

Tuesday, April 21, 2020—Psalms 31-33

On April 21, 1836, Sam Houston and his soldiers defeated the Mexican Army at San Jacinto. Their names have gone down in history as heroes of Texas Independence, but they did not fight to become famous. They fought for the sake of something greater.

David called out to God to come to his rescue, but he was not asking for help simply to be comfortable or out of danger. "Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me" (31:3). David had promoted God as his source of hope and help. He wanted God to be famous for His power and deliverance. Those who trusted in Him could take heart and give Him praise.

David knew the power of deliverance, and he also knew the power of confession. When he harbored sin in his soul, he rotted from the inside out (32:3). When, however, he confessed his sins, he found great blessing and freedom in the forgiveness of the Lord. Most children think, "I've messed up. My dad will kill me." David, however, learned, "I've messed up. I have to tell my Father." His love surrounds those who trust Him (32:10).

This assurance of forgiveness is no license to sin. The psalmist makes clear that God is all-powerful and loves justice and righteousness. He thwarts all those who plan against Him, "but the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love" (33:18).

Pray to walk in faith and holiness for the glory of God alone.

Monday, April 20, 2020—Psalms 28-30

For God to interact personally and graciously with His people is a remarkable thing. The gods of other religions and regions were distant and selfish, yet Yahweh, the Great I Am, revealed Himself to Israel and made a covenant with them to protect and provide. Knowing this intimate connection, the psalmist cried out to God to hear him and answer him. "If you remain silent, I will be like one whose life has ended" (28:1b). He wanted the life-giving, vibrant connection only God could provide.

Those who reject Him have no hope, yet the psalmist could trust and praise Him because God listens. "The Lord is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one. Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever" (28:8-9).

Psalms 29 portrays the strength of God as humbling and overwhelming. His thunder rattles the ground and topples trees. His people look at His power over creation and cry out, "Glory!" (29:9). His manifested sovereignty gives strength and peace to His people (29:11).

When he was mired in sin, the psalmist cried out to God. If he died, he could no longer praise God (30:9). He wanted to repent and return to God's favor in order to praise Him and live in righteousness. "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (30:5).

Praise God for sending Jesus so we might know Him more personally than ever imaginable. Live in that hope and righteousness.

Sunday, April 19, 2020—Psalms 25-27

In his discipleship study, *PrayerLife*, T.W. Hunt encourages his readers to give God a reason to answer prayer. God knows everything, so He isn't the one who needs the reason for the answer. We are. We need to remember the character of God and the expansion of His Kingdom and mission when we approach Him so we don't pray self-centeredly.

The psalmist calls on God to remember (25:6-7). This is not because God is forgetful. This is his way of giving God a reason to answer the prayer in the affirmative. God has revealed Himself as loving, merciful, and forgiving, so he is basing his prayer in the character of God, not in his own weak and flawed ways. His hope was in God alone (25:5, 21).

Praying with God as the focus does not mean His people are not aware of their own character. In Psalm 26, the psalmist prays for vindication because he has trusted the Lord in everything (26:1) and sought to live with His character in his own life. He has walked in the truth and avoided evil men and wicked schemes. God is undoubtedly shaping him and will be honored by delivering him from trouble.

Seeking the Lord and His blessing give the psalmist complete confidence. He knows God is more faithful than the closest family, and God will save him at the right time if he walks faithfully with Him (27:5).

Pray for a deeper relationship with God that bases prayer on His goodness and will. Walk faithfully with Him, trusting Him at all times.

Saturday, April 18, 2020—Psalms 22-24

The Jews used the Psalms as a songbook for their worship. Long before Christ, they had grouped them for usage at different times and in different settings. By divine direction, they placed Psalms 22-24 consecutively, foreshadowing the person and work of Jesus.

While He hung on the cross, Jesus quoted Scripture. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (22:1). The weight of the sin He bore in His body and His soul created a division between the Son and the Father that had never existed. Still, He quoted Scripture! His heart and mind were saturated with truth, and this song declares certainty in turmoil. "Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel . . . in you they trusted and were not disappointed" (22:3,5b). Jesus knew God would not be far off and would rescue Him. In the end, God would be proclaimed as righteous (22:31).

