

### Monday, April 22, 2019—Psalms 34-36

God is real. Though neither the human eye cannot see Him nor the human mind fully conceive Him, He is more real than anything. Every generation has had skeptics and deniers. Even those who profess their belief in Him struggle at times with His reality. The doubts and frustrations of mankind do not make Him a myth or fairy tale.

When God manifests Himself through answered prayer, the beneficiary has no trouble proclaiming His reality and goodness. Psalm 34 encourages everyone to taste and see the Lord is good (34:8). There is inexpressible joy for those who truly trust in Him. The Psalm begins, however, with the declaration of praise for the Lord at all times. Even in times of doubt or discouragement, God is worthy of our praise. “The righteous face many troubles, but the Lord rescues them from each and every one” (34:19). God is worthy of deep reverence from His children.

Psalm 35 addresses the troubles that Psalm 34:19 referenced. The Psalmist does not want his enemies to gloat over his defeat. He tells God he will praise him after God rescues him (35:9-10, 18, 28). Isn’t God worthy of praise at all times? Of course He is, but the Psalmist knows an audience hears the praise of one delivered differently than the praise of one mired in difficulty. He wants to lift God up and to encourage others to do the same.

The Psalmist was convinced God’s unfailing love demanded justice in life (36:10). He rested in that hope. Do the same today.

### Sunday, April 21, 2019—Psalms 31-33

Because God is holy, no one approaches Him without reverence. To be sure, many people treat Him as if they are god and He is the servant. Some, however, who have caught a glimpse of His glory, bow before Him and come humbly to Him.

That humility can be deceptive. Some mistakenly believe they cannot or should not bring their emotions to Him or discuss their mundane needs. The Psalms can help correct that notion. The Psalms include the gamut of human emotion and lay bare the human condition. In Psalm 31, the writer cries out for mercy because of distress. Tears have blurred his vision. Grief is killing him, and misery drains his strength. His enemies scorn him, and his neighbors despise him. Even his friends won’t come near him (31:9-11). This is raw, and he brings it all openly to God.

Despite the hardship, he continually declares his trust in Yahweh (31:1-5, 14). He praises Him for His goodness and urges all those who hear the song to do the same. He protects those who love him and are faithful, so there is hope. Those who hope in Him can be strong and courageous.

The transparency of the Psalms also includes stark honesty about the debilitating nature of sin (32:3-4) and the joy that comes when He forgives (32:1-2, 5). “Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust in the Lord” (32:10).

Use Psalm 33 as a guide for prayer and praise. Praise God today for His strength and faithfulness. Profess your hope and trust in Him.

#### Saturday, April 20, 2019—Psalms 28-30

Paul told the Romans that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. On Resurrection Sunday, the disciples of the road to Emmaus didn’t recognize Jesus, but their hearts burned within them when they heard His explanations. Early that morning, Mary did not recognize Jesus by sight, but she knew He was alive when He spoke her name.

Hearing from God changes everything. No wonder the Psalmist said, “If you are silent, I might as well give up and die” (28:1b). He was crying out to God for salvation, and he knew if God did not answer, there was no hope. Imagine the misery of the disciples on Silent Saturday, the Sabbath between His crucifixion and His resurrection. They heard nothing from God. What hope was there?

When God answered, the Psalmist shouted with praise (28:6-7). On Easter Sunday, Mary ran back to tell the disciples as did Cleopas and his companion. “The Lord protects his people and gives victory to his anointed king” (28:8). His people celebrate His powerful voice.

God not only hears His people and gives victory. When He works, the Lord “gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace” (29:11). His influential presence gives His people power to face whatever may come and gives them assurance He will not leave or forsake them. Because of His great love and action, God is worthy of honor (29:1, 30:1).

He transforms mourning into dancing (30:11). He transforms death into life.

Praise Him today for what only He can do.

Friday, April 19, 2019—Psalms 25-27

Parents go to great lengths to help their children reach the levels they define as successful. They pay for tutors and coaches. They stay up late and get up early to help with homework and travel to practice.

How would parents' lives change if their goal for their children was not that they made good grades, achieved athletic prominence, or obtain a good job but that their children became holy? "Friendship with the Lord is reserved for those who fear him. With them he shares the secrets of his covenant" (25:14). When someone puts off the trappings of the world in order to pursue righteousness and intimacy with God, that person finds protection, success, honor, and satisfaction the world can't offer.

