her history. But the Lord had a great purpose for her. He wanted to raise her up as his own people to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:5,6). He cut her free from the cords of the wicked. God sets his people free to serve him. When we worship our righteous God and acknowledge his sovereignty, no one can gain victory over us.

2. All who hate Zion (5-8)

Those who hate God and oppress and harass his people will be turned back in shame. People without God in their lives are like grass trying to grow on a roof: It has no roots, so it withers in

the hot sun before it can grow. People without God can have no blessing from God, so their lives are dry and fruitless. God's people have victory when they wait patiently on God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for cutting me free from the cords of sin and death. Thank you for blessing me to put down roots in your word so that my life is fruitful.

One Word: Thank God for his grace and blessing

I WAIT FOR THE LORD

Psalm 130:1-8

Key Verse: 130:5

1. Out of the depths (1-4)

There are times when we hit rock bottom. Psychologists call this depression, and they sometimes blame it on a "chemical imbalance." Perhaps such suffering comes from external events beyond our control; perhaps from our own failures or shortcomings. But whatever the cause, It is the time for the child of God to cry out to the Father for mercy and come to him as a repentant sinner. God always hears us when we ask for mercy, for he is eager to forgive the repentant sinner. His forgiveness brings healing to the heart and soul.

2. In his word I put my hope (5-8)

God's word of promise plants hope in people's hearts. Promises look to the future, and God's promises are as trustworthy as God's own faithful character. When my soul waits for the Lord and I put my hope in his word, he works in me mightily. With him is full redemption. He himself redeems his people from sin and despair.

Prayer: Lord, I cry to you from the depths, and my soul waits on you.

One Word: I put my hope in his word

LIKE A WEANED CHILD

Psalm 131:1-3

Key Verse: 131:2

1. My heart is not proud (1)

Our purpose as human beings is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But when our hearts are full of pride and ambition, we have no joy in God. We are seeking joy in something else. God trains his people. He performs surgery on our pride and teaches us how to rest in him alone.

2. Like a weaned child (2-3)

The time comes when a mother must wean her child. At first, he cries and demands his mother's breast. But she must curb his demands and teach him that he cannot have everything he wants. When he accepts this, he is weaned, and he becomes quiet. He sees things differently. He can rest peacefully with his mother, enjoying her love. God wants us to surrender our pride and passion and put our hope in him. He wants to give us his deep peace and to teach us to enjoy fellowship with him.

Prayer: Lord, I don't want to be driven by pride and passion; teach me to wait on you and rest in you so that I may have your peace in my soul.

One Word: Like a weaned child

TWO VOWS

Psalm 132:1-18

Key Verse: 132:17

1. David's vow (1-10)

David swore an oath to the Lord that he would not rest until the ark of the covenant had been brought to its dwelling place in the heart of the land. The ark contained the Law (the Bible), and its cover was the mercy seat (atonement cover). The ark represented God's presence in the midst of his people. David brought the ark to Jerusalem and prepared everything to build the temple to house it.

2. The Lord's vow (11-18)

God swore an oath to David, promising that his descendant would sit on David's throne forever. Jesus is the everlasting King; his kingdom is forever. The horn represents strength and power. Jesus is called the horn of salvation (Lk 1:69). He is the lamp that will never go out. He is God who came to dwell with his people. The Lord's presence in the midst of his people is the source of blessing.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your great faithfulness to keep your promises. Help me to be faithful to you to the end.

One Word: David's vow; God's vow

LIVING TOGETHER IN UNITY

Psalm 133:1-3

Key Verse: 133:1

1. Like precious anointing oil (1-2)

It is hard for brothers to live together in unity. Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one (Jn 17:11b,21). Christians cannot avoid community. We are commanded to love God and to love one another. When we obey, God pours out a great blessing on us. His blessing is like the anointing oil poured on Aaron the high priest. God's anointing brings peace and power in prayer. It equips his church for the priestly work of bringing the world to God through the preaching of the gospel (Ro 15:16).

