

LENT 2023

What is Lent? **DEVOTIONS WRITTEN BY THE LEADERSHIP OF GRACE CHURCH**

Lent is a period of fasting, moderation, and self-denial traditionally observed by Catholics and some Protestant denominations. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter Sunday. The length of the Lenten fast was established in the 4th century as 46 days (40 days, not counting Sundays). During Lent, participants eat sparingly or give up a particular food or habit. It's not uncommon for people to give up smoking during Lent, or to swear off watching television or eating candy or telling lies. It's six weeks of self-discipline.

Lent began as a way for Catholics to remind themselves of the value of repentance. The austerity of the Lenten season was seen as similar to how people in the Old Testament fasted and repented in sackcloth and ashes (Esther 4:1-3; Jeremiah 6:26; Daniel 9:3).

However, over the centuries Lenten observances have developed a much more "sacramental" value. Many Catholics believe that giving something up for Lent is a way to attain God's blessing. But the Bible teaches that grace cannot be earned; grace is "the gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17). Also, Jesus taught that fasting should be done discreetly: "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen" (Matthew 6:16-18). Jesus' command to "wash your face" seems to conflict with the practice of rubbing ashes on one's face on Ash Wednesday.

Fasting can be a good thing, and God is pleased when we repent of sinful habits. There's absolutely nothing wrong with setting aside some time to focus on Jesus' death and resurrection. However, repenting of sin is something we should be doing every day of the year, not just for the 46 days of Lent.

If a Christian wishes to observe Lent, he is free to do so. The key is to focus on repenting of sin and consecrating oneself to God. Lent should not be a time of boasting of one's sacrifice or trying to earn God's favor or increasing His love. God's love for us could not be any greater than it already is.

-From "Got Questions"

DAY 1 – FEB 22

PSALM 1

By: Daniel Carraway

Read Psalm 1

The Book of Psalms is organized into five sections that include Psalm 3 to Psalm 145 with a conclusion of praise to God comprised of Psalm 146 to 150 and an introduction consisting of Psalm 1 and Psalm 2.

Psalm 1 highlights how Godly people enjoy the eternal kindness and blessings from God The Father,

but wicked people are judged and destroyed.

Psalm 1 contains three sets of 2 verses each, for a total of six verses that contrast righteous people and wicked people.

Verses 1 & 2 describe how righteous people are happy (blessed) because they diligently study God's Word, communicate with God through continuous prayer, and delight in what God values. In contrast, wicked people participate in un-Godly activities and ignore or mock God.

In verses 3 & 4 the Psalmist describes how righteous people flourish and produce good things that please God and encourage others, but wicked people wither, and they do not achieve or produce anything of value.

Verses 5 & 6 affirm that wicked people perish and disappear into eternal darkness but righteous people are known by God and are forever blessed with His presence and eternal provision of good things.

Do not be discouraged when Godly practices and people are mocked and scorned and do not be misled into believing that wicked people will ultimately flourish. Remember that God will ultimately reward those who obey Him and He will judge unbelievers.

The Book of Psalms ends with 5 Psalms of praise to God for His Majesty, His Justice, His Wisdom, His Power, and His eternal blessings and honor He gives to the Righteous and His Judgment and destruction of the wicked.

Are you following the path of the righteous or the path of the wicked?

DAY 2 – FEB 23

PSALM 2

By: Tony Cooper

Read Psalm 2

I feel like today's Chapter Psalms 2 has many applications to our modern-day world. If you listen to popular news sites, Facebook and YouTube shorts it won't take long before you find someone waring against Christian values or even Christians themselves. In verses 1 – 3 it seems that the writer says that the

rulers of this world are working together against the interest of God or God himself, but that work is in vain. When I read this, I am reminded that we don't have to worry about what the future holds when we see how it seems the popular culture and even our government seems to back Christians into a corner. The things that are happening today are no surprise to God and are no different than what has happened many times in history. We often believe that what is happening to us or what is happening in our lifetime is unique, and that can at times overwhelm us.

However, as we study history in general and that found in the Bible, we see that what is happening to us is something that has already happened to Gods people in the past. This chapter reminds us that God will be triumphant in the end and that the best advice for us is to trust and take refuge in him. He is in control and will triumph in the end.

This advice is easier said than done but anytime it I feel overwhelmed I just zoom out from my myopic view of the current circumstances, and I can easily see how God has continued to be in control of

everything in this world that he
created.

DAY 3 – FEB 24

PSALM 3

By: Johnny Dowdy

Read Psalm 3

Psalm 3:(1) "O Lord , how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; (2) many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in God."

This Psalm of David is being written in response to David fleeing from his son Absalom. How does King David life come to a point where his son is attempting to take

his life? There are lessons for us to learn from the life of David.

In his youth, God had given David a supernatural victory over a champion Philistine soldier named Goliath, a giant of a man while showing great courage and confidence in God. In 1 Samuel 16: 12 with find a description of David “He was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome”. God had instructed Samuel, an Old Testament priest, to anoint David as king of the nation of Israel. Under David’s leadership, God gave Israel many victories over the

Philistines and other surrounding enemies.

David, while on the mountain top in these great victories, succumb to his temptation with Bathsheba that ultimately also led to the death of her husband Uriah. The Lord instructs Nathan, a prophet, to confront David with his sin. David was told by the prophet of the consequences of his sins stating, “the sword shall never depart from your house” and evil shall rise up against you in your house”. There are warnings in scripture that we reap what we sow. Job 4:8 states

“those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same” (Job 4:8).

We should be warned that victories and blessings can lead to a sense of entitlement and an attitude of self-reliance. Our walk with the Lord is one of humility and reliance / dependence on the Lord. God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Psalms 3(3) - But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. (4) I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. (5) I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained

me. (6) I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. (7) Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. (8) Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people!

David, even with the evil that he had sown into his household knew that he served a Lord who is full of mercy and grace; a Lord who loved him unconditionally. God heard his prayers and delivered from his danger. Later in Psalms 32

David writes (5) I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.....(7) - You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

The Psalms tell you and I that we should “store up His word in our hearts so that we might not sin against Him”. In Christ, we have a Savior who loves us unconditionally who is full mercy and grace.

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9)

DAY 4 – FEB 25

PSALM 4

By: Mitch Escobar

Read Psalm 4

Most of our problems come from difficulties dealing with conflict with the people around us, our home members, or close ones. While reading Psalm 4, we can see that the writer also had similar difficulties and took refuge in God through those times. We can follow the same example: pray for rescue when other people's sins affect us

or confess our repentance need when we affect others. Also, we can offer our thoughts to God and ask for wisdom and direction while trusting that our God's support is with us, such that we can even have joy and rest on Him in such adversity.

We can meditate by asking ourselves the following questions.

- What do I do when you are in trouble? Do I pray?
- Do I bring my emotions to God when I am in difficulties?
- How can I trust more in God?

- Have I experienced God's joy and peace in the middle of my dark times?
- Can I share my experiences with God with someone that may need to hear and strengthen their faith?

May our God strengthen your faith so you can bring your thoughts and heart to Him. So, you be a light in the darkness to yourself and the people that need Jesus Christ now.

You are God's representative at this time.

