

## Tuesday, April 28, 2020—Psalms 52-54

In the Garden of Gethsemane, there are olive trees from the time of Jesus. These trees are not attractive—their branches and trunks are asymmetrical and uneven. They are not tall and stately like a mighty oak, yet they thrive because of deep roots and good stewardship.

The psalmist saw the boasting of evil men around him and knew that one day their wickedness would cost them. One day the righteous would say, “Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others! But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever” (52:7-8).

Not trusting God, therefore, is foolish. The fool is not one who has no knowledge. In fact, the Bible labels as a fool many of the most intelligent people who have ever lived. The fool develops his own system of right and wrong and decides God’s standards are no longer useful or practical. This leads the fool to a life of corruption and wickedness that God cannot support. In considering the people of the world, God sees that there is no one who does good (53:3). Sin has tainted every single person. The only hope is for God alone to provide salvation.

The wise one declares, “Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me” (54:4). Praise God for His faithfulness to provide and deliver. Pray for wisdom to walk with Him regardless of circumstances.

## Monday, April 27, 2020—Psalms 49-51

When finances are strained and the economy struggles, it’s not uncommon to look to the wealthy and wish for a life like theirs. “Surely they have everything they need.” “I wish I had as much money in the bank as they do.” “What I wouldn’t give to be his friend!”

The psalmist said to be wise with wealth. “Why should I fear when evil days come . . .?” (49:5). No amount of money can redeem a life from God (49:7-8). Money might pay a few bills or bridge a gap, but the true cost of eternal life is too much for any billionaire. Wise men may give advice, but their lives will end just as the foolish. God has indeed provided wealth and wisdom, but we are

never to trust in them. Only God can redeem our lives (49:15). Only He has the riches and understanding to make this life and the next life worth living.

God reminded His people that He did not rely on them for His sustenance. Their sacrifices were not His source of food and drink. Their offerings were not His source of supply. He created and owned everything. Their sacrifices were their way of honoring Him so that He might show them the way to salvation (50:23). Sacrifice was a reminder of surrender, a broken and contrite heart aligned with God once again (51:17).

In surrender, David came to God in Psalm 51. Come to God today in full reliance on Him and Him alone for wealth, wisdom, and joy.

#### Sunday, April 26, 2020—Psalms 46-48

When Moses prepared the people of Israel to enter the Promised Land, he marveled at the relationship they had with Yahweh. “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?” (Deuteronomy 4:7). Having God near changes everything about life.

The psalmist knew this peace from God’s presence. Even if the world crumbled around him, he would not fear because God was an ever-present help in trouble. God was his refuge and strength. He didn’t just say those things. He believed those things. As a result, he could be still and allow God to be God (46:10). All was well even when nothing was right.

The psalmist called on everyone to sing praise to God. He was the King of the earth, reigning over the nations while seated on his throne (47:7-8). The true king deserves his subjects’ applause, so he called on everyone to clap and shout for joy because Yahweh filled him with awe.

Israel had seen God turn away great armies and provide incredible victories. The only explanation was His awesome might and His unfailing love. He would be their God and their guide to the very end (48:14).

Some of the world’s kings have the title but no authority. Consider how much authority God, the true King, has over you. Pray for a life that calls Him King and lives as if that is true. He is near, good, and worthy.

#### Saturday, April 25, 2020—Psalms 43-45

The COVID crisis has required social distancing. People must maintain physical distance while standing in line, walking a grocery aisle, or talking on the

street. Kids have not been able to be at their school building, and most churches have suspended their gatherings. Being apart is hard.

The psalmist knew this struggle. He was oppressed by life, and the suffering was creating distance between himself and the Lord. He longed to be back at the Temple, where the presence of God dwelled, so he prayed for his light and truth to guide him out of the darkness. He was confident God would answer his prayer, and he would one day praise Him (43:1-5).