2. Like the dew of Mount Hermon (3)

Mount Hermon was the tallest mountain around. The dew that fell on its heights morning by morning was abundant and refreshing. It represents the outpouring of God's Spirit and his blessing of life forevermore. Such dew falls on Mount Zion and the people of God when they worship him with one heart and one mind (Ac 1:14).

Prayer: Lord, help us to dwell together in unity.

One Word: Like anointing oil and dew

LIFT UP YOUR HANDS

Psalm 134:1-3

Key Verse: 134:2

1. Praise the Lord (1-2)

This is the last of the 15 songs of ascents. The pilgrim traveling up to Zion has arrived. He has come to meet God and worship him, so he lifts up his hands to God in prayer and praise. Our chief end in life is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Our pilgrimage leads us to his presence. We enter his presence to praise and thank him.

2. The Lord bless you (3)

The Lord is the Maker of heaven and earth. He is the Possessor of all things. He dwells in Zion. This means that he has chosen to reveal himself through the history of his people Israel who worshiped him in the temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. He is the God of Abraham and Moses, the God of the Bible. He is the God of David, the God and Father of Jesus Christ. When we come and worship him, he blesses us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to draw near to you through the study of your word; I lift up my hands to you in praise and prayer.

One Word: Come with praise

THE LORD IS GREAT

Psalm 135:1-21

Key Verse: 135:5

1. Our Lord is great (1-14)

The Lord is great. He does whatever pleases him. He controls the winds and clouds and storms; he delivered his people Israel from bondage in Egypt and gave them the promised land as an inheritance. He delivered me from bondage to sin and gave me a new life. The Lord is good. All his activity is directed toward accomplishing his purpose of world salvation. Praise the Lord, all you servants of the living God.

2. The gods of the nations (15-21)

People who worship idols are very foolish. They make an image with their own hands and worship it; the idols have eyes but they cannot see, ears but they cannot hear. They cannot help those who call on them. Furthermore, a man becomes like what he worships. Men who worship money or power become slaves of these things.

Prayer: Lord, I want to worship and praise you, for you are the great God. Help me to share in your redemptive work in my time.

One Word: Praise and worship the Almighty God

HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

Psalm 136:1-26

Key Verse: 136:1

1. God is the Almighty Creator (1-9)

This psalm was meant to be sung responsively to praise the Almighty, loving God. The Lord God is the Almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth. It is most amazing and wonderful that this Almighty God is full of love and mercy. His love never changes. It endures forever.

2. God is the Almighty Deliverer (10-15)

He delivered his people Israel from slavery in Egypt. It was a costly deliverance. It required slaying the firstborn of Egypt and splitting the Red Sea asunder. He delivered his people because of his great, unchanging love.

3. God remembers his promises (16-26)

In love he led his people through the desert and struck down mighty kings to protect them.

Prayer: Lord, I praise you, for your love endures forever. Everything you do by your sovereign power is done in love. Praise God who remembers us in our low estate.

One Word: Give thanks to the Lord Almighty

HOW CAN WE SING THE LORD'S SONG?

Psalm 137:1-9

Key Verse: 137:4

1. We remember Zion (1-4)

The Jews were carried off to Babylon to live there in exile for 70 years. This was God's discipline for their unfaithfulness. It was a sorrowful time. They knew they had sinned; they longed for home. Their Babylonian captors were superficial, proud and bent on pleasure-seeking. They enjoyed listening to the singing of the Israelite captives. But the exiles had no song in their hearts, for they were far from home and God seemed far away. Their highest joy was remembering Jerusalem and the temple in its glory.

2. Remember, O Lord (5-9)

They could not sing; they could not retaliate; but they could pray. Their prayer sounds bitter and cruel--and indeed it was. It was very different from Jesus' prayer from the cross, "Father, forgive them..." But it was real--they laid their feelings before God. Their hope was in God alone.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me of sin and rule my heart so that I can sing your songs during my earthly pilgrimage.