DAY 5 – FEB 27

PSALM 5

By: Keller Galpin

Read Psalm 5

David was king of Israel and, thus, had many enemies. We see David speak of his enemies in many of his writings in the Psalms. While we may not today have physical enemies seeking to destroy us in the way David did as king, we do have a common enemy in the prince of this world who seeks to destroy God's kingdom. In our lives today, sin is

our main enemy. Or, in a more practical sense, ourselves. James 1:14 makes it clear “but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his OWN desire”. The imagery here is that of baiting a hook. Much like the fish is enticed by the bait, he fails to realize that his own demise is hidden just underneath that bait that seems so enticing and satisfying in the moment. So, what sinful desires hidden in your flesh tempt and entice you the most? Is it the desire to sleep in instead of getting up earlier to spend time with God in his

word? Is it the desire to sit and scroll on your phone instead of taking that moment to pray or to have fruitful conversation with family or those around you? Is it that new material item you have been lusting after every time you see it in the store or on that car lot? Is it saying no to supporting a biblical mission financially so that you can have an extra vacation this year?

Much like David, we too, should look at this Psalm of plea as an example. An example for us to make

our request for protection against our own sinful desires made known to God. We see many examples in the psalms of David praying for protection against sin and to God for help in upholding his statutes. Our prayers should also be so bold.

I think it's very important to note that David was no perfect man. Although this psalm is mainly a lament for protection against his physical enemies, David had his own documented spiritual failures and shortcomings. We see in verses

7-8 him acknowledging where his righteousness comes from. If David, a man after God's own heart, recognizes his own depravity and need for the grace and mercy of God for right standing before him, we would be wise to do the same.

As John MacArthur puts it. "Disciples are to walk in God's ways, being obedient to his direction for their lives, yet are fully dependent upon his grace for responsible progress. "

Let us heed the words of David today. May we humbly and confidently go before God through the power of the ultimate high priest, Jesus, and beg for the Holy Spirit to lead us in obedience to his word today and every day. Pray that those sinful desires that are all too common and familiar to us are molded to His desires by the transforming work of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

DAY 6 – FEB 28

PSALM 6

By: Justin Gravlee

Read Psalm 6

During this period before Easter as we ponder our lives and what Christ did for us on the cross, we can't help but be thankful. This should lead us to look inwardly and really be in mourning over our sin (Hence the ashes on the forehead to mark the beginning of Lent). Perhaps many of us never grew up participating in Lent but we may have close friends and strong believers that do and so we

can see the value in it. To the church as a whole we should be focused on this Lent mindset daily and letting it change the way we speak, act and treat others.

The 10 verses in Psalms 6 seem to cover a wide range of our emotions and communications in our relationship with God. Specifically, verses 2-4, speak to what should be our conversation with our father when we mess up or even in habitual sin. *2 Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me Lord, for my bones are in agony. 3 I am sick at heart. How long, O Lord, until you*

restore me? 4 Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love. I can identify with the beginning where David confesses his weakness because many times, we believe we have the strength and resolve to handle things on our own. This is dangerous and we should start with the realization that without the power of Christ in us we can do nothing. We know that, *when pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom, Proverbs 11:2.* Another important aspect of these verses is what sin does to you physically as well as

spiritually. David says his bones are in agony and he is “sick at heart”. This is probably a level you and I don’t feel very often if we are honest. The challenge during this time of Lent is to get to a place when we are sick towards our sin and turn from it. We are assured in verse 4 that when we do, he will rescue us and restore us with unfailing love and grace.

DAY 7 – MARCH 1

PSALM 7

By: Sean Johnson

Read Psalm 7

Have you ever yearned for justice? Do you desire people to get what they deserve? It's one of the reasons we love a good crime drama or that we celebrate when the "bad guy" gets caught. In our personal lives, we desire for those who wrong us to be faced with justice. In Psalm 7, David cries out to God to save him from his pursuers- that justice would be served. In contrast, he defends his innocence

by asking that the Lord judge him according to his righteousness. David is convinced that a holy and just God will satisfy his wrath against evil by delivering justice against the evildoers. However, if I'm honest, my desire for a righteous judge is often externally focused...I want others to get what they deserve. When it comes to my own sins, I secretly desire mercy instead of justice. In this season of Lent, we should remind our hearts of the beauty of Easter- that God, in his infinite wisdom, devised a way for his wrath and justice to be satisfied by the blood of Christ on our behalf. John

Piper so exquisitely puts it: “The wisdom of God has ordained a way for the love of God to deliver us from the wrath of God without compromising the justice of God.” So that’s the good news of the gospel- that justice has been served against evil and that Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice paid the punishment that we have earned. Thank God that we don’t get what we deserve! “I will give thanks to the Lord thanks to His righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.” (v.17)

DAY 8 – MARCH 2

PSALM 8

By: Richard McClure

Read Psalm 8

“Oh, LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” If you listened to Christian music any time during the 80’s or 90’s, that phrase may bring a familiar tune to your mind.... you’re probably already humming the tune right now! The song happened to be a staple in my parents’ home and I can’t stop humming it even now as I type these words. And like that song, this short chapter packs quite the

punch, so much so that I feel I will not be able to do it justice in this short space.

That said, I want us to focus on what caused David to so empathetically cry out in this way. Fortunately, he doesn't make us guess. It was, in two words, God's creation. David points to the glory of God being declared from the highest of the stars to the words of the lowliest of babes. All of God's awesome creation, from the tiniest of molecules to the sun, moon and stars of our galaxy and the galaxies beyond, cause David to burst out in praise! He marvels at the creation so much so that he opens and closes the psalm with the same phrase.

I would ask, when was the last time you stopped to marvel at God's creation? Or better yet, when did a sunset last cause you to cry out in praise and adoration to God for what you saw? I can attest from my own experience, it is far too easy to go about the hustle and bustle of our daily lives and not stop to praise God for the awe inspiring creation that He has placed us in and in which He has allowed us to partake.

David himself was so moved that he questions the worthiness of man in being given such a privilege. That God would "remember" and "care" for man seems unfathomable in the face of such spectacular creations. But He

absolutely does! So much so that He not only placed us here and allowed us to partake in the glory and majesty of His creation in spite of our sin, but He humbled himself to enter in to what He created so as to reconcile us to Himself! So, as we move towards Easter when we will celebrate Christ's resurrection as our redeemer, let us stop to praise Him for ALL He has done, to which we can only say, "Oh LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

DAY 9 – MARCH 3

PSALM 9

By: Brian Parker

Read Psalm 9

PEACE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

“The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.”

Reread Psalms 9:9-10

Psalm 9 was written by King David, praising GOD after a great victory over his enemies. I'm sure David was

somewhat anxious and worried in the midst of battle, but yet he knew God and was sure of his unfailing love and faithfulness. God reveals in verses 9-10. and 10 that he is his people's refuge, in times of oppression and great trials. I find great comfort in these verses. When I read these verses, I always remember God's word in Philippians, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 4:6-7 NIV) How do I find peace when I am in the middle of a trial or difficult times? I quiet down my heart and

pray that God will keep my eyes focused on Him and not on the circumstances. I always remember God's promises which assures me that no matter the circumstances he is always with me, strengthening and guiding me. "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

(Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

DAY 10 – MARCH 4

PSALM 10

By: Chip Perry

Read Psalm 10

“Psalm 10 - A prayer for the overthrow of the wicked”

When I first read Psalm 10 preparing for this devotional, I thought “Wow! What a commentary on the current state of our nation.” (v2) “In pride the wicked hotly pursues the afflicted” [*think: you and me. ...* “we are afflicted in every way, but not

crushed” 2 Cor. 4:8]. (v3) “For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire...” [*think*: “it’s all about what I want”]. (v7) “His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression, under his tongue is mischief and wickedness....” [*think*: many of our government and church leaders with their doublespeak: abortion is merely “healthcare”; churches must be more “inclusive”]. (v8) “In the hiding places he kills the innocent...” [*think*: slaughter of the unborn].

