

Sunday, April 15, 2018—Psalms 13-15

Like anyone suffering, the Psalmist asked in Psalm 13, “How long?” No one enjoys suffering, yet in suffering God’s people often find the things of the world to be less and less lovely and God more and more needed. Paul told the Philippians he wanted to know the fellowship of Jesus’ suffering, not because he had some twisted desire for pain but because He knew Jesus Himself suffered and because He wanted to grow in His character and sense His presence in hardship when others were gone.

In *PrayerLife*, T.W. Hunt encourages pray-ers to give God a reason to answer their prayer. In Psalm 13, the writer does just that. “If you don’t deliver me, my enemies will rejoice” (13:4). He did not want evil people to celebrate their evil schemes. With or without deliverance, the Psalmist trusted in God’s faithful love and sang because of God’s generosity.

The fool (the one morally bankrupt and spiritually empty) says there is no God (14:1). He has no need for prayer because he has no desire to know God or depend on Him. He may indeed frustrate the plans of the righteous, but God is their refuge and will deliver them.

Being able to pray is a true gift from God. Speaking to Him, coming into His presence, is no simple matter. “Who can dwell with Him?” David asked (15:1). He described a morally and spiritually upright person. Prayer is a privilege, granted by God, to those who are seeking Him.

Prayerlessness is foolishness. Pray with dependence and worship.

Saturday, April 14, 2018—Psalms 10-12

God is slow to anger and great in power. He will not leave the guilty unpunished (Nahum 1:3), but He does not always punish their guilt immediately. To be sure, there are some stories in Scripture where God punished someone with affliction or even death at the moment of sin, but far more often, the guilty go on about life, seemingly unaffected, for some time. This waiting period is where the righteous and oppressed question, struggle, and suffer. This waiting is the subject of Psalm 10.

The writer shares the frustration of watching the wicked boast about God’s inattention or inability. The sinful man feels as if God will never hold him accountable (10:4, 13), so he lives in moral abandon. The writer is honest about this concern and frustration but turns his mind to the greatness and righteousness of God. The weak can trust Him. The outcast can flee to Him. Even when life seems unfair, God will win and reward those who have walked with Him and sought Him.

Psalm 11 promotes this truth as well. When the very foundations of life seem to have been torn away, he knows God remains firmly seated on His throne in heaven (11:4). He will one day punish the unrighteous and allow the ones He loves to see His face. Until then, He will protect His people from the perverse generation (12:7). They may indeed struggle and suffer, but the wicked will never have victory over their souls.

Praise God for His consistent character and preserving power.

Friday, April 13, 2018—Psalms 7-9

Jesus told the woman at the well, “God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). There is a wonderful blend of the natural and supernatural involved when temporary humans interact with the eternal God. The mind allows maturity while the spirit allows connection. Whether singing, praying, reading, or meditating, those who worship are to do so with clarity about God and self.

The Psalmist says the wicked dig a pit and fall into (7:15, 9:15). They do not evaluate themselves or their situation with the clarity which comes only from God. He asks God to punish him rightly if he himself has done anything wicked, but his hope is in the righteousness of God and the refuge He has become. “The one who examines thoughts and emotions is a righteous God” (7:9b).

Psalm 8 involves self-examination as well and marvels at the grace God has bestowed to man in allowing man to know Him. The majesty of creation stuns him, and he wonders how God could have chosen to make man a little lower than the angels and give him the responsibility of stewardship. He declares His Name to be magnificent (8:1,9).

The Psalmist prays for deliverance based on the character of God. He asks for His grace (9:13), and he says, “Do not let mere humans prevail” (9:19). He asks God to deliver and to judge so the world will know they are nothing compared to Him.

Pray with self-examination and Savior-exaltation.

Thursday, April 12, 2018—Psalms 4-6

The Psalmist knew God acted in order to bring glory to Himself, but he himself had seen God vindicate him in the past, so he was confident this would be true for the future. He knew God listened when he prayed. “Know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him” (4:3). The result was anger without sin, proper contemplation, sacrifices in righteousness, trust in Yahweh, confidence that He will be present, joy in the heart, and peaceful sleep in safety. Those who treated him unfairly and pursued lies needed to take notice of their folly.