One Word: Sing the Lord's song

THE LORD WILL FULFILL HIS PURPOSE FOR ME

Psalm 138:1-8

Key Verse: 138:8

1. You have exalted your name and word (1-5)

David knew God's heart. God exalts his name and his word above all things. God's name represents God himself. David worshiped God; he praised him for his love and faithfulness. He exalted God's word by obeying it. When he called to God in prayer, God answered and made him stouthearted and bold to serve God and obey him.

2. You will fulfill your purpose for me (6-8)

David was a conquering hero and finally, a king, but he walked humbly before God. God dwells on high, but he extends his hand to help those with humble hearts. When we walk in the midst of trouble, God preserves our lives. God saves us so that he can use us. The Sovereign God has a purpose for our lives, and he will surely fulfill his purpose. He saved me from sin and death so that he could use me in his great world salvation plan.

Prayer: Lord, help me to walk humbly before you, trusting your protecting hand and ready to do your will.

One Word: God will fulfill his purpose

SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART

Psalm 139:1-24

Key Verse: 139:23,24

1. Where can I go from your Spirit? (1-12)

Some people are good at hiding from difficult jobs and demanding people--even in the age of beepers! No one, however, can hide from God. He knows our inmost thoughts. He knows us better than we know ourselves. His Spirit is with us when we climb to the heights or when we sink to the depths. God knows us because he loves us. His purpose is to bless us, to make our lives useful and joyful.

2. Your created me (13-18)

My existence is not an accident. God personally created me for his own good purpose (Eph 2:10). My life has meaning when I fulfill God's purpose for me. God himself is at work in the womb of each mother to create a human being in his image.

3. I hate those who hate you, Lord (19-24)

David loved God--so he hated those who hate God. David did not know himself. I do not know myself, either, so I asked God to search and test my heart.

Prayer: Lord, search me and know my heart and lead me in the way everlasting.

One Word: God created me to serve him

THE LORD SHIELDS MY HEAD

Psalm 140:1-13

Key Verse: 140:7

1. My strong Deliverer (1-8)

David fought many battles both before and after he became king. Our battles are with the Prince of Darkness, for we are engaged in spiritual warfare. Satan makes war against my soul every day. But the Sovereign Lord is my strong Deliverer. He guides my feet, which are so prone to wander and to lead me into traps. He protects my head--my most vulnerable spot--on the day of battle.

2. Destroy your enemies, O Lord (9-13)

David was attacked both physically and verbally. Satan uses evil rumors and slander to attack God's servants in our times as well. He is an expert in psychological warfare. What can we do? We cannot depend on ourselves, for we are weak. Our weapons are prayer and the word of God. He will surely defend his people and destroy his enemies, for the sake of his name.

Prayer: Lord, you are my guide and my strong Deliverer. Shield my head on the day of battle and cover the heads of your enemies with trouble.

One Word: The Lord will shield my head

MY EYES ARE FIXED ON YOU, O LORD

Psalms 141:1-10

Key Verse: 141:8a

1. Daily worship (1-4)

David worshiped God in the wilderness--even when he was far from a place of worship; his prayers were like the evening sacrifice. He asked God's protection of his lips and heart. He did not want to be drawn into godless activity.

2. The rebuke of a righteous man (5-7)

David welcomed the rebuke of godly people--but he did not listen to or compromise with God's enemies. We must gratefully welcome the rebukes of God's servants and pray for God's help when we are attacked by evildoers.

3. My eyes are fixed on the Lord (8-10)

When we are attacked by enemies within or enemies without, we can win the victory if we fix our eyes on the Lord and take refuge in him. He will help us pass safely through the traps that have been set for us.

Prayer: Lord, guard my heart and lips; help me to grow through the rebukes of your servants, and help me to fix my eyes on you.

One Word: Fix your eyes on the Lord

THE LORD IS MY PORTION

Psalm 142:1-7

Key Verse: 142:5

1. I cry aloud to the Lord (1-5)

When I am in the midst of a time of stress and under great pressure, and no one can help, I cry out to the Lord. He knows the way. He knows the snares that make a way unsafe, and he faithfully guides me. When I am alone and no one seems to care about my life, the Lord cares. He is my refuge. No one can satisfy the deepest needs of my heart, but the Lord is my portion. He satisfies my soul.