And the wicked seem to get away with it. (v5) “his ways prosper at all

times”. (v6) “he says to himself, ‘I shall not be moved.’” (v4) “All his thoughts are, ‘There is no God.’” (v11) “He says to himself, ‘God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.’”

So, we as God’s people despair: (v1) “Why dost Thou stand afar off, O Lord? Why dost Thou hide Thyself in times of trouble?” BUT, the psalmist encourages us to pray. (v12) “Arise O Lord; O God, lift up Thy hand. Do not forget the afflicted.” (v15) “Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer...” AND the psalmist reminds us that God hears. (v17) “O

Lord, Thou has heard the desire of the afflicted; Thou wilt strengthen their heart, Thou wilt incline Thine ear.” AND he gives us hope for the future. (v16) “The Lord is King forever and ever...” Thus one day (v18) “...man who is of the earth may cause terror no more.”

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, as we look at the evil and wickedness abounding in our nation, we pray for repentance, revival, reawakening, a movement of your Holy Spirit upon our land. We pray for the salvation of many of our leaders, and for them to have Godly wisdom (1 Tim 2:1-4).

We pray for our churches to preach Your word, to stand firm for (and return to) Godliness (Eph 6:14), and to resist the deceitful schemes of the devil (Eph 6:11). O Lord, overthrow the wicked! Father, we look forward to eternity when we will fully enjoy and glorify Christ our Savior, for that is our chief purpose now and forever. To Him be the glory! AMEN.

DAY 11 – MARCH 6

PSALM 11

By: Charles Whittaker

Read Psalm 11

A short but very important Psalm to encourage us that God is with us and that we need to stay focused on Him and not get distracted by the world.

When David wrote this Psalm, he was being pursued by Saul and his son Absalom. David makes it clear that he trusts God and will stay focused on Him in spite of his personal situation. God knows our hearts.

David begins this Psalm with this statement “ –In the Lord I take refuge”. He goes on to say that in the end, those who follow and trust Him will be rewarded and those who don’t will be punished.

As I meditate on this Psalm, I am reminded that God uses circumstances to test us and grow our faith in Him. We need to keep our minds and hearts focused on the one true God. In times of Trouble, we need to seek God and His guidance.

DAY 12 – MARCH 7

PSALM 12

By: Stephen Whittaker

Read Psalm 12

Righteous people are becoming scarce. Corruption and evil are celebrated. Smooth talkers seduce with flattery. Gossip spread destructive words. Liars spread deception. And worse, there is no shame.

This is the world King David found himself in when penning Psalm 12. David was feeling isolated,

alienated, and surrounded by a dark world. What could David do but cry out to the Lord, “Save, O Lord! Help Lord!”

Even in his desperation, David found his confidence through the pure and precious Word of God. David knew the Lord would hear his petition, rise up and save his servant from the darkness surrounding him.

It is easy to draw a parallel between King David’s world and the world today. The wicked continue to prowl, as vileness is exalted among the children of man. But God’s word

endures today, as pure and perfect as when King David penned Psalm 12. And though believers may sometimes share in King David's feelings of isolation and alienation, they can find confidence knowing:

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I (Jesus) have overcome the world” (John 16:33b).

DAY 13 – MARCH 8

PSALM 13

By: John Woodrum

Read Psalm 13

How Long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

David emphasizes the intensity of his situation by repeating the phrase “how long” four times.

David is feeling alone, alienated from God, and cursed.

Commentators believe David's reference to "Sleep in death" may be a metaphor for deep depression. But David does not give up. He holds on to the promises of God (verse 5) and makes the decision to respond with singing (verse 6)! He is able to do this because he is rooted in God's unfailing love (see verse 5) and he remembers and reflects on God's past faithfulness to him.

You may not consider yourself a good singer, but did you know that singing should not be optional for

the Christian? Colossians 3:16 commands, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” When we are walking in the Spirit, we sing! And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart

(Ephesians 5:18-19). Often, we men are hesitant to participate in congregational singing.

Don't let your insecurities or "manliness" stop you. When you sing you are being obedient to God, and you'll feel the joy of the Spirit when you sing songs of affection to God.

DAY 14 – MARCH 9

PSALM 14

By: Roy Jaeger

Read Psalm 14

David had a knack for beginning his Psalms by cutting straight to what was troubling him. Fools. It isn't until verse 3 that we see the cause. The Jewish people were under siege and evil was apparently winning. Feel familiar?

Compare verses 2&3 with Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Evil has its

roots in believing there is no God. **All** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Deliverance did come from Zion & His name is Jesus. The gladness (joy) David speaks of in verse 7 can truly be ours, depending on our response to verse 1. The God David put his trust in sent His son, Jesus. The fools and agents of evil have concluded God and Jesus are nothing. Verse 1 declares them fools.

Years ago, there was a man who stood on a corner in Houston

wearing a sandwich board. The front had “I’m a Fool for Christ”. On the back it had “Who’s fool are you?”

Joshua 24:15 comes to mind. Choose you this day who you will follow, the god of your fathers across the river. As for me and my family, we will follow the Lord! (My translation)

Choose wisely!

DAY 15 – MARCH 10

PSALM 15

By: Jeremy Lokey

Read Psalm 15

This short chapter is packed with some deep reflections. David begins with a rhetorical question, 'O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? '

The word “dwell” means that we were not created for a temporary, on-and-off relationship with God, but rather a permanent, everlasting relationship that begins the moment

of salvation and, like God Himself, has no end.

Essentially, he means “how can a person have a close, intimate relationship with the Creator?”

If you’ve spent any time around someone’s child, you’ve probably noticed words, phrases, mannerisms, or even behaviors that resemble their parents. Without even trying we tend to pick on these things over time. Even spouses can begin to resemble one another after years of marriage.

David goes on to describe the actions of someone who dwells with God. Just like the family resemblances you have with the people in your household, if you spend time with God (through prayer, His Word, His church, etc.), you're going to start to resemble your Creator.

So reread this passage then spend a few minutes meditating on whether or not verses 2-5 describe your life. Do you resemble the Father?

Day 16 – March 11

PSALM 16

By: Mitch Hines

Read Psalm 16

I read this psalm and I wonder, especially in this season of Lent; “How rested am I?”

“My body also will rest secure.” The literal Hebrew word for “rest” here means “to settle down” or “to abide”.

Jesus told us to abide in him in John 15:4 (ESV), “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit

by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

Am I finding rest, abiding in Christ? Or am I getting caught in the ‘hurry up’, ‘get to the next thing’ way of life that our culture seems to be pushing me towards?

