

CONFESSIONS

How the Psalms Transform the Way We View ourselves, the World and God

Series Summary

Many view the practice of confession as negative and unnecessary for the modern world. But what if radical honesty is what we long for and need? What if confession was the beginning of freedom? On Sundays we will explore how the Book of Psalms helps us navigate the whole range of human experience with both honesty and hope by pointing us to the gospel of God.

- **21/1** Confessions: Where Can I Find Rest? | Psalm 4
- **28/1** Confessions: How Should I View Myself? | Psalm 8
- **4/2** Confessions: How Should I View the World? | Psalm 19
- **11/2** Confessions: What is My Purpose? | Psalm 27
- **18/2** Confessions: How Can I Change? | Psalm 32
- **25/2** Confessions: What Should I Do with My Guilt? | Psalm 51
- **4/3** Confessions: How Can I Handle Betrayal? | Psalm 55
- **11/3** Confessions: Why Can't I Have What They Have? | Psalm 73
- **18/3** Confessions: What Do I Do When I am Sad? | Psalm 126
- **25/3** Confessions: Where is the Justice? | Psalm 146
- **1/4** Confessions: Where is the Victory? | Psalm 22 (EASTER)
- **8/4** Confessions: Where Can I Find Comfort? | Psalm 23

Why Do the Psalms Matter?

The Psalms are theological. Much of the new testament teaching on Christ is firmly founded in the Psalms. In fact, the Psalms are quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book. The Psalms were most likely the hymnbook that Jesus and his contemporaries sang and read from in the synagogues. Jesus himself referred to and quoted the Psalm in a way that only someone immersed in them would. Paul uses them to establish essential beliefs and shape the theology of the church. God has given us this hymnbook so that we might know Him and the work of his redemption more clearly.

The Psalms are relational. The Psalms help us relate to God and ourselves. In reading them, we learn the balance of honesty and reverence, knowing the truth about ourselves and also the truth about God. After all, the Psalms are a collection of prayers and prayer is a two-way street, a conversation between man and God, creature and creator, a relationship between heaven and

earth. Taking in God's Word and talking to God in prayer is the way to navigate the whole range of our experience. Like an emotional map, this collection of poems captures all the highs and lows of life, the power and passion, the misery and joys and helps us direct them into the presence of God.

The Psalms are missional. This collection of poetry not only describes in astonishing detail the ups and downs of the human experience, but they also celebrate God's wisdom and victory. In the midst of the pain and suffering of this present world, glorious declarations of reversal within the Psalms reveal God's plan for the renewal of the world through Christ. In that sense, the Psalms contain the themes of both Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On the one hand, Jesus would suffer the worst of the human experience as strikingly described in the Psalter. But on the other hand, he would also bring about the greatest redemption the world will ever know. This great reversal, as portrayed in the Psalms, comes true through the resurrection of Jesus and his second coming. It is this vision that sends us out into the world both acknowledging present suffering but also proclaiming future hope that comes through the work of Jesus.

How Do the Psalms Work?

In studying, singing and living the Psalms they bring about change by helping us to look up, look in and look out. First, **they help us look up through praise**. In honouring and celebrating God, lifting our requests to him, we acknowledge who he is and how he works in our lives. **The Psalms also help us look in through prayer**. In praying we have to be honest about ourselves, what we are experiencing in life whether good or bad. This leads us to true self-understanding and awareness. But lastly, **the Psalms help us to look out through prophecy**. The foretelling and forthtelling about Christ lay both a theological foundation and offer a future hope. These songs in the Old Testament look forward to God's righteous reign when his kingdom comes fully and finally in Christ.

And how do the Psalms bring change? First, the Psalms **promote meditation**, helping us to focus on who God is, what he has said and how he works in our lives and our world. Also, the Psalms **produce maturity**, helping us become well-rounded emotionally, spiritually and relationally, more equipped to face the whole range of life experiences and relationships with wisdom. And lastly, the Psalms **provoke mission**, reminding us that the God of the Bible is the God of all creation and every nation and sends us out to proclaim the good news of redemption in Christ to a city in need.