2. Set me free from my prison (6,7)

There are many kinds of prisons. The prisons of bad habits, of sinful lifestyles and of fatalistic situations seem to have a grip on us that is too strong. But the Lord sets us free from prison when we cry out to him for mercy and put our troubles before him. He sets us free so that we may serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Prayer: Lord, set me free from my prison of sin and self. Set me free from my bad habits. Be my everlasting portion and the King of my life forever. Set me free so that I may praise and serve you.

One Word: The Lord is my everlasting portion

SHOW ME THE WAY I SHOULD GO

Psalm 143:1-12

Key Verse: 143:6

1. My soul thirsts for you (1-6)

When we are attacked within and without by our enemy the devil, our spirits grow faint. It is easy to lose heart and become discouraged. How can our parched souls be refreshed? Not by victory nor by success. Only when God's Spirit is poured out on our thirsty souls can we be truly healed and renewed. When we meditate on God's word and praise him for his gracious redemptive work in us and in the world, and spread our hands out to him in prayer, he pours out his Spirit afresh.

2. Teach me to do your will (7-12)

God pours out his Spirit so that his people may be equipped to do his will. How can we know God's will? We must ask him for direction. David did this many times (1Sa 30:6-8). When we trust God's love implicitly and commit ourselves to obey his will, he will teach us his will and lead us on level ground to win victories for his name's sake. He will protect and guide and use us according to his will.

Prayer: Lord, I lift my soul to you. Pour out your Spirit on me, as you pour rain on parched ground.

One Word: Lord, show me the way to go

BLESSED ARE THE PEOPLE WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD

Psalm 144:1-15

Key Verse: 144:15b

1. Praise the Lord my Rock (1-11)

Man's life on the earth is tenuous and uncertain--like a fleeting shadow. But God is eternal. How amazing it is that he should love us and care for us! He trains us to fight the enemy Satan, and then protects us and gives victory--even though Satan is full of lies and deceit.

2. God's blessings (12-15)

When God blesses our lives, we are truly blessed. When our children become faithful men and women, our material needs are met, our sheep increase by thousands and ten thousands and we live in the security of God's protection, it is because of the blessing of the Lord. The Lord sometimes gives dry, difficult, and seemingly fruitless times to train us in faith, but he is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, train my hands for battle, so that I may fight the enemies within and those without. Help me to live as one of your people.

One Word: Blessed is the one whose God is the Lord

GREAT IS THE LORD AND WORTHY OF PRAISE

Psalm 145:1-21

Key Verse: 145:3

1. I will exalt you my God and King (1-13)

God created all things for his glory. We his creatures must praise him and extol his great name forever and ever. When we meditate on his great works, we become great; we must tell of his mighty acts to our children and to our sheep. Even though he is the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, he is compassionate. And he is loving toward all he has made. His saints--those who belong to him through faith in Jesus--must tell of the glory of his eternal kingdom.

2. The Lord is faithful to all his promises (14-21)

Our God is a God who makes promises, and he keeps all his promises. He promised Abraham that through his offspring all peoples would be blessed; he sent Jesus to bring forgiveness and peace to all who trust him. He promises to open his hand to supply all our needs and he promises to fulfill the desires of those who fear him. He also promises to be near to all who call on him in truth.

Prayer: Lord, I extol your name. Thank you for faithfully keeping your promises.

One Word: Our great God keeps his promises

BLESSED IS HE WHOSE HOPE IS IN THE LORD

Psalm 146:1-10

Key Verse: 146:5

1. Do not put your trust in men or princes (1-4)

Even men of great power and authority and many good intentions cannot save us. Even though a man wants to be faithful, he cannot. Man is mortal. He must die, leaving all of his good intentions and great plans uncompleted. So those who put their trust in men will be disillusioned.

2. Blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord (5-10)

God is the Maker of heaven and earth and everything in them. He is faithful forever. If our hope is in him and he is our Helper, we are blessed. When does he help? He helps the oppressed and hungry. He sets prisoners free; he gives sight to the blind and lifts up those who are weighed down by the cares and anxieties of the world. He watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow. He loves the righteous. He helps those who humbly seek him and call on him for mercy.