As I draw near to celebrating the resurrection; am I taking the time to “praise the Lord”, to “keep my eyes

always on the Lord”, and to be “filled with joy in His presence”? Or am I allowing my plans, my tasks, and my wants to grab my attention? Am I finding rest?

Too often my default mode of operation is to busy myself. Whether that be with tasks or entertainment, I find ways to occupy my mind with stuff.

What if this season was different? What if instead of looking for the “next best thing”, I focused on what actually is THE best thing - Jesus? Will you join me?

Lord, I pray this day that I will keep my eyes on you. For with you at my right hand, I will not be shaken. My heart is glad and my tongue rejoices and my body will rest securely. You make known to me the path of life through Jesus Christ. I pray you will help me to believe that you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Grant me your rest, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

DAY 17 – MARCH 13

PSALM 17

By: Keenan Adams

Read Psalm 17

Psalm 17 is a prayer in which David is crying out for protection against his enemies. Prayer should be our go to move in all circumstances, but unfortunately it is often our last. What I love about this Psalm is that it is David being honest when talking to God. Oftentimes the honest prayers we pray are the ones in which we experience God the most.

David begins with telling God to search his ways and know that his heart is right before Him. David's prayer then turns to his enemies in which he pleads for God to give him protection.

We can learn a lesson from David in this as we must first submit ourselves to God and His word. David's hope is in God. We place our hope in Christ for salvation and for that our sins are covered by Christ's blood. As David was looking forward to Christ in hope we now look back at Christ and the hope that we have in Him. The victory has been won and Christ said, "It is

finished”. We can stand firm on Jesus as our hope and the things we face in this world may be temporary, but we can rest in knowing this is not our home.

To conclude, David contrasts two different groups of people in the last few verses. The first group are those who are living for themselves, and the second group are those who are living for God. We can look at this and say we align with believers that we are definitely not the first group, but I challenge everyone reading this test ourselves as Paul would say in 2 Corinthians 13:5. We must die daily

to ourselves and if we do not we can easily fall into living for ourselves and thinking we are all fine just because we made a confession of faith years ago.

This advent season let us pray honest prayers submitting to Christ and putting all our trust in what he has already done for us on the cross. Our prayers should aim at bringing God glory and not be self-centered.

DAY 18 – MARCH 14

PSALM 18

By: Seth Cloud

Read Psalm 18

P18:1 – 3

*I love you, O LORD, my strength.
The LORD is my rock, in whom I
take refuge, my shield, and the horn
of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*I call upon the LORD, who is worthy
to be praised, and I am saved from
my enemies.*

Psalm 18 is during a time when David became king and called to the LORD for protection from Saul and his enemies. The LORD did just that! Have you ever been in a situation that you felt was too big for you to handle alone? Maybe you weren't in jeopardy of succumbing to a physical death like David, but you just felt like the world around you was crashing down. Maybe it was because of an employer that was constantly on you about something, maybe it was because of a spouse that was constantly telling you how terrible of a partner

you were, or maybe it was because of a friend that had done something hurtful to you.

For me, it was the “*dreaded boss*”! I was working in the evenings and only seeing my family a few hours a week. Anytime something went wrong it seemed like the easiest target was the guy that worked the evening shift....ME. This made going to work and being away from my family that much harder and I too felt like my world was crashing down around me.

I'm ashamed to say that I was not in the Word daily and was definitely not trying to build a close and personal relationship with the LORD. Instead, I was too busy feeling sorry for myself and hating the situation that I was in. When I read Psalm 18: 1-3, it's a reminder that I need Jesus in my life. Even though he is most likely not going to come down from the clouds with smoke in his eyes and lightning bolts, he is my rock with whom I take refuge. Knowing our LORD and having a personal relationship with Him has given me

peace in knowing that even when things are not going the way I want them to go, He is still in control.

Remember, we are called to love our enemies. DO NOT let these “earth shattering” issues interfere with your relationship with Christ.

God Bless!

DAY 19 – MARCH 15

PSALM 19

By: Jerry Eidson

Read Psalm 19

It is not known the exact time in the life of King David when he reflected on this natural revelation of God and put his thoughts in writing. A quick internet search of “When did David write Psalm 19?” does not reveal anything conclusive but leads readers of scripture to wonder if it came to David as a young shepherd. Maybe one night while he was watching the flock, David

looked to the stars in wonder and amazement of their vastness, leading him to celebrate God's creation and proclaim His Glory. Or, maybe later in life as he is hiding in a cave from the zealous pursuit of King Saul, David looks to the sky to remind himself of who anointed him; of who is really on his side. Regardless of when it was written, the message is still the same: all of creation reveals and reminds us of the power of God.

David also understood the power revealed in the word of God. In verse seven he writes, "The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” At this point, David essentially had the Law of Moses as his bible. No Psalms. No Proverbs. No Ecclesiastes. No Romans. No Ephesians. How on Earth (literally) did David understand that the word of God was to be more desired than gold, as he writes in verse ten? Because “the word of God is alive and active.” “The word of the Lord endures forever.” The same God who revealed this to David is the same God who reveals it to us today.

As believers in the 21st century, we have the entirety of scripture to

“revive our soul” yet we still struggle with so many sins. We have the beauty of this world staring us right in the face and we still forget to see that there is a God who is far more powerful than the creation. Why is that? I cannot answer but only for myself. I look at my problems more than I look at the heavens and I read Facebook more than I read the word. I let myself get distracted from the only thing that should matter... praising Jesus.

David understood that even if he never praised God again if all voices across the earth ceased to praise the Lord, the heavens will still

declare the glory of God. God will be praised, and God will be glorified even if I choose never to do it again.

There is no escaping the natural revelation of our God. Paul says that we are without excuse because “what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them”. For us believers, we also have a special revelation through the word of God. This brings us hope, but if we never read it, we will never understand it like David did. Today and every day after, I choose to look to the heavens to open my eyes to the power of God and I choose to look

to the word of God to revive my soul.

***Let the words of my mouth and
the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.***

Psalm 19:14

DAY 20 – MARCH 16

PSALM 20

By: Vidal Garza

Read Psalm 20

The Lord does not exclude our way in this road of afflictions, we are still clay, and clay is passed through the fire. We will go through the test, through the conflict and the affliction. Our prayer should be that God will strengthen us in the process and we will be victorious.

Let us offer our lives as a living sacrifice, as an offering as verse 3

says, and let us rejoice in Him for the love He has for us, let us forgive because God has forgiven us much more—let us not forget it.

Verse 6 "Now this I know...", many times our mind knows different things than our heart, David rested in the Lord knowing this because he knew that his trust was in God and not in his sword. Many times we trust in a secure job, in a social position, and in a doctor in the face of adversity when in verse 7 the Psalmist puts God before all human resources.

“We rise up and stand firm,”
because we hope in Jehovah. Lord,
allow us to put you above all things
on the day of tribulation because
“we know that all that happens to us
is working for our good,” you are in
control of everything, it is just that
there are times that we forget.

Verse 8 reveals that we will fall,
there is no doubt about that, but its
emphasis is that we get up and
stand firm, Lord, have mercy on the
day of affliction and remind us that
you are in control.

Answer us when we call!

