

Friday, January 11, 2019

## Prayer

Psalms 109-110

*In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer.*

Psalm 109:4

Apparently David has been betrayed. He has been attacked unjustly. This attack hurts even more deeply because it comes from people who he had considered to be friends. The wounds of a friend can be very deep indeed. I read as David expresses the depth of his hurt and pain to the Lord. Yet again, I read one of David's prayers and I must admit I struggle with his requests. As David starts his prayer, he presents the issue to God and then reveals how he will process it. He will pray. He will pray because he is a man of prayer. That causes me to pause. When things happen to me, how do I handle them? What happens to me is far less important than how I handle what happens to me. Am I a man of prayer or am I a man who prays. There is a difference. I think the difference is revealed in what I do first when something happens. Is my first reaction gossip or slander? Is my first reaction to try to solve it myself? Is my first reaction to avoid the problem? Or, is my first response to move to prayer? Do I take it to the One who knows everything and can truly solve whatever problem I may be having—even if the problem is me? Left to myself, I can see what needs to be fixed in everyone else; in prayer, God reveals how He is working in me as well. Sometimes I find I am really the source of the whole trial or that the trial has come so that I can grow in my relationship with God and others.

*O God, I long to be a man of prayer. I want my first response, every time, to be a cry out and up to You. I know, with all my heart, that You are the One who can step into any situation and bring light. I long to see that light—even if it shines on me. Especially if it shines on me. I am Your servant. Amen.*

January 7 - 12, 2019

Saturday, January 12, 2019

## Steadfast

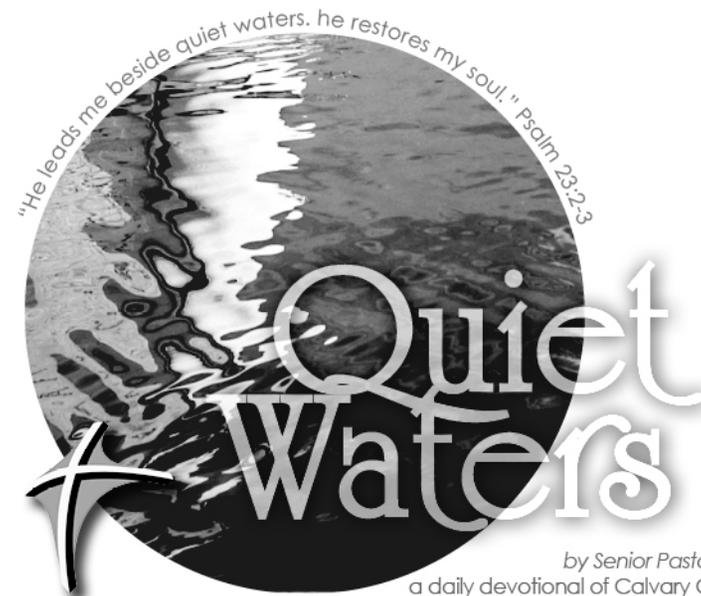
Psalms 111-112

*Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever. He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.*

Psalm 112:1,6-8

The one who fears the Lord will have no fear of bad news. Notice that the reason there is no fear of bad news is because the heart of one who fears the Lord is steadfast. It is steadfast because it trusts in the unchanging, all-powerful, all-loving, Almighty God. Knowing this one, true God and His love will bring a genuine calmness in the midst of bad news or bad circumstances. This calmness comes as I delight in the commands of the LORD. As I meditate on the word of the LORD and delight in putting that into practice in my life, I find the strength to not be shaken. If my delight is found in riches, or comfort, or pleasure, or any other self-focused thing, I will not be delighting in the commands of the LORD. Then I will be shaken when my health is taken away, or my riches are insufficient, or I am wronged in a relationship. But if I focus on the Word of the LORD, I will be steadfast, my heart will be securely held in His hand, and I will not be undone by bad news.

*O LORD, keep me steadfast in Your word and in Your truth. Hold me securely and allow me to rest in Your grip. Keep me satisfied with You. Even as I say that, I hear how silly it is to think that I should need more. I long to find great delight in Your commands. Thank You for being a loving God.*



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka  
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, January 7, 2019

## Blameless

Psalms 101-102

*I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing.*

Psalm 101:2-3a

How many times in my life, when I am all alone, do I think about or do things that I would not do in front of others? Who I am in secret reveals great things about my heart. When I consider the vile things that are available to set before my eyes, I realize the need for me to be very deliberate in the way I live my life. So many things that on the surface appear harmless can actually lead me into a vile place.