Consistently walking with God develops a healthy sense of righteousness in the disciple. The Psalmist had that confidence. "Put me on trial, Lord, and cross-examine me. Test my motives and affections" (26:2). How many people know God in His holiness and walk with Him to the point they are open to scrutiny of their motives and affections? One who does that knows the secrets of the covenant and the assurance of His protection and provision (26:11, 27:1).

Those who walk with God know there is no better place than to be in His presence (27:4). The truly "successful" have discovered nothing is more valuable, precious, or beautiful than God Himself. They have discovered a desire to honor Him above all things and have discovered the power to wait patiently for His action (27:14).

Praise God for His holiness. Pursue Him above all things.

Thursday, April 18, 2019—Psalms 22-24

On Crucifixion Friday, Jesus hung on the cross from noon to three, and he cried aloud the words of Psalm 22. The weight and wickedness of sin was so heavy on His soul that He felt something He had never felt before—a separation from the fellowship He had always known. He reflected on the song His people had sung for 1,000 years and felt them coming true. God was holy (22:3-5), but Jesus was scorned (22:6-8). The Psalm vividly describes the misery of Jesus' final moments (22:12-18), and affirms the presence of God in our deepest suffering (22:24).

Likely the most famous of the Psalms, Psalm 23 describes God as a good

shepherd and gracious host. Both roles require dealing with the needy and unattractive. Sheep are simple and smelly. Guests arrive unexpectedly and inconveniently. Despite the difficulties, God meets the needs of His people, going above and beyond expectation, and He gives assurance of His faithfulness in this life and in life beyond this world.

Being king, David knew the power of the position and the pomp afforded to him. Imagine, then, the celebration when God Himself will one day enter through the gates of the New Jerusalem. Imagine the praise heaped on Jesus when He came back to heaven after His earthly mission was done. The doors open and gladly receive the King of Glory (24:9)!

This same King allows those who He has made righteous to enter into His presence (24:3-6). Praise Him for His presence in all of life.

#### Wednesday, April 17, 2019—Psalms 19-21

The fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris stunned all who saw it. Those who were actually in Paris were most affected. Others who had seen the structure with their own eyes were likewise moved. Why? The immensity of the building and its ability to turn attention to Christ stirred viewers with a sense of awe, being in the presence of something greater.

Psalm 19 says creation declares the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of His hands (19:1). Through creation, God has revealed Himself to all of humanity throughout every generation. If they pause long enough, creation draws its viewers into a sense of awe toward the Creator. God did not stop with creation, however. He revealed Himself more specifically through the Law (19:7-11), and the Law even more can move a person into humility, worship, and God-glorifying obedience (7:12-14).

Knowing the greatness of God, the Psalmist penned Psalm 20 as a blessing over His people. “May He hear your cry in times of distress. May He keep you safe and send you help. May He approve of your worship and fulfill your plans. May we praise Him when He gives victory” (20:1-5). Some boast in chariots and horses, but Israel boasts in the person and character of Yahweh (20:7). Even the king rejoices in His strength (21:1).

Pray for a greater awareness of the presence and power of God. Praise God

today with music and singing (21:13). Thank Him for revealing Himself so we might know Him, love Him, and obey Him.

#### Tuesday, April 16, 2019—Psalms 16-18

When a young man with college debt, a low-paying job, and a growing family learns he has received a multi-million dollar inheritance from a long-lost great-uncle, his perspective changes. The daily pressures of bill-paying are not as intense. His ability to spend time with wife and children increases. What is coming changes what is now.

The Psalmist declared Yahweh as his inheritance (16:5). Everything about his life was defined by the value of God Himself. He saw the dead end that others faced as they chased idols (16:4), so he placed his trust in God and celebrated the others in his life who did the same (16:3). He knew even death itself would not have an eternal hold on him because the power of God was greater than the grave (16:10-11).

This assurance of God's sufficiency does not remove His people from the day-to-day interaction with evil people and a sinful world. Psalm 17 cries out to God for protection in the chaos of life. God's people can use the certainty of the future as a buffer against depression and cynicism, but they cannot avoid the world to which He has called them as witnesses. Each day they can call for His rescue and His judgment (17:13, 18:3).

The one with an inheritance can live differently. Psalm 18 says He is faithful to the faithful and pure to the pure. He rescues the humble and humiliates the proud (18:25-27). Live today with the confidence, passion, and righteousness that God is your inheritance.

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