their fear of Him. Their trust should translate to praise because the dead are not the ones who worship Him (115:17).

 Psalm 116 celebrates the listening ear of God (116:1). The Psalmist cried out in anguish, and God’s response moved him to use two more words to describe Him—gracious and righteous (116:5). “The Lord protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me” (116:6). God’s grace put his soul at rest and caused him to ask, “How can I repay him for all He’s done for me?” (116:12). His conclusion was to worship His name and spend his life fulfilling his role as servant to Yahweh (116:13-19).

 Praise the Lord today for His love, faithfulness, help, protection, grace, and righteousness. “For great is his love toward us; and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever” (117:2).

Saturday, May 20, 2017—Psalm 119

 Psalm 119 is a testimony about the Law. The psalmist made it an acrostic poem using the Hebrew alphabet. The first eight lines begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph. Each successive eight-line section uses the successive Hebrew letter in the same way. The 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet mean this psalm contains 176 verses of reflection on the treasure of the word of God.

 From the beginning, the writer declares the blessedness of those whose walks are blameless. Their full obedience comes from the awareness of the righteousness of God’s ways. His Law may seem harsh or unbending. His expectations may seem lofty or impossible, yet learning those ways and living by them lead to a sense of life, hope, and strength that all should consider and enjoy.

 What the outside world sees as restrictive or fatal, the psalmist knows as liberating. “I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free” (119:32). He cannot grasp them simply by reading or hearing them, however. He pleads with God, “Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them in the end” (119:33).

 Pray for a heart and mind which make these declarations, “The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold” (119:72). “Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long” (119:97). “I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly” (119:167).

 Walk in the path He illuminates (119:105). Memorize the word so you won’t sin against Him (119:11).

*Read the Bible Through 2017*

Week 20

Sunday, May 14, 2017—Psalms 100-102

 The months of May and June allow time for recognizing mothers and fathers and their vital role in shaping lives. Everyone has a mother and father, but not everyone has a relationship with them. Being able to interact, love, and shape one another is a true blessing.

 The Psalmist called for all the earth to shout to the Lord and worship Him. “Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture” (100:3). The Psalmist was joyful not only that God existed—something worthy of worship in itself—but that God called Israel His sheep. They had a relationship with the Master of the Universe. What a blessing that was!

 The character and presence of God not only produce worship but also a lifestyle of faithfulness. Psalm 101 is a declaration of this desire for righteous living. “I will be careful to lead a blameless life . . .” (101:2). He will hate evil, shun the wicked, and bless the faithful. God deserves more than words from our lips. Our lives should magnify His name and ways.

 Upright living can lead to downright distress (102:2), but the Lord remains on His throne (102:12). He will look down from heaven to hear the groans of the oppressed and release the captive from prison (102:19-20). His name will endure, and His people will prosper.

 Praise God today for being a present, powerful Father who cares and nurtures like a loving mother.

Monday, May 15, 2017—Psalms 103-105

 All of creation has the ability to praise the Creator. The Psalmist called on the angels, the works of creation, and his own soul to praise the Lord (103:20-22).That would not be possible unless God created each of those with the ability to do so. It could easily be said that the highest purpose of all things is to bring Him praise.

 The human soul has privileges unlike the angels and creation. God acts toward the soul like nothing and no one else. He forgives (103:3) and redeems (103:4). God satisfies (103:5) and works righteousness and justice for the soul (103:6). He reveals His ways and does not treat the soul as sin deserves (103:7-12). Above all, God expresses love toward the soul (103:13-17). A song of praise and a life of service are worthy responses. Singing and serving are great privileges to be employed and enjoyed.

 To look around at creation is to see the glory of God on full display. Psalm 103 celebrates the hand of God in creating all things and the heart of God in providing for all things. The writer concludes, “May the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the Lord rejoice in his works” (103:31). He wanted his personal praise to be pleasing to Him as well and for sinners to vanish from the earth (103:34-35).

