

## **THE PATH, AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 6, 2020**

**Theme:** This week we will continue to look at the attributes of God using some of the images of God that are presented in the Psalms. The book of Psalms was the hymn book of the Old Testament and of the early church. It was made up of the songs that Jesus would have sung throughout the day and in worship as well. Because of that it shows us the beauty of who God is and gives us reasons why we should praise Him and celebrate Him.

### **MONDAY - PSALM 3 (GOD IS OUR SHIELD)**

David was fleeing from his son Absalom when he wrote Psalm 3. He felt the pressure of an enemy closing in on him, but it wasn't just any enemy, it was his son. David knew conflict because he was the king of the country, but this is a different type of conflict. This one is personal and this one was more than just a physical struggle. It was also an emotional and mental struggle and it was taking its toll on David as he wrote Psalm 3. In this song of praise however we get a wondrous description of God, He is a shield about us. David introduces us to a very important concept, God as divine warrior. He is our protector and as we are told in the New Testament, "if God is for us who can be against us." Of course that proclamation leads to a question, "how can we make sure that God is for us?" There is only one way and that is through the blood of Jesus Christ. If we repent of our sins and place our faith and our trust in Him, then our sins are washed away and His righteousness is imputed to us. Because of that we go from being enemies of God to being friends of God. God is on our side. He is for us, as Paul says in Romans 8:31, which means He is our shield as well. Because God is the divine warrior nothing can separate us from His love (see Romans 8), He is our protector and He keeps us and guards us so that nothing removes us from His love. It is an amazing thought. David was dealing with violence and with hatred. He was dealing with a very difficult family situation but in all of that God is his shield. He is on David's side and through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross He is on our side as well. Our world may be filled with uncertainty due to all of the division within our country and due to Covid 19, but God is our shield. In the midst of that uncertainty and in the midst of our personal struggles, He is our shield. He covers us and nothing can take us away from His love.

### **TUESDAY - PSALM 18 (GOD IS OUR ROCK)**

David's life seems to be marked by conflict and struggle. There is the battle with Goliath, there is the feud with Absalom, there are numerous other enemies and battles, and there is the jealousy of Saul and the hardship that it caused. In Psalm 18, David is finally delivered from Saul and as he thinks about God's goodness and God's protection, he says "God is my Rock". David had had many struggles and at times his life seemed to have no stability, but as David looks back he says, "God is my rock." A rock is stable. David is most likely looking at some of the rocky terrain that surrounded his residence and as he looks at these huge rocks that would have been considered immovable in his day, David says "God is my rock." In other words He is David's stability and He is immovable. David has experienced shifting political sands, he has dealt with family turmoil, he has been confronted with his own sin and his own instability, but as David looks at his life, he says God is my rock, God is my stability. He is unchanging and immovable. The writer of Hebrews tells us that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, which means if He was David's stability thousands of years ago, He is our stability as well. Our world is changing, our lives change, the people around us change, but as Christians we have a constant in our lives. We have stability. We have God, He is our immovable rock, so we can cling to Him within the storms that are raging and when life is changing. He is our stability and He is always faithful.

### **WEDNESDAY – PSALM 5 (GOD IS OUR KING)**

We don't know the tune of Psalm 5, but we do know that it was a psalm that was played on the flute and it was a psalm that celebrated God as king. The irony of this is that David, the King is writing this psalm but he recognizes that he is not the real king. He may be the earthly king of the county, but God is the King of King and Lord of Lords and because of that David, the King yields to Him. We may sometimes fall into the trap of believing that we are the kings or queens of our own lives, that we are in control, and that we are masters of our own fate. In reality we control very little in our own lives. God however is in total and complete control. How do we respond to that? We must yield to Him. We must know that He is in control and because of that we run to Him for strength and for wisdom. We run to Him for help and we admit our own limitations. He is not limited at all and so we must trust Him. He is king which means we shouldn't be trying to live life our own way. We shouldn't be seeking our own will but instead we should seek to yield our will to the will of God. After all knowing and doing His will is ultimately what matters in life. And the good news is this, "His will is good and perfect and pleasing." In other words God's will is what is best for us, so pursue His will today, after all He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### **THURSDAY – PSALM 23 AND PSALM 80**

The most familiar image of God in the psalms is found in Psalm 23, "the Lord is my shepherd..." This refrain is not limited to Psalm 23 however as it is also repeated in Psalm 80. Psalm 23 is a psalm of David, whereas Psalm 80 is a psalm of Asaph. Psalm 23 is written at an unknown time but it is a time where David is looking back on his life and celebrating the faithfulness of God. Psalm 80 is written around 722 bc when the 10 northern tribes are carried into captivity. They are being taken captive not because God has forgotten them, but because they have forgotten God. God is still their shepherd. He still wants to protect them and provide for them. He still wants to lead them and guide them, but their hearts have grown hard and in their stubbornness they want to go their own way. This has led to disaster and to their impending captivity. Psalm 80 is the psalmist crying out for God to intervene and to save them, to come to their rescue even though they are "sheep that have went astray." When you take these two psalms together you see a very important principle and it is simply this that God is a shepherd in the good times and the bad times. He is with us at all times of life, even when we feel as if He is silent and we are being carried into captivity. Even in the hard times God is still good and He is still our faithful shepherd.

### **FRIDAY – PSALM 7 (GOD IS JUDGE)**

Psalm 7 was most likely a very harsh sounding psalm, it probably had a very irregular rhythm as is shown in the title, "a shiggaion of David". Whatever it sounded like musically it was a song that was sung in worship, and it was written about God's faithfulness to David even when Cush, the Benjamite brought false charges against him. These charges had disrupted the rhythm of David's life. They had left him wondering and hurting and yet even in the midst of the lies, David reaches out to God to vindicate him, because of course God is the ultimate judge. This psalm shows David running to God and asking for God to hear his cries, it shows David standing before the judge and awaiting a verdict. There is never any doubt that God, who is a righteous judge is going to judge justly and fairly. David knows this and that is why he runs to God for help. God is our righteous judge today as well, which means He will judge in fairness and justice. That sounds like good news until you realize that we are all sinners deserving of punishment. The good news is that Jesus took the punishment in our place because of that we can stand before Him and be judged forgivenly.