Psalm 23 is the most famous of all of Israel's song. It celebrates the relationship with God, the Shepherd, who protects and provides for His sheep. Even in the valley of the shadow of death or in the presence of their enemies, sheep have no fear because the Shepherd is with them.

Finally, Psalm 24 celebrates the coming of the exalted king. The city rejoices at His coming, and the people are humbled by His presence. Only those who are righteous in His eyes may see Him.

Celebrate Jesus today. He is the one who died for sin. He is the ever-present Shepherd and the victorious King.

Friday, April 17, 2020—Psalms 19-21

Psalm 19 celebrates the revelation of God. His creation testifies to His existence and His magnificence. Looking at the order of the universe and the beauty of the earth provides testimony of His glory, but God did not stop with creation. He has provided His word, the Bible, to give more specific revelation of who He is. His truth moves His people to love Him and obey Him and seek forgiveness from Him as He faithfully protects and provides. His people want to please Him the more they know Him.

Knowing God intimately causes His people to pray for others to know Him closely as well. Psalm 20 expresses the desire for God's deliverance and help and His acceptance of sacrifice and answer to prayer. The psalmist promises to shout for joy when God blesses the people for whom he is praying. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm" (20:7-8).

The psalmist had complete confidence in God. He expressed his gratitude for God's placing the king in leadership and ensuring the defeat of Israel's enemies. The people benefitted from it, but there was no doubt God was the true strength and hope for them all. "Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might" (21:13).

Know Him. Read His word. Pray for others. Celebrate His goodness and power in your life.

Thursday, April 16, 2020—Psalms 16-18

Satisfaction. Where can you find it? A cool drink of water. A project finally finished. A dream becoming reality. For King David, satisfaction came in knowing Yahweh. "I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing'" (16:2).

He knew others would run after other gods, but that would only lead to sorrow (16:4). God had provided a place for him to live. God was a constant source of counsel and accountability, and He was an ever-present help. "You have made known to me the path of life" (16:11).

Some might say, "Of course David was satisfied with God. He was a king living in a palace. He had lots of money and the praise of his people. Life was easy for him. Who wouldn't be satisfied with that?" David might remind those doubters about all the conflict he faced. There were many wicked men who wanted to harm him (17:8-12). Death entangled him (18:4-5). He wasn't satisfied because life was easy. He was satisfied because God was good. He couldn't help praising this God as his strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, refuge, stronghold, and salvation (18:1-2).

"He rescued me because he delighted in me" (18:19b). Imagine the level of satisfaction that comes when people know that God delights in them. They can face uncertainty because they know God treasures them and will be faithful to protect and provide. Praise Him today for Who He is. Pray for growing satisfaction in His sufficiency.

Wednesday, April 15, 2020—Psalms 13-15

Patience is most definitely a virtue. Those who are able to practice patience are heroes (or weirdos) to those who can't (or won't). Often one of the greatest challenges is not knowing how long being patient requires.

The psalmist asked that question. “How long, O Lord?” (13:1). He felt forgotten. He felt distant from God. He knew his enemies were gloating because they had the upper hand. The beauty of the song is that the writer was not afraid to express his emotion. He was able to process his hurt and vent his emotion and then conclude, “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation” (13:5). He was honest about how the circumstances affected him and then confident in the unchanging nature and covenant promises of God.

Some let the hurts and the temptations of life draw them away from God. They doubt His goodness or believe the lies of Satan. They feel the numbing, counterfeit happiness of sin and decide God is no longer useful, loving, or good. They begin to say there is no God (14:1), or if there is a God, He isn’t good or worthy of devotion. The psalmist wondered why they never learned (14:4). Only God will make life truly good.

To know the one true God is, therefore, a gift from God and requires the holiness only He can provide—a life of genuine character (15:1-5a). The God who is unchanging produces people whose lives are not shaken (15:5b). Praise God for His certainty. Pray for patience to walk in it.