 Creation tells His glory, and history tells His story (105:1-45). He works so people might know His promises and keep His laws. Look around. Reflect. Praise Him for who He is and what He has done.

Tuesday, May 16, 2017—Psalms 106-108

 To know God is to recognize His eternal majesty. One can never exhaust His resources or finish discovering the last of His character traits. To praise Him, then, is an incomplete act. “Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord or fully declare His praise?” (106:2). There will always be something new for which He deserves honor and worship.

 His glory is in contrast to the wickedness and rebellion of the people He has chosen for His name. Psalm 106 recounts their history and how they exchanged the glory of God for the image of a bull (106:20), how they grumbled against Him and provoked His anger (106:24-32), and how they defiled themselves with idol worship (106:39), yet He took note of their distress and had pity on them (106:44-46). He deserves eternal praise.

 Psalm 107 begins with the same refrain as Psalm 106. “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever” (107:1). His character is morally sound, and His unconditional love will last forever, so His people can respond in gratitude no matter the circumstances in which they find themselves. He will not change, so they can assure themselves He will see them through. “Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord” (107:43).

 Give thanks to God no matter your circumstances. Walk with Him. Worship Him. “With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies” (108:13).

Wednesday, May 17, 2017—Psalms 109-111

 Human nature says, “Don’t get mad. Get even.” The Psalmist, however, turned to prayer (109:4). Could the same be said of you? Are you known for how you seek retribution or for how you seek the Lord?

 To be sure, when he prayed, the Psalmist asked for justice and punishment (109:9-15). “. . . May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership” (109:8). He wanted God to act decisively. “May this be the Lord’s payment to my accusers, . . .” (109:20).

 What allowed prayer instead of revenge? He trusted the character of God. “But you, O Sovereign Lord, deal well with me for your name’s sake; . . .” (109:21). “Help me, O Lord my God; save me in accordance with your love” (109:26). His past faithfulness gave present hope.

 The people sang of this hope with the words of Psalm 110 when they enthroned a new king. Imagine God the Father singing this to the Son when He returned to heaven. His power moves His people to go into battle (110:3). They are confident He will be with them and crush His enemies (110:5-6). He promises to refresh them and lift up their head in victory (110:7). How confident are you of this personally?

 God He amazes, provides, displays, and redeems. He is faithful, holy, and awesome. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise” (111:10). Express your faith, wonder, and hope.

Thursday, May 18, 2017—Psalms 112-114

 “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” The classic quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt galvanized a nation in a time of intense international concern. FDR knew the paralyzing power of fear and the need for the nation to avoid it.

 The Psalmist would agree to a degree. He knew the freedom from fear that settled on those who belonged to Yahweh, but he also knew the great irony of that liberty. Freedom from fear comes from fear—the fear of Yahweh Himself. “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands” (112:1). Some have described this fear as “reverential awe.” This fear is an understanding of His majesty and a desire not to disappoint Him because of His greatness and goodness.

 The beneficial results of this fear are myriad (112:2-9). Those who walk in the fear of the Lord learn wisdom and find blessing. In contrast, those who do not fear God fall prey to every other fear known to man. “[T]he longings of the wicked will come to nothing” (112:10).

 Those who fear Him gladly praise Him (113:1). There is no one like He is. He raises the poor to sit with princes and gives the barren woman a house full of children (113:7-9). He chose a nation for His own possession and did great wonders before them (114:1-4). His presence made the difference (114:7).

 Pray for an increased fear of the Lord which enjoys His presence and drives you toward increased holiness.

Friday, May 19, 2017—Psalms 115-118

 What would people say if asked to describe you in three words? For what are you known? The Psalmist might answer that question about God with two words—love and faithfulness (115:1). He wanted no glory for himself but for all of it to be directed to God because of these two powerful traits. The enemies of God often ask about His presence or question his ways, yet their idols are man-made and without power. Those who follow them will find themselves with a similar destiny (115:8).

 The Psalmist uses two more words—help and shield—to encourage the people to trust Yahweh (115:9-11). He will bless them for