

Week 19

May 7 - May 13

Psalms 12-17, 19-32, 35-41, 53, 55, 58, 61-62, 64-70, 86, 101

When I was in seminary, one of my professors challenged us with this question: how can the ancient prayers written in the psalms to God, be God's Word to us today? The answer, I propose to you, is that the psalms are prophetically the prayers of Jesus, the Messiah Himself. I know this may be a different way of understanding the psalms for you, but I believe that there is sufficient biblical evidence to support this.

So, as you read through the psalms this week, I hope you enjoy some insights into the life of the Messiah by reading through the prayers of the Messiah. – David Curtis

May 7th

Psalms 12-17; 19-21. "Joy of the Messiah"

Psalm 16 is a fitting start to our study in the Psalms this week. If you read Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, you will discover that Peter quotes verse 8-11 of this psalm in Acts 2:25-28. Peter then goes on to declare that David was not writing of himself, but rather of the coming Messiah. However, we recognize that the whole psalm is in the first person, so logically we conclude all of it to prophetically be the words of the Messiah Himself.

As I read through the rest of this psalm, I am encouraged by verse three, "The godly people in the land are my true heroes! I take pleasure in them!" Have you ever considered that living a godly life is a source of joy for Jesus?

Not that living a godly life is possible on our own, but rather because of Jesus' death and resurrection we are then able to live godly lives. No wonder it brings Him joy to see us living a godly life. It is one of the reasons He died. His joy is in seeing our lives reflect the benefit of His sacrifice. May you bring joy to God by living a godly life through the power of Christ who is in you.

May 8th

Psalms 22-26. "At the End of your Rope"

Psalm 22 is another psalm of David or the beloved one and, once again, it is prophetically speaking of the Messiah. This psalm is so interconnected in the life of the Messiah that the first line was spoken by Jesus as He hung on the cross.

The four gospel accounts give us information on the details of Jesus' crucifixion, but Psalm 22 allows us to enter into His emotions as He hung on the cross. And as we look, we see an overwhelming trust in the Father's will and a dependence upon Him for deliverance.

You may be wondering, how does this relate to me? Remember that Jesus possessed full humanity, including emotions and free will. The crucifixion was when Jesus was at His lowest point. He was physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually drained. He was dying a criminal's death having done nothing wrong, and yet we see Him continuing to praise the Father and trust in Him. How do you respond when you are at your lowest? Will you still trust and praise God when all hope seems lost?

May 9th

Psalms 27-32. "Imprecatory Psalms"

Psalm 28 is what Bible scholars call an imprecatory psalm. This is because the psalmist asks God to judge the wicked and the enemies of the righteous. Some have been troubled by the presence of such psalms. They wonder how a God of love and grace could receive such a request. Will God really act in response to this request?

Today I am challenging you to think differently about this psalm and others like it. If these psalms are prophetically the words or prayers of the Messiah, then it changes their message, the reason being that Jesus came for the purpose of taking the punishment for the sins of mankind. Thus Jesus, in praying these imprecatory psalms, actually prayed for God's judgment and wrath to come and then willingly became the object of that judgment and wrath on our behalf.

Because of Jesus, these imprecatory psalms are no longer messages of condemnation and judgment, but rather of grace and love, for "He personally carried away our sins in His own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds" (1 Peter 2:24)

May 10th

Psalms 35-38. "Mistreatment"

Have you ever considered the treatment that Jesus received from those He came to save? I think Psalm 35:11-14 provides insight into how He felt and increases our understanding of the mistreatment He received. The ones He has prayed for, fasted for, and grieved over are now rejoicing because of the trouble He is now in.

A striking example of this is in Luke 19:41 when Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. He wept, not just because He knew the city would be destroyed, but also because of their sin and rebelliousness. Later the same crowd that Jesus wept for was yelling, "Crucify Him" (Luke 23:21).

His mistreatment was obvious, but He did not retaliate. Rather, we see in this psalm and the gospels that He trusted His fate and the fate of those mistreating Him to a holy and righteous God.