Vile thoughts are those which draw me into areas of self-gratification. They are the thoughts that take me to a place where I entertain my self with mundane things.

The verse for today helps me remember that I must remove all the things in my house that may pull me away from a blameless heart. This is especially important in my house, where I have time to be alone and can so easily be drawn away from the purity that I love to have with my Father. It is but one step in choosing to be very careful in living a blameless life. As I live that blameless life, I anticipate with great enthusiasm the Lord coming to me! I would not want Him to come and find me doing something that is vile.

O LORD, help me to be blameless in the secret places of my heart. May those places be cleansed by You and may You wash over me with a desire to have all vile things removed from my home. Please keep me from anything that may take me from the purity I long to have in Your presence, as I wait for Your glorious appearing. Amen.

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

## Deserve

Psalms 103-104

*... he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Psalm 103:10-12

Every now and again, I come to a place in the Scriptures where I have no choice but to pause and consider what I have just read. This is one of those places. I am prone to keeping tally of what is fair and right. When I am mistreated (even in small ways—like not getting checked out fast enough at the drive-through lane), I immediately begin to think of what I deserve. I remember when McDonald's told me that I deserved a break today. I began to believe it and it has impacted me very negatively. I guess I really didn't need any help. I believed it already. I read this verse and I come face to face with the realization of what I truly deserve. I deserve to be treated according to my sins. Yet, because of Jesus, my sins (while not forgotten by God) are removed as far as the east from the west. This allows me to be spared the consequence of separation from God—exactly what I deserve. I need to pause and consider what it means to fear a God who does not give me what I deserve. Then I need to realize that unless I fear God in this way I will not experience His compassion. Yet it is this forgiveness that causes me to fear (Psalm 130:4).

O LORD, help me remember Your great love for me and how You do not treat me in the way that my sins deserve. Thank You for Jesus, who makes it possible for me to stand before You forgiven and restored. Thank You for Your undeserved compassion toward me. O Father, may You help me understand what it means to fear You in my life. You are awesome. Amen.

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

## Prostituted

Psalms 105-106

*They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.*

Psalm 106:34-39

This psalm recounts the journey of the people of Israel in the Exodus. In the text, I see myself all too clearly. Over and over, the Lord reaches to me in love, calling me to holiness and relationship with Him. Like the Israelites, I am bent on rebellion (verse 43). God sees this as me prostituting myself—giving my affections to another. It is true. It is so hard to live in this land where everything seems to turn my affection away from the Lover of my soul. I am drawn to worship idols—even to the extent of offering my children as a sacrifice to them. Be sure this is still happening today in our world. Children are presented with lesser gods to love and embrace. Things that are temporary are seen as greater than the Eternal God. This is shedding of innocent blood as we teach our children to prostitute themselves by our example. He relents because of the covenant, but there is still pain involved. There is always pain in adultery.

O LORD our God, Please help me to love You alone. Help me see the ways that I have been lured away from You. I confess that I have prostituted myself. Please forgive me. Help me see the pain that that has brought into my heart and the heart of my family, but—more importantly—Your heart. Amen.

Thursday, January 10, 2019

## Thanks

Psalms 107-108

*Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.*

Psalm 107:13,15

Four different times in this psalm, we see these phrases repeated. There are some minor differences, but the basic message is the same. There was a group of people that was experiencing distress. There are four distinct groups mentioned—desert travelers, prisoners, the sick, and sailors. Each cries out to the Lord in their distress (verses 6, 13, 19, 28). And in each case, the Lord either delivers, saves, or brings that person through that distress. Each of these is followed by a call for response. The response is to be thanksgiving. God saves because of His unfaithful love. How often do I pause and just thank God for that unfaithful love. I am quick to call out in the midst of my distress. I need to learn to be just as ready to be quick to call out my thanks before, during, and after God's working of His wonderful deeds. Sometimes I miss His working. Perhaps if I were more grateful for how He does work I would be quicker to notice when and how He is.

O LORD, let me give thanks constantly for Your unfaithful love. You have done so many wonderful deeds among men. I read of them in Scripture and I hear of them from testimonies of people I talk to almost every day. You are amazing, God. Thank You for hearing my cries and for saving me in my distress. Amen.