

#### Thursday, May 20, 2021—Psalms 118-119

Agatha Christie is one of the best-selling authors of all time. Her mysteries were full of complex plots and numerous characters that kept the reader guessing throughout. In the end, as the plot resolves, everything makes sense. The complex becomes simple because the author intervenes.

If Agatha Christie can do that with a plot she developed, imagine how God Himself can turn things upside down and rescue the afflicted and mend the broken when it seems impossible. He is above all things. He has dominion over all things. The Psalmist called on God in distress, and God rescued him (118:5). He is worthy of trust (118:8-9), and He takes the One the world rejects and makes Him the capstone (118:22-23).

God is worthy of praise. His love endures forever (118:28-29). It is no wonder, then, that the Psalmist was so fond of the Law God had given. The Law was God's revealed pathway for knowing Him and expressing love to Him. God's Law was the way for His people to walk in holiness so they could experience His love in its fullness. Psalm 119 celebrates the revealed, unchanging standards which lead to protection and provision.

The word is a guard against sin (119:11). The word comforts in affliction (119:50). The word teaches and blesses (119:97-104). The word is a lamp to light the way (119:105). The word remains delightful despite trouble and distress (119:143). The word endures forever (119:160).

Thank God today for being sovereign and for giving His word for guidance, rebuke, and encouragement. Read the Bible, and enjoy Him.

#### Wednesday, May 19, 2021—Psalms 115-117

Political discussions regularly devolve into one side's pointing out the flaws of occupants of the other side of the aisle. They promote their own strengths and laugh at their opponent's weaknesses. What rarely happens is for one side to admit their own imperfections and shortcomings.

The Psalmist knew the taunts of his enemies. They wondered aloud, "Where is their God?" The pagans that lived among the Israelites had gods one

could see and touch. They had shrines for sacrifices and sensuality. The Israelites had one place of worship, and few people could enter. No one could see their God, so was He even real?

God was in heaven and was more real than anyone. The gods of the pagans were made by hand. They had noses that could not smell and ears that could not hear. While no one could see God, He had been and would continue to be the help and the shield for His people (115:9-13). The Psalmist wanted God, the only real God, to receive praise (115:1, 18).

Walking with God did not prevent every hardship and struggle. Pagans could easily have pointed out the difficulties faced by God's people. The Psalmist did not deny those, but he did say that God heard his cries, and God rescued him (116:1-11). "How can I repay the Lord for all the good He has done for me?" (116:12). He is faithful, even unto death (116:15). No handmade idol can do that.

Praise the Lord for His faithful love (117:1-2). He is real and good.

Tuesday, May 18, 2021—Psalms 112-114

Comic books introduce readers to a world of heroes and villains who fight earthly battles with out-of-this-world strength. The good guys often find themselves in tough situations, but in the end they prevail. Justice is done. The wrong has been made right. The hero is more heroic than ever.

If readers can cheer characters on a colorful page, imagine the joy that comes to those who know the living God. "The Lord is exalted above the nations, his glory above the heavens" (113:4). He can give children to the barren and raise the poor from the dust to places of nobility. When He speaks, the earth responds (114:3-6). More than simply words on a page or fables from history, God is real and has done miracles on earth.

God does not perform His work and then retreat to some hidden harbor. He doesn't need to put on a disguise or take on another persona. He lives among His people (114:1-2). In fact, because of the work of Christ, God lives within those who trust in Him. His personal relationship with them gives them great personal benefit. They delight in His commands (112:1). They are confident about the present and

the future and are able to give generously to those in need. “He will not fear bad news; his heart is confident, trusting in the Lord” (112:7).

Praise God for His being real and able to do heroic, life-changing things. Pray for increasing confidence in Him and faithful service to Him.

#### Monday, May 17, 2021—Psalms 109-111

Conflict is as old as civilization. Cain and Abel had a deadly encounter. Nations have warred against nations throughout history. To seek the demise of another person or country is part of the brokenness of sin.

The Psalmist called for the destruction of his enemy, but he called on God to do the job. He was not planning to do so himself. He knew he was weak and incapable (109:22-25). He wanted God to make it evident God was responsible (109:27). These people had cursed God and attacked him. They had gone after the weak and vulnerable to put them to death. The Psalmist called for devastation to come on them (109:6-15) because they were promoting godless living. His only hope was calling on God who stands ready to save the needy from those who condemn (109:31).