Prayer: Lord, my hope is in you; you have opened my eyes and set me free from the prison house of sin and death.

One Word: Hope in the Lord

GOD HEALS THE BROKENHEARTED

Psalm 147:1-20

Key Verse: 147:3

1. He sustains the humble (1-9)

The people of Israel were defeated and scattered because of their sins. But they repented and God forgave them and gathered them to himself. God heals the brokenhearted and binds up the wounds of repentant sinners. God is great. He created the heavens and the earth. He hung each star and knows its name. His power and understanding are limitless; he alone can heal the brokenhearted. He is ready to help all who humbly call on his name.

2. God delights in those who fear him (10-14)

God does not delight in the beautiful people who spend their time in health clubs. He delights in those who fear him, in those who put their hope in his unfailing love. He grants peace and blessing to the city that is full of such people.

3. God reveals himself in his word (15-20)

God commands and all nature obeys. He is revealed in his works of creation. He revealed himself to Israel through the law and through his mighty acts of salvation and judgment which are written in the Bible.

Prayer: Lord, heal the brokenhearted by your word.

One Word: God heals the brokenhearted

PRAISE HIM ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Psalm 148:1-14

Key Verse: 148:5

1. Praise the Lord all you his creatures (1-12)

God created all things for his own glory. Let all things in heaven and on earth praise him. Sun, moon and shining stars praise him. The great sea creatures, all wild animals and flying birds, all cattle must praise his name. Even hail and lightning, snow and clouds and stormy wind as well as mountains and trees, do his bidding. Kings and all princes, young men and maidens, old men and children--let them all praise his name, for he is our Creator.

2. He has raised up a horn (13-14)

A horn is the symbol of strength. God has raised up a strong king and shepherd for his people. This is a great blessing. He has raised the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Jesus is the horn of salvation. All who belong to Jesus are the saints of Israel, the people close to God's heart.

Prayer: Lord, I join all creatures in praising your name. Especially, I praise you for Jesus, the horn of salvation.

One Word: Praise the Lord

THE LORD DELIGHTS IN HIS PEOPLE

Psalm 149:1-9

Key Verses: 149:6

1. He crowns the humble with salvation (1-5)

The people of God should gather together to sing and dance and make music before the Lord. We are his children. Children are humble. They can dance before the Lord in simplicity and sincerity. King David once danced before the Lord. His wife despised him for this, but God was pleased. God wants his people to be joyful. When we come to him with humble hearts, full of love and trust, eager to accept his grace, he crowns us with salvation.

2. A double-edged sword (6-9)

God has work for his people to do. It is not always pleasant work. He called Israel of the Old Testament to be his instrument to execute judgment on enemies of God. He calls the Israel of the New Testament to do battle with Satan with the double-edged sword of the Spirit--which is the word of God (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12).

Prayer: Lord, help me to praise you with a new song and a fighting spirit. Give me a humble, joyful and obedient heart.

One Word: Let us rejoice in the Lord our Maker

PRAISE THE LORD

Psalm 150:1-6

Key Verse: 150:6

1. Where should the Lord be praised? (1)

Praise him in the sanctuary. Praise him anywhere and everywhere under his heavens. Whenever God's people come together it should not be to complain or to criticize. When we come together,

it should be to praise and thank God. The heavenly hosts praise God day and night in his mighty heavens.

2. Why should he be praised? (2)

Praise him for his acts of power. He is the Creator of all things. He redeemed his people from bondage in Egypt by his mighty hand, and he redeemed us from bondage to sin by sending his one and only Son. Praise him for his surpassing greatness.

3. How should he be praised? (3-5)

When words fail, we can express our thanks and praise in joyful music and dance.

4. Who should praise him? (6)

Everything that has breath should praise the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, attune my heart to praise your name. Help me to praise you with my life wherever I am.

One Word: Everything that has breath praise the Lord