DAY 21 – MARCH 17

PSALM 21

By: Drew Kelley

Read Psalm 20

“The King Rejoices in the Lord’s Strength” Psalm 21:7, ESV:

For the king trusts in the Lord,
and through the steadfast love of the
Most High he shall not be moved.

Psalm 21 was written by King David as one of praise and thanksgiving for the battles won by the strength of God, but also as a warning to the enemies of God. David was a great king and war general, but more

importantly a man after God's own heart. It is clear in this Psalm that David knows everything he has been given is from God. How often do we allow ourselves to bask in our own glory when achievements come our way? On the other hand, how often do we attempt to bear the burden of our earthly lives alone?

In verse 7, David proclaims his trust in the Lord and why. "Through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved." Because of the incomprehensible depth of God's love, there is nothing we will face in life that can separate us from Him. This truth calls for a life of praise and worship! David had more battles to

endure, but because of his trust in the Lord, he knew that God would deliver him. This is a great example of the kind of unshakeable faith we should have as believers.

Prayer:

Father, help me to trust you more and rest in your steadfast love so that the highs and lows of life would not move me from true joy that is only found in You. Thank You for Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that allows me to have a glimpse of this joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 22 – MARCH 18

PSALM 22

By: Lee Lawrence

Read Psalm 22

 Amazing Grace, 

Even if you don't attend church regularly, you could probably finish the first verse of this song! Psalm 22 would have been the same way for the Jews of Jesus' time. Psalm 22 starts out My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

We have all had seasons of life when we felt abandoned by God

and wondered where he was and why he wouldn't intervene in our circumstances.

David goes on to remember all the ways God had been there for his people. He then starts recalling the ways God has been there for him, personally, and shifts his focus to worshiping him in the midst of his circumstances!

When Jesus quotes this Psalm, I imagine his mother and the few disciples at the foot of the cross finishing the Psalm and finding comfort in his promises.

When we find ourselves in seasons when we are questioning where God is and why he won't intervene, let's remember that His way is always best. Let's shift our focus to his goodness and choose worship until His will is fulfilled.

DAY 23 – MARCH 20

PSALM 23

By: Bo Minor

Read Psalm 23

In Psalm 23 David is worshiping God for being a good shepherd. His praise is about who God is, as He leads, protects, provides, teaches, and encourages. As I have meditated on this great psalm it has been enlightening to think of God as our shepherd and the comparison that is given in the Bible of how a shepherd cares for his sheep and

God cares for us. In John 10, a correlation between Jesus and a good shepherd is made, the shepherd is better than the hired hand because the shepherd cares intimately for his sheep. Just like a shepherd, God is fully in control of His sheep, he is responsible for their direction and protection, what comfort to know that God is in control and not us. We should worship God for being our shepherd and the care that he gives us, as sheep we tend to think that we are in control and that we know best, but it is often that when we get in

trouble that we see God's sovereign hand protecting us when we are in situations of desperation. This has meant a great deal to me in our recent situation. We have made the decision to move back home, and it has come with its share of difficulty to process. Not only are we excited about the thought of moving home, but we have also encountered a lot of fear. Leaving a church and community that we love and have been so blessed by is a hard thing. The worry about whether we will be able to replace what we have here is tough. In all of this I can rest in the

fact that God is a good shepherd and that by seeking Him, he will lead, protect, provide, teach, and encourage us through this new season. This doesn't mean that we won't go through difficult times, but we can look to the end of the Psalm and see our hope. "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

DAY 24 – MARCH 21

PSALM 24

By: Sean and Shanell Schuyler

Read Psalm 24

Read the first line of this Psalm again. “The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” We dwell therein, you and me. We belong to the One who created us. We belong to the Most High God, the One who sees, the One who hears, the One who heals. We belong. We who love the LORD get the privilege of calling

him Abba Father. Yet, we did not earn this privilege. It was a gift to us from our Father, through His son, Jesus Christ.

The Psalm asks, “Who may stand in His holy place?” The answer is no one, apart from Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness. He is the only one who lived a full life with “clean hands and a pure heart” and who did not seek idols or engage in deceit. Jesus deserved honor, a throne, and a crown for His righteousness. Yet, He laid it all aside and took on the weight of the

sins He did not commit. He voluntarily left the presence of His Abba Father and allowed the righteous wrath of an unrighteous world to be laid upon Him for our sake. He bought the gift of our salvation and freely gives it to us so that we may “ascend into the hill of the LORD” and “stand in His holy place” and “receive blessing from the LORD.” Join me in prayer.

Father,

Thank you for the gift of salvation through your Son, Jesus Christ. Without His

sacrifice for my sins, I would not be able to come into Your presence. Through Jesus, I am blanketed in righteousness, and You look upon me as your child. Give me a deep understanding of Your ways so that I may tell others about the love You have for Your creation and how You long for all to come to You and stand in Your presence. Provide me with opportunities to share your Word with others who may not know You as their LORD. Forgive my disobedience or delay or distraction but keep ringing my heart with prompting to speak Your name boldly. Lead me in Your will and let my words and actions bring glory to Your name. Amen.

DAY 25 – MARCH 22

PSALM 25

By: DJ Strong

Read Psalm 25

In this Psalm, David is prayerfully expressing his desire to walk the pathways of the Lord and take refuge in God.

This speaks to me on a personal level. It is no secret that my family has been through the proverbial wringer with so much loss and sadness.

Like David, daily, I seek not only the will of the Father but His protection and guidance in every step of my day because, without Him, I am nothing.

Acknowledging His sovereignty in the face of my trials and my sins was and are the only way I can make it through and is the only way I maintain my walk with Him.

DAY 26 – MARCH 23

PSALM 26

By: Charlie Unfricht

Read Psalm 26

It is believed that this psalm was written by David during his persecution by Saul. When you first read this, it may appear David is boasting. However, most of the commentaries indicate that David is pretty certain his sin against Saul is not the reason for his persecution. David asks God to vindicate/judge him to make sure he is correct in his assumption. David goes on to tell

God of all the ways he avoids sin in dealing with corrupt people. David is seeking God's vindication and confirmation that he is on the right track. He knows he is not perfect but, in the matter with Saul, he wants verification from God that his sin is not the cause of his persecution. Whenever we are experiencing trials or persecution do we ask God to show us our heart before blaming the other person? Are we interested in understanding how our sin plays a part in our circumstances or is it always the other person's fault?

Head – Acknowledge our sin absolutely plays a part in our circumstances and relationships.

Heart – Ask God to continually remind us of the part our sin plays in circumstances and relationships.

Hands – Be accountable to others. Examine your relationships and seek forgiveness where needed.

Prayer –

Lord,

Please show me where my sin has been impacting my circumstances and relationships. Please give me the strength and courage to admit

my failings and make things right with those I have sinned against. I acknowledge most of all that I have sinned against you. Please help me to see my sin for what it is, disobedience to you.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

DAY 27 – MARCH 24

PSALM 27

By: Alex Wasek

Read Psalm 27

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

Read Psalm 27

David was fighting literal battles and running from people who wanted him dead, and while we aren't experiencing the same thing, we are all struggling with something. Psalm

27 starts by reminding us that God is personally the light, salvation, and stronghold of not just David but whoever puts their faith and trust in God.