Palm 44 expresses a feeling of distance as well. The writer knew the stories of his ancestors and their praise for how God had delivered them time and again. He personally knew victory God had given. His trust was not in weapons. He boasted in God alone (44:8), yet something had happened, and God was no longer going with them in battle. The writer was filled with shame and disgrace (44:15).

He begged God to rise up and help them based on His unfailing love (44:26). He was confident they had not walked away from God, so he wasn't sure how to repent or change. He simply knew God needed to act.

Psalm 45 celebrates the reign of a new king and the power of God in his life, a stark contrast to the previous two psalms. Pray for the power of His presence in your life. Seek restoration any time distance occurs.

#### Friday, April 24, 2020—Psalms 40-42

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated to everyone what things they built their lives around or trusted for consistency. Social activities, steady income, sports and celebrities, and so much more have all come to a standstill or been threatened by the response to this invisible enemy. What has not changed is the love of God and His ability to change lives.

The psalmist knew the transformative power of God compared to the world. "Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods" (40:4). God will not change. God will not fail. He looks for inward submission, not outward action. God provides security and stability which leads to praise.

The psalmist knew times when even his closest friend had turned against him (41:9), but God would remain faithful and trustworthy. He called on God for mercy and believed God would uphold him in his integrity. He was not wrestling with how he lived in the world or recounting his being treated or judged

unfairly by the world. He was simply believing in the righteousness of God and considering how he trusted Yahweh and walked with Him. That was the comparison that mattered.

The psalmist knew there was nothing more necessary than his connection with Yahweh. He longed for him like a deer pants for a refreshing drink (42:1). Day and night God expressed His love, so any time his soul was downcast, he put his hope in Yahweh.

Praise God for His unchanging love and hope. Seek Him alone.

Thursday, April 23, 2020—Psalms 37-39

Frustration is part of the human condition. Life does not go as expected or desired. Faith fights frustration by trusting that the Lord will make everything right. Patience allows the believer to know God will make things right in His timing. “If the Lord delights in a man’s way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand. I was young and now I am old, yet I have never see the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread” (37:23-25).

In Psalm 37, the psalmist exhibited great trust in Yahweh, knowing He would protect His people and give them a blessed future. They would have an inheritance that was abundant and bring justice to the wicked. In Psalm 38, the tone changes. God has not changed, to be sure. The psalmist, however, is dealing with personal guilt and feels the weight of God’s wrath and the sting of His justice. He confesses his guilt and how it troubles him (38:18) and asks for God’s help to restore him quickly.

The psalmist knew he had to deal with personal sin, but he also realized he could not stay silent about sin around him (39:1-3). Compared to God, people are vapor. Their lives amount to nothing without Him, so life comes to have value only when focused on Him and His ways. His discipline is the pathway to growth, strength, and peace.

Thank God for frustrations that increase your faith and discipline. Praise God for His faithfulness and His grace.

Wednesday, April 22, 2020—Psalms 34-36

God calls people to faith in Him so He can be glorified. He wants the world to look on His goodness, power, and sufficiency. He does not want the world to be amazed at the intellect or beauty or ability of people. He wants to

use the weak and simple to demonstrate His power and wisdom. God, therefore, responds to those who are fearful, weak, and poor. Blessed are those who take refuge in Him (34:8). Those who seek Him will lack nothing (34:10), and He will be near them in their sorrow (34:18).

Knowing God's power, the psalmist rejoiced in the Lord and delighted in His salvation. "My whole being will exclaim, 'Who is like you, O Lord? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them'" (35:10). He called on God to go to battle for him and to frustrate his enemies (35:23). The life of faith does not ignore hardship or pretend it's an illusion. Faith acknowledges hardship as reality and calls on God to step into the fray.

The psalmist knew his adversaries plotted evil day and night. They lay in bed dreaming up harmful schemes, but the love of Yahweh exceeded their mental capacity and military capabilities (36:3-6). "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light" (36:9). God would bring victory.

Thank God for difficult times that give Him an opportunity to show His goodness and provision. Pray for faith that increasingly trusts Him and embraces hardship as an opportunity to grow.

