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April to June 2019

“The Book of Psalms” (Part 2)
by
Rev Dr Timothy Tow
*(with extracts from C.H.Spurgeon and
others)*

About the Author



The Rev Dr Timothy Tow (1920-2009) was the founding father of the Bible-Presbyterian movement in Southeast Asia after he returned to Singapore in 1950, having caught the spirit of the 20th century Reformation movement in Faith Theological Seminary. He was the pastor of Life BPC (1950-2003) and True Life BPC (2003-2009), and principal of Far Eastern Bible College (1962-2009). A regular contributor to the RPG, he had also written more than thirty-five books. His RPG writings on “The Book of Psalms” were first published during the years 1988, 1991 and 2002.

MONDAY, APRIL 1

PSALM 91

MATTHEW 5:45

*“...He is my refuge
and my fortress...”*

TOTAL PROTECTION IN PESTILENCE AND WAR

That everything that happens in the world today is governed by God's Providence is a beneficial doctrine that brings us back to God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. The daily sunshine or rain that the world receives, whether by the good or the evil, is called general providence (Matt 5:45).

When our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount says God takes much more care of His children than birds and flowers (Matt 6:26-30), He teaches a particular providence. Now this particular (special) providence of God over His own in the context refers to peace-time care.

In this Psalm we go one step further. We are assured of a particular providence that extends to troublous times. Here the Psalmist testifies of a total protection given to us who are abiding closely in Him as in Psalm 46 which tells us God is an instant Help in trouble. The dangerous and pestilential circumstances cover every danger of disease and war. Whether great or small, God has promised to protect and save us. He will send His angels to keep charge over us. Like a nurse over a little child, she will not let him fall and bruise himself.

Now when Satan tempted Jesus to jump down from a pinnacle of the temple (Matt 4:5-6) quoting Psalm 91:11-12, this is a case of using Scripture out of context. So it has become a proverb: "Satan quoting Scripture." When we jump down from a high tower to show off, angels will not bear us up, but rather Satan will press us down. Angels will take care of those who trust in Him, who obey His Word, who seek His glory. In such a case, if there should be a falling down as in an air flight, the Lord will take good care of us, come what may. To court danger for the sake of sensationalism is to fall into Satan's trap. To speculate in business, to take great risks for the sake of earning a fast buck is to fall into Satan's trap.

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 91:1.)

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for Thy promise to be with me in times of trouble.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

PSALM 91:5

PSALM 139:8-10

*“Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
or whither shall I flee from thy
presence?”*

GOD OUR FATHER IS HERE

What is this terror in Psalm 91:5? It may be the cry of fire, or the noise of thieves, or fancied appearances, or the shriek of sudden sickness or death. We live in the world of death and sorrow, we may therefore look for ills as well in the night-watches as beneath the glare of the broiling sun. Nor should this alarm us, for be the terror what it may, the promise is that the believer shall not be afraid. Why should he? Let us put it more closely, why should we? God our Father is here, and will be here all through the lonely hours; He is an almighty Watcher, a sleepless Guardian, a faithful Friend. Nothing can happen without His direction, for even hell itself is under His control. Darkness is not dark to Him. He has promised to be a wall of fire around His people, and who can break through such a barrier? Worldlings may well be afraid, for they have an angry God above them, a guilty conscience within them, and a yawning hell beneath them; but we who rest in Jesus are saved from all these through rich mercy. If we give way to foolish fear we shall dishonour our profession, and lead others to doubt the reality of godliness. We ought to be afraid of being afraid, lest we should vex the Holy Spirit by foolish distrust. Down, then, ye dismal foreboding and groundless apprehensions, God has not forgotten to be gracious, nor shut up His tender mercies. It may be night in the soul, but there need be no terror, for the God of love changes not. Children of light may walk in darkness, but they are not therefore cast away, no, they are now enabled to prove their adoption by trusting in their heavenly Father as hypocrites cannot do.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: My God will never leave me nor forsake me.

PRAYER: Father, I thank Thee for faithfully watching over me.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

PSALM 91:9

HEBREWS 13:14

"He is my strong habitation."

AT HOME IN MY GOD

The Israelites in the wilderness were continually exposed to change. Whenever the pillar stayed its motion, the tents were pitched; but tomorrow, ere the morning sun had risen, the trumpet sounded, the ark was in motion, and the fiery, cloudy pillar was leading the way through the narrow defiles of the mountain, up the hillside, or along the arid waste of the wilderness. They had scarcely time to rest a little before they heard the sound of "Away! This is not your rest; you must still be onward journeying towards Canaan!" They were never long in one place. Even wells and palm trees could not detain them. Yet they had an abiding home in their God, His cloudy pillar was their roof-tree, and its flame by night their household fire. They must go onward from place to place, continually changing, never having time to settle, and to say, "Now we are secure; in this place we shall dwell." "Yet," says Moses, "though we are always changing, Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place throughout all generations!"