How do you respond to mistreatment? Remember what Paul wrote, "Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, 'I will take vengeance, I will repay those who deserve it,' says the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

May 11th

Psalms 39-41, 53, 55, 58. "Doing God's Will"

Have you ever struggled to do God's will? You know what I am talking about; those situations where what you should do is very apparent and yet you still rebel and choose to sin.

Jesus never had that kind of experience, for He always followed God's will.

Psalm 40:6-8 declares that Jesus delights to do the Father's will. These verses are also quoted in Hebrews in reference to Jesus coming to do the will of the Father. Also, in Jesus' own declaration of His purpose in John 6:38 he said, "I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do what I want."

Everything that Jesus did in His earthly ministry was to carry out the will of the Father in His life. Jesus spent time with His Father in prayer and solitude, He submitted to His Father, He exercised compassion on people, He knew the Scriptures and taught them to others, and He resisted temptation. Much of what Jesus did is also God's will for us, so if you desire to know God's will for your life, you need not look farther than how Jesus lived His life.

May 12th

Psalms 61-62, 64-67. "Overwhelmed"

Have you ever felt overwhelmed with life? Have you ever felt distant from God and troubled? If so, don't be alarmed. We have all been there, every person, including Jesus. The first four verses of Psalm 61 seem to indicate that Jesus experienced these emotions as well.

The very fact that Jesus experienced these emotions tells me that our experience of them is not always because of our sin. While sometimes it is our sin that leads us to a sense of despair, it never was for His personal sin that Jesus felt this way since He was without sin. Rather, it was because He was dwelling in a broken world and living among broken people that Jesus experienced these low moments.

So, what are we to do when we, who live in this same broken world among broken people, are overwhelmed? I see three things from this psalm that we can do:

- 1) Cry out to God for help
- 2) Trust in Him for shelter and protection
- 3) Respond with praise and thanksgiving

Is this your practice when you are overwhelmed by this world?

May 13th

Psalms 68-70; 86, 101. "Dealing with Guilt and Shame"

In reading Psalm 69 today you probably made many direct connections to the life of Jesus. Verse 9 was quoted by the apostle John (John 2:17) and verse 21 was fulfilled with Jesus on the cross (John 19:29).

How can we, though, connect verse 5 to Jesus since it indicates that the Messiah was guilty of sin; and yet Scripture is clear that Jesus never sinned. Paul explains this mystery in 2 Cor. 5:21; "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us." Jesus became sin for the entire world, experiencing the guilt and shame of all those sins. This psalm reveals what it was like for Jesus to take on these sins?

- He cries out for salvation (vs. 1-4)

- He feels shame and humiliation (5-8)

- He is scoffed at, mocked and gossiped about (9-12)

- He expresses faith in God's ability to deliver (13-18)

- He recognizes that comfort is not available from men (19-21)

- He calls for judgment on the unrighteous (22-28)

- He pleads for salvation (29)

- He expresses faith in God and praises His name (30-36)

- How do you respond to the guilt and shame of sin?

General Questions for each day:

Summarize the day's Bible passage in your own words.

What thoughts, actions, attitudes or beliefs are addressed in the passage?

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to apply this passage to your life today?

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Bible Discussion Guide:

Read Acts 2:25-36. Peter said that David was a prophet and wasn't necessarily writing about himself. How does this impact our reading of the Psalms?

Have you ever considered yourself a hero to Jesus?

How do you think Jesus feels when we make godly choices? What about when we make ungodly choices?

How do you respond to God when you are at your lowest point?

What can we learn from the psalms about persevering in hard situations?

Is it ok for us to pray for God's judgment on sin to occur? Why or why not?

How is God's judgment on sin different than judgments that we pass against people?

How do you typically respond to mistreatment?

What can the psalms teach us about dealing with mistreatments and injustices?

How can you know God's will for your life?

How can you grow with respect to carrying out God's will in your life?

What things in life overwhelm you?

How do you typically act when you feel overwhelmed? What can we take from the psalms that can help us grow in how we respond to being overwhelmed?

How do you typically deal with guilt and shame?

Personal application: Review the different responses out of Psalm 69 listed on May 13th's devotional that Jesus had to guilt and shame. Which ones of these come easy for you? Which ones are difficult for you?