He knows God does not delight in wickedness or boasting, so he isn’t coming before God demanding his way. “But I enter your house by the abundance of your faithful love; I bow down toward your holy temple in reverential awe of you” (5:7). He is confident of the Lord’s punishment of the wicked and His refuge for those who rejoice in Him. “For you, Lord, bless the righteous one; you surround him with favor like a shield” (5:12).

“Turn, LORD! Rescue me; save me because of your faithful love” (6:4). He does not ask based on his own righteousness but on the character of God Himself. He knows who He is. He knows what He desires, so he bases his prayer on that and trusts in the delivery. He, in turn, tells his enemies to flee because “the LORD accepts my prayer” (6:9).

Pray in confidence because of the consistent character of God.

Wednesday, April 11, 2018—Psalms 1-3

A man is known by the company he keeps. This likely explains the negative view religious leaders had toward Jesus. He spent inordinate amounts of time with the outcast, flawed, sinners. Had he not read Psalm 1? God promised to bless those who delighted in Him, not those who walked with the wicked or stood with the sinner or sat with the sarcastic.

Jesus had read Psalm 1. (In fact, He wrote it.) He meditated on the Law and saw God bring fruit in His life. Psalm 1 warns the reader not to spend time with the wicked, sinner, and mocker because of the potential impact they can have on the one seeking righteousness. Psalm 1 does not, however, prohibit going to those people to bring them to life. For those who are delighted by God, the way of sin is not attractive. God watches over them and uses them in the most negative of situations and places.

Psalm 2 speaks to all those who conspired against the anointed of God, especially those doubted, ridiculed, and hoped to stop Jesus. God laughs at their schemes (2:3). Their rebellion will lead to death (2:12).

Because God brings victory to and through Jesus, we are wise to walk with Him. Psalm 3 speaks of the challenges of life, yet if we keep company with Jesus, the number of foes we face is nothing compared to the power of the Lord we trust. “Salvation belongs to the LORD” (3:8).

Praise God for victory in and through Jesus. Walk with Him.

Tuesday, April 10, 2018—2 Samuel 22-24

Throughout the Scriptures, God commands His people to sing. There is something unique about the singing experience as words combine with notes in rhythm to stimulate the mind, body, and soul. In His wisdom, God left the words of many of those songs for His people to read and to help lead them in worship as well.

When David found himself free of all his enemies, he sang. The words of 2 Samuel 22 are filled with praise for Yahweh and celebration of His power and grace. David never took credit for his military might or warfare strategy. To be sure, he recognized God’s blessing his faithfulness (22:21-28), but he did not boast of this. David had been in dark places and deep trouble, and God was the hero. God was the one worthy of worship. “He is a tower of salvation for his king; he shows loyalty to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever” (22:51).

The final chapters about David make much of Yahweh, but they also acknowledge the mighty men who surrounded the king. He could not do alone what God called him to do. These men marched into battle,

risked their lives for his safety, and helped establish his kingdom. God lifts up the humble, and He gives good brothers and sisters for the journey.

When David found himself sinful, he repented and made an offering. Pray for a spirit which remains humble, brothers and sisters to help you walk faithfully, and willingness to repent daily to follow Him.

Monday, April 9, 2018—2 Samuel 19-21

Regret is one of the most formidable of all emotions. “If I only had done . . .” “If I would have said . . .” “I could have been that, but . . .” “Now I realize I should have . . .” The haunting thoughts resurface at inopportune moments and deepen the regret itself.

David had regained the throne after the defeat of his enemy. His troops should have been marching through the streets with shouting. David should have been celebrating the victory, but the problem was the enemy was his son, Absalom. His son was dead, and he was grieving. The grief was compounded by the regret of past inaction and a dysfunctional relationship.

Joab had to do the hard work of confronting David, telling him his actions were shaming his soldiers by loving his enemy (19:5-6). Should David had loved his son and grieved his death? Of course. There were, however, greater considerations. His son had rebelled against him, the Lord’s anointed. The troops had risked their lives to save him. King David was a mess of emotions, and he needed to begin acting as king.

David’s experience allowed him important perspective. He extended grace and mercy to Shimei and Mephibosheth, and he provided for the concubines Absalom had defiled. He rallied his troops against the rebel Sheba, and they brought his rebellion to a quick end.

Pray for power to fulfill responsibilities. Thank Jesus for taking away shame and regret at the cross. Live in the power of the gospel.