The people of Israel sang Psalm 110 when they crowned a new king. As they placed God’s chosen man on the throne, they prayed for God’s power and provision to work through him. They celebrated the victory God would provide over their earthly enemies. Knowing God’s promises moved the people to stand with the king and serve (110:3a).

Whether in weakness (Psalm 109) or celebration (Psalm 110), the people of God stand before Him in awe (111:9). Fearing Him is the starting point for a relationship of wisdom and fruitfulness. He teaches and brings justice. He is gracious and compassionate. “The Lord’s works are great, studied by all who delight in Him” (111:2). Praise Him no matter what.

#### Sunday, May 16, 2021—Psalms 106-108

“I will stop this car! Don’t make come back there!” Statements like this have been common between driver parents and passenger children through the generations. Parents have standards of behavior for their children and are not

afraid to use discipline to correct misbehavior.

God, too, makes use of discipline. The Psalmist praised God for His everlasting loving kindness (106:1). He admitted the people had wandered from God's expectations. History showed that God disciplines His disobedient children to bring them to repentance, and He is faithful to hear their cries for deliverance and saves them (106:44-48). God's willingness to punish and restore is a part of His steadfast love. After all, what good parent wants his children to make bad choices a lifestyle?

Psalm 107 calls on God's people to praise Him for the countless ways He leads and provides. He satisfies the soul (107:9). He frees the captive (107:16). He completely changes circumstances (107:33-38). The proper response to His wisdom and love is gratitude and worship.

The faithful love of God is the life-changing reality for His children. His love rescues from captivity. His love gives identity and purpose. His love provides wisdom and strength to walk in His way, and his love rebukes and corrects to prevent harm and destruction. The Psalmist knew this love and knew there was no victory in life without it. "Give us aid against the foe, for human help is worthless" (108:12).

Thank God for His holiness and love. Pray for the desire to follow Him and the strength to do so. Thank Him for discipline that restores.

Saturday, May 15, 2021—Psalms 103-105

"The pen is mightier than the sword." Words have the power to build up and to tear down in ways that military might or physical strength cannot begin to touch. Parents can bless their children. Spouses can encourage their mates. Employers can empower their employees.

Often forgotten is the ability of the faithful to bless God Himself. Acts 13:2 says the church at Antioch ministered to the Lord in the way they worshiped before Him. Psalm 103 calls on the worshiper repeatedly to bless the Lord. Though He is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything, He receives the praises of His people, and they bless Him. He has done great things and has expressed

steadfast love. His people are temporary. He is eternal. He deserves to hear lavish praise from His people.

Take a look at the beauty and wonder of creation. He made all of it from nothing. He set the boundaries for the waters, and He put the mountains in place. He provides daily for the wild animals, and the birds sing praises to Him. He makes crops grow so humanity can flourish. The seasons remain regular because of His maintenance. The soul that considers all of this wonder responds to Him in praise and blessing (104:35).

Beyond creation, one can look at the story of Israel and see how God works intentionally in the lives of those He calls (105:1-45). He blesses them and sets high standards for holiness and service. He deserves the praise of lips and the obedience of lives. Bless the Lord with both.

#### Friday, May 14, 2021—Psalms 100-102

When company is coming over, Mom insists that the house is cleaned. When going to meet the mayor, Dad says the dress code is Sunday best. The audience affects the attitude and presentation.

When coming into the presence of God, the Psalmist calls on God's people to celebrate. The God of the whole universe allows His people to interact with Him. He says that ought to elicit a joyful noise, thanksgiving, and praise. He is their Creator. They are the sheep He tends so well. He is good. His mercy is everlasting (100:1-5). When God is the One listening, His people are to respond rightly.

Having interacted with the God of righteousness, His people live every day with integrity (101:2). They know the character of God because of their time spent with Him, so they want to live in His way. God will not tolerate those who slander their neighbors (101:5) or who walk in deceit. He welcomes and blesses those who walk in faithfulness.

Being able to come before this God of righteousness and holiness is no small thing. His people can never take that for granted. In despair and discomfort, the Psalmist pled with God to hear him (102:1). He was physically suffering and struggling emotionally, but he knew God reigned forever (102:12). His

circumstances did not change who God was or what His future held. There was security in Him for all who trusted in Him.

Praise God for His power, provision, and protection. Come before Him with humility and celebration.