Because of David's faith in the Lord, we see him asking for and seeking one thing; that he be able to live in the Lord's house forever and gaze upon His beauty. He wants to sing, make music, and shout for joy in God's presence. We often try to find or make our own joy, but David knew that true joy only comes from being in the presence of the Lord.

The rest of the Psalm is a bit different, and it shows David

experienced the same thing that many of us do. He was wholly confident in God's security, and while he "knows" he can trust God, he still is afraid. In this fear he calls on the Lord not to forsake him, all while believing "my father and mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in." He knows God will protect him but asks "give me not up to the will of my adversaries." I think this is something that we can all relate to. "Knowing" that we can trust God, but not being immune to fear and doubt.

Ultimately, because he trusts in the Lord, David ends with the

encouragement “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage, wait for the Lord!

Life is complicated, and beautiful, and painful, and wonderful, and there are things that happen that we don't understand and cannot fix. Psalm 27 shows us that through all these things when we place our faith in God, we are assured that God is there for us.

DAY 28 – MARCH 25

PSALM 28

By: Don Whaley

Read Psalm 28

God Hears Our Prayers

Blessed be the Lord!

For he has heard the voice of my
pleas for mercy.

7 The Lord is my strength and my
shield;

in him my heart trusts, and I am
helped;

my heart exults,

and with my song I give thanks to
him.

Psalm 28:6-7

There are several Psalms where we find David pleading with the Lord to hear his voice. In Psalm 18:6 David says,

“In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help and in Psalm 64:1 he says, “Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from dread of the enemy.”

David begins Psalm 28 by crying out to the Lord his rock for help. He is facing a threat from evildoers and fears being dragged away with the

wicked. He feels as if the Lord does not hear his pleas for mercy and that he might as well give up and die. Yet, by the time we get to verses 6 and 7, the psalm transitions, or better yet, we see that David has gone from feeling anxiety and doubt to feeling joy and assurance.

As believers in Christ, we know that He is our advocate and high priest interceding for us. (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25) Like David, we can cry out to the Lord and know that our prayers have been heard and with our song, give thanks to Him.

Prayer: Father, we praise You for being our strength and shield and for hearing our prayers. We thank you for filling our hearts with joy so that we may sing songs of thanksgiving. We thank You for Jesus, our high priest and advocate. Amen.

DAY 29 – MARCH 27

PSALM 29

By: Kirk Whitaker

Read Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

What does it mean to ascribe?

It means to give account of or glory to something. In this Psalm David is saying give glory to God for his strength,

splendor, and holiness. He goes on to give several attributes of the power and majesty of God. The imagery he uses is intense. It culminates with all in his temple crying out “Glory!” and recognizing that the Lord is enthroned forever. In today's age this Psalm speaks volumes. The world seems to have forgotten God. They know nothing of His power and majesty. We know He is enthroned above and worthy of all our praise and seek Him. Lord help us to show the world who You are. And as David asks in verse 11, Lord give us strength and bless us with peace in these uncertain times.

DAY 30 – MARCH 28

PSALM 30

By: John Woodrum

Read Psalm 30

The phrase from Psalm 30:5, "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning" may be a familiar phrase to you. But we may not be aware of the context of this expression.

The psalmist confesses within the assembly (verse 4) that he has sinned against God. He has displayed a proud and independent spirit—"I said

in my prosperity, 'I shall never be moved.'”

When everything was going well with him, he "felt secure," even to the point of self-confidence. Apparently, he had come to a point of practical atheism. But God got his attention. His suffering was like "night" to him. His sorrow resulted both from the suffering and from repentance. The psalmist then returned to the Lord and experienced his forgiveness. The Lord then restored him—a restoration or healing that is compared to the morning light. God's restoration changes weeping into joy.

In Christ, God's mercies are new every morning. We have been called to glorify Him, and He has given us the Holy Spirit so that we have the power and motivation to deny ourselves and lift Him up. But often we fail. We have prosperity and success, and we begin to live life as if God doesn't exist. Paul Tripp reminds us of God's mercy and the necessity to live with humility. He writes,

I love the words of Lamentations 3:22–23: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning;

great is your faithfulness.” Let these amazing words sink in. If you are God’s child, they describe your identity and your hope. They give you reason to get up in the morning and to continue. They enable you to face and admit how messed up you really are. They allow you to extend mercy to the failing people around you. And they allow you to be comforted by God’s presence rather than be terrified at the thought that he is near (New Morning Mercies).

In what area(s) of life are you living as a practical atheist? If you have areas that are “off limits” to Him, as His child you will experience spiritual discontentment if you aren’t already. God doesn’t allow His children to live in disobedience. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal these areas and embrace God’s grace and mercy. Humbly seek Him and anticipate the joy that He will restore to your heart. It’s coming in the morning!

DAY 31 – MARCH 29

PSALM 31

By: Roy Jaeger

Read Psalm 31

Psalm 31 ends with “Be strong and courageous,

all you who put your hope in the Lord.” I was tempted to write how this Psalm spoke to me, because it spoke to me deeply. All of struggle when life seems or is titled against us. Instead, I’ll let the Psalm speak for itself. Read it slowly. Let God speak to you as He did to David as

he looked to Lord. I'm confident David will touch on something you have, are or will encounter in life... Be Strong and courageous! How? When your hope is in the Lord! Take the next 5-10 minutes as you read this Psalm and consider where your hope truly is?

1 Lord, I seek refuge in You;
let me never be disgraced.

Save me by Your righteousness.

2 Listen closely to me; rescue me quickly.

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a mountain fortress to save me.

3 For You are my rock and my
fortress;

You lead and guide me
because of Your name.

4 You will free me from the net
that is secretly set for me,
for You are my refuge.

5 Into Your hand I entrust my spirit;
You redeem me, Lord, God of truth.

6 I hate those who are devoted to
worthless idols,
but I trust in the Lord.

7 I will rejoice and be glad in Your faithful love because You have seen my affliction.

You have known the troubles of my life (Do you really believe this?)

8 and have not handed me over to the enemy.

You have set my feet in a spacious place.

9 Be gracious to me, Lord, because I am in distress; my eyes are worn out from angry sorrow —

my whole being as well. (Ever relate to this?)

10 Indeed, my life is consumed with grief

and my years with groaning;

my strength has failed

because of my sinfulness,

and my bones waste away. (Do you see yourself this way?)

11 I am ridiculed by all my

adversaries

and even by my neighbors.

I am dreaded by my acquaintances;

those who see me in the street run
from me.

12 I am forgotten: gone from
memory

like a dead person — like broken
pottery.

13 I have heard the gossip of many;
terror is on every side.

When they conspired against me,
they plotted to take my life.

14 But I trust in You, Lord;
I say, “You are my God.” (Do you
really believe this?)

15 The course of my life is in Your

power;

deliver me from the power of my
enemies

and from my persecutors.

16 Show Your favor to Your servant;
save me by Your faithful love.

17 Lord, do not let me be disgraced
when I call on You.

Let the wicked be disgraced;
let them be silent in Sheol.

18 Let lying lips be quieted;
they speak arrogantly against the
righteous
with pride and contempt.

19 How great is Your goodness
that You have stored up for those
who fear You
and accomplished in the sight of
everyone
for those who take refuge in You.
(And this, do you really believe this?)

20 You hide them in the protection
of Your presence;

You conceal them in a shelter
from the schemes of men,
from quarrelsome tongues.

21 May the Lord be praised,
for He has wonderfully shown His

faithful love to me
in a city under siege.

22 In my alarm I had said,
“I am cut off from Your sight.”
But You heard the sound of my
pleading
when I cried to You for help.

23 Love the Lord, all His faithful ones.
The Lord protects the loyal,
but fully repays the arrogant.

24 Be strong and courageous,
all you who put your hope in the
Lord.

DAY 32 – MARCH 30

PSALM 32

By: Jeremy Lokey

Read Psalm 32

There's a good chance this Psalm of instruction (a maskil) was written by David after his sin with Bathsheba came to light and he finally repented before God. He reflects on his condition before his confession ("my bones wasted away") and how his sin weighed heavy on him day and night.

You may not have committed the exact same sins as David (adultery and murder), but regardless of the sin, you have sinned against God and it has caused separation between you and God.

When Jesus said in Luke 7:42 “a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.”, He wasn’t saying a more righteous person is less loving. Jesus is sharing a foundational truth that as we mature in Him, we begin to recognize our sin more and more. In turn, we seek forgiveness more

and more as we understand that His kindness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

So pause now and consider how freely God has forgiven you for your past mistakes. Not to dredge up the guilt and shame of them, but to acknowledge that forgiven sin is what causes us to be “BLESSED”. You aren’t blessed because of your sin; you are blessed because you have **CONFESSED** and **REPENTED** of your sin! Praise be to God!

DAY 33 – MARCH 31

PSALM 33

By: Mitch Hines

Read Psalm 33

Hope.

A word we use regularly to say things like, “I hope my team wins tonight,” or “I hope to go there someday,” or “I hope it doesn’t rain.”

But hope in this psalm runs deeper than mere wishful thinking. Hope is

a deep-seated, anchored expectation. It is a sense of waiting in anticipation for something to happen. It is a time of trust.

It struck me as funny for the psalmist to say, “A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.”

And yet I find myself asking what (instead of a horse) am I putting my hope in for deliverance? Is it my own effort? Is it my boss? Is it my family or my possessions? Do I hope in the spaced-out times of vacations to get me through the

mundane hours and weeks and months of work that I have to endure until I can get to my next getaway?

The psalmist here says, “We wait in hope for the Lord...we put our hope in you.”

What if this is where my hope was placed day in and day out? What if each day I woke up saying, “Lord, today I wait in hope for you. You are my help and my shield. In you my heart rejoices, for I trust in your holy name. May your unfailing love be with me, Lord, even as I put my

hope in you.” What about you?
Where have you placed your hope?

Father I praise you for your word -
for it is right and true. By your word
all things were created and have
their being - how can I not place my
hope in you? Help me this day to
find my hope in Jesus. Give me
eyes to see when everything around
me seems to be falling apart. In
Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

DAY 34 – APRIL 1

PSALM 34

By: Les Lonsdale

Read Psalm 34

David wrote Psalm 34 after a humiliating and life-threatening situation in which he had only himself to blame. Fleeing from King Saul who was adamant on taking his life, David fled into enemy Philistine territory. After being recognized and taken before King Achish, David realized his foolish mistake, only escaping with his life

by drooling and feigning insanity before the king. After barely escaping death, he retreats to a cave in Adullam, where he might have written this psalm of thanksgiving and deliverance.

It is an acrostic psalm, using the letters of the Hebrew alphabet sequentially. Although the preface of the psalm refers to David fleeing from 'Abimelech' instead of King Achish, it is generally thought that 'Abimelech' might have been a general title for Philistine rulers just

as 'Pharaoh' is a title used for Egyptian rulers.

Verse 2 shows that David was 'humbled' by his experience, but he boasts in God for his deliverance.

Verse 3 exhorts us to 'magnify' the Lord. But how do we do this?

Magnification makes things appear larger and closer than they are.

Though Jesus may appear small (just a man) and far away to some, we can magnify Him by proclaiming His greatness and His majesty as well as describing how close He can be to those who are in need.

In verse 5, David changes from first person (I) to third person (those) showing that not only himself, but also others who look to the Lord will also be delivered as well.

Verse 7 speaking of the 'Angel of the Lord' refers to Christ who is omnipresent and therefore can be with each

individual who calls to Him.

This entire Psalm is great for anyone who is going through a trial, spiritual battle, or hardship and needs hope and assurance! Statements such as those in verses

7, 15, 17, and 19 all promise God's protection and deliverance from such hardships.

Verses 11-14 explain what it means to 'fear the Lord'. It is a reverence of God that is rooted in action rather than feeling. To do right and to turn from evil shows God that you have humbled yourself in His presence and are obedient to His commands.

And as verse 22 concludes, '...no one will be condemned who takes refuge in Him'.

DAY 35– APRIL 3

PSALM 35

By: Mandy Johnson

Read Psalm 35

As I am thinking about lent and Jesus' journey to the Cross and reading through David's cry out to God here in Psalm 35, I am drawn to think about suffering. David spent 26 verses asking God to deliver him out of his enemies' hands. Ultimately, David needed a redeemer.

The picture of redemption in the Old Testament was God rescuing his people from bondage in Egypt. In the New Testament Jesus rescued us

from the bondage of sin. God, in his great love, sent his son to live the perfect life that we could never live, die and rise from the dead in order to redeem us.

When you redeem a gift card, you turn it in to receive something else. Jesus is the one that sets our worth. He “turned in” his life for us by dying on the cross, and what do we get back?... life everlasting.

On another note, it's easy to put ourselves in David's shoes in these verses. I'm sure we all have felt like life is way more than a little difficult. David encounters people who are making life very difficult for him. They are fighting him and devising evil

against him. David, however, knows how great God really is. He understands that God is sovereign and in complete control and says, “Great is the Lord who delights in the welfare of his servants.”

Have you ever been somewhere totally out of range for your phone to get a signal when you really need it?? It’s really annoying and at times a little scary when you don’t have access to be able to contact someone if you need them. We can rest assured that God is never out of range. Even when you feel like David here in these verses... suffering injustice... just remember that God is for you not against you. He loves you

and cares for you. He has provided a redeemer for you in Jesus Christ. Isaiah 41:8-10 says: But you Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

How encouraging it is to know and understand that we have been chosen!! God isn't going to choose

you and then leave you... no... He will equip you for the work he has set out for you. He sends a redeemer (Jesus!!) to save you then He provides you with the strength you need from His Holy Spirit. David is proof of this. As we read on in David's life, God is with David and equips him to carry out God's work. During this lent season, remember what a precious gift we have been given from our creator simply because he loves us.

DAY 36– APRIL 4

PSALM 36

By: Meredith Carraway

Read Psalm 36

This Psalm gives a dramatic contrast between the evil done by people who have rejected God, and the wonderful provision God has for those who love Him. It is a Psalm of David, perhaps written during his persecution by Saul. Whether the first four verses refer to a specific person or not, they describe someone who has no fear of God and who does Satan's evil will. This person excuses his own sin and

is fine with the evil deeds of others. Verse 4 says that this person cannot sleep because of all the wickedness he is devising. In verses 11 and 12 David is asking God to protect him from evil and keep him close to Himself. David knows the wicked will fall one day, even though they may seem to prosper in the present.

In verses 5 through 9, David uses God's creation to describe the grandeur of His goodness and faithfulness towards those who love Him. God's mercy, faithfulness, righteousness, judgements, lovingkindness, light, and every other good thing about Him are so amazing

that David chooses the grandest features of Earth to describe them. David also describes the perfect things God has promised to Believers as being full and satisfying, like a river from which we are free to drink. The life God gives when we trust Jesus as our Savior is eternal. We know God will keep every promise to us as Believers in Jesus.

David had many trials and sorrows in his life, but it is clear from this Psalm that he was completely in awe of God, worshipped God in his heart, and desired more of Him. Theologian Matthew Henry said, “A gracious soul, though still desiring more of

God, never desires more than God.”
As long as we desire more of God
and trust Him for everything, we will
know He is for us, and we can come
to Him for anything we need.

Prayer: “Heavenly Father, thank You
for who You are and for all Your
provision - for my salvation through
Jesus, for Your mercy, Your love, and
Your faithfulness. Please help me to
desire more of You and draw me ever
closer to you.”

DAY 37– APRIL 5

PSALM 37

By: Megan Hines

Read Psalm 37

Why does it seem that evil is winning? That evildoers are prospering while the faithful and righteous in Christ are burdened, targeted, and struggling? Lord, where is your justice, where is the blessing of walking in righteousness, and when will things be made right?

Psalm 37 is such a balm for our weary souls living in a broken world. What a comfort to see it written within scripture, to know that we are not alone in these thoughts and doubts, more specifically fears and envy (vs. 1) that comes as we try to make sense of the world around us. Thankfully the Lord is quick to answer our hearts with 3 truths:

1. With eternity in mind, our time and life are short, and his justice will come! (vs. 2, 12-13, 18-19, 22)
2. There is Hope and Help, Strength and Provision abundantly provided by the Lord for those

who walk in his righteousness.
(Vs. 9,23-24,31, 34, 39-40)

3. Our salvation and our righteousness are not a work of ourselves, or a measurement of our ability to do all that is commanded within this Psalm... but as verses 39-40 gloriously states: “The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.”

“Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proved character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” -Romans

5:1-5 - Go read all of Romans 5...
so good!

Lord, thank you for your word that renews our minds and gives us vision for eternity! Forgive us when we run to fear, envy, and despair instead of your truth which anchors our hearts and minds. Help us to wait on you Lord, to delight in you, and to walk in your ways. Be our refuge as we walk through this world and above all, Lord come quickly and restore your justice, peace, and kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

DAY 38– APRIL 6

PSALM 38

By: Viviana Cooper

Read Psalm 38

I remember taking candy from a broken bag at a grocery store when I was little. I hid the candy in my pocket and ate it with shame, fear and pain in my stomach. It was the sore effects of my sin. I knew God was not pleased with my actions. I tried to justify my actions, “My parents can’t afford to buy me

candy... It was already open anyway”.

I think we all can think of a time when we did something wrong and we could not stand the fact that we chose to sin.

Psalm 38 is a song full of pain and guilt, as David felt the effects of his sin.

It is inspiring to see that David drew near to the Lord though he sensed both God’s wrath and displeasure. Though we don’t see it at the time, it

is a great blessing when God makes us aware of how much He detests our wickedness. The awareness of these things is meant to drive us to the mercy and grace of God.

A stunning reality is that God gave Himself as the provision of mercy and grace "by sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh as

a sin offering". We need to cry out to the Lord when His hand is heavy on us because of our sin. Let us rejoice that He disciplines those whom He loves and responds by confessing our iniquity and

repentance. Let's rejoice that He did not forsake us, and we do not have to bear the judgment of our sin in hell. But this is only because of the Righteous one who bears our sins and became the ultimate offering on the cross.

DAY 39– APRIL 7

PSALM 39

By: Tiffany Lawrence

Read Psalm 39

If You Can't Say Something Nice...
PRAY

We have all found ourselves in different situations that make us angry. When I read Psalm 39 I was reminded of a time I was stuck...after hours... in a meeting, which in my very frustrated opinion, shouldn't have even been a

meeting. I mean, if everyone was doing what they should have already been doing we wouldn't even be in this situation. Did I mention that it was after hours?

As the meeting went on and on all I could hear were excuses, selfishness, and an overall lack of team unity and vision. I was over it and I was about to give them a piece of my mind, tell them what to do and if they would listen, we could all go home. My Boss must have felt the heat radiating from my side of the table because as I took a deep breath to impart my wisdom, he

held up his hand in front of my face and told me to be quiet. WHAT!!!

After I got over the initial shock and frustration I started praying (for my boss' safety first, of course. LOL). I went around the table and said a quick prayer for each person, and I was reminded how much God loves each one of us and that we are valuable to him. To my surprise my boss came back to me and asked if I was ready to share what I had to say. This time I took a different approach. A minute with the Lord changed everything.

David has resolved to keep his mouth shut because if he says what he wants to say he might fall into sin. He seems to be over it with the human condition. We are but a vapor...most of life is lived in vain, without any lasting meaningfulness... in pointless pursuit of the fruitless favors of this world, and so on. But then David, in the middle of his frustration, breaks his silence and turns to the Lord, his only true hope, and pours out his heart. God is patient with us in all our brokenness and in the middle of our human condition. He is not exasperated by our humanness. He

is with us as we endure the brokenness of this world and he loved us enough to make a way, through Christ, for us to be with him in His kingdom where we will no longer be foreigners.

I pray that, as someone who is by nature quick tempered and often quick to speak, I will be aware of the times The Lord is saying to me if you can't say something nice, pray.

DAY 40– APRIL 8

PSALM 40

By: Michelle Woodrum

Read Psalm 40

The Final Answer

6 In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear.

Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

7 Then I said, “Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: 8 I delight to do your

will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”

In Psalm 40, David had waited on the Lord for deliverance. God had answered his prayer, and he offered praise, even as he acknowledged that new problems were right around the corner. In verses 6-8, David recognizes that genuine repentance, obedience, and faith, not just going through the motions of offering sacrifices, is what God desires.

Hebrews 10:5-9 quotes verses 6-8 of Psalm 40, showing God intended to replace the old

covenant with the new covenant. God had always intended to send Jesus as the real fulfillment of the old covenant symbolism. Jesus is God's final answer to the world's sin problem, and his sacrifice alone enables us to stand righteous before Holy God.

Our personal sacrifice and fasting over the last 46 days have allowed us to focus on repentance and all that Jesus has done for us on the cross. Fasting and self-denial do not earn favor or increase God's love. Just as David wrote in Psalm 40, God does not delight that we go

through the motions. I pray our time of fasting has allowed us to tune out some of the world's noise and enabled us to refocus our hearts and minds on Jesus and His purpose for each of us right here where He has us. He is the final answer because it's all about Jesus. And He is alive!

“He is not here but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” Luke 24:6-7

Prayer: We praise you, God. You are holy, righteous, and worthy!! We thank you for Jesus, your final answer to sin!! May our lives reflect our gratitude and obedience to you in the way we live. Our desire is to reflect your character and the love of Jesus to those you put in our lives!! Give us the focus to not stray from what You have called us. We love you and celebrate what the resurrection has given us!! Amen.