The Christian knows no change with regard to God. He may be rich today and poor tomorrow; he may be sickly today and well tomorrow; he may be in happiness today, tomorrow he may be distressed — but there is no change with regard to his relationship to God. If He loved me yesterday, He loves me today. My unmoving mansion of rest is my blessed Lord. Let prospects be blighted; let hopes be blasted; let joy be withered; let mildews destroy everything; I have lost nothing of what I have in God. He is *"my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort"* (Ps 71:3). I am a pilgrim in the world, but at home in my God. In the earth I wander, but in God I dwell in a quiet habitation.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Am I dwelling in God today?

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for Thy constancy in this world of uncertainties.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

PSALM 92

ACTS 20:6-7

*"...The sabbath was made for man,
and not man for the sabbath."*

SABBATH SONG

The title of this Psalm is thus abbreviated. Sabbath is a Hebrew word which means "rest." This rest is commanded in the Fourth Commandment.

This rest from servile labour is holy not only to rest our tired bodies but also to commemorate what the Lord God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, has done to bring us into being. The creation process is completed, and shall be commemorated.

With the completion of God's redemptive work in saving us from death to life by our Lord Jesus Christ through His resurrection from the dead, the Day of Rest which falls on the seventh day (Saturday) is since the day of the Apostles incorporated into the Lord's Day (Sunday). (Read John 20:19-20; Acts 20:6-7; 1 Cor 16:1-2; Rev 1:10).

How shall we spend Sunday (or what we now call the Lord's Day or the Christian Sabbath)? According to the injunction of this Psalm we should spend it in:

1. worship, with thanksgiving and praise; and
2. meditation on the works of God and His justice in the government of men, both good and bad. This is activated through instruction. Hence the preaching of God's Word is the second part of worship, after praise and thanksgiving through prayer.

The above two components of hallowing the Lord's Sabbath are to be found not privately or individually but corporately, in public worship by the whole Church family. So, Hebrews 10:25 exhorts us: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 92:1.)

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to keep Thy Day holy.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

PSALM 92:4

1 CORINTHIANS 4:12

*"...God is not unrighteous to forget
your work and labour of love ..."*

GLAD THROUGH GOD'S WORK

Do you believe that your sins are forgiven, and that Christ has made a full atonement for them? Then what a joyful Christian you ought to be! How you should live above the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, can it matter what happens to you now? Luther said, "Smite, Lord, smite, for my sin is forgiven; if Thou hast but forgiven me, smite as hard as Thou wilt." And in a similar spirit you may say, "Send sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, persecution, what Thou wilt, Thou hast forgiven me, and my soul is glad."

Christian, if thou art thus saved, whilst thou art glad, be grateful and loving. Cling to that cross which took thy sin away; serve thou Him who served thee. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Rom 12:1). Let not your zeal evaporate in some little ebullition of song. Show your love in expressive tokens. Love the brethren of Him who loved you. If there be a Mephibosheth anywhere who is lame or halt, help him for Jonathan's sake. If there be a poor tried believer, weep with him, and bear his cross for the sake of Him who wept for thee and carried thy sins. Since thou art thus forgiven freely for Christ's sake, go to and tell others the joyful news of pardoning mercy. Be not contented with this unspeakable blessing for thyself alone, but publish abroad the story of the cross. Holy gladness and holy boldness will make you a good preacher, and all the world will be a pulpit for you to preach in. Cheerful holiness is the most forcible of sermons, but the Lord must give it you. Seek it this morning before you go into the world. When it is the Lord's work in which we rejoice, we need not be afraid of being too glad.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: My life must be a life of service for God.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for the joy of serving Thee.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

PSALM 93

1 TIMOTHY 1:17

“...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

**JEHOVAH REIGNS SUPREME
OVER
HIS WHOLE CREATION**

Jehovah (the Hebrew name of God) is translated "LORD" in the King James Bible. His might and majesty need no elaboration.

He is the King of kings. He is buckled, and ready to strike at His enemy and defend His Kingdom. From the Creator-God we now see His creation, or hear His voice in nature (v.3).

*God hath a voice that ever is heard
In the peal of thunder, the chirp of the
bird;
It comes in the torrent, all rapid and
strong,
In the streamlets soft gush, as it ripples
along;
In the waves of the ocean, the furrows
of land,
In the mountains of granite, the atom
of sand;
Turn where you may, from the sky to
the sod,
Where can you gaze that ye see not the
Lord?*

(Eliza Cook)

Seen in another light (v.4), the utmost of their power is to Him but a sound, so He calls it a noise by way of contempt.

*Loud the stormy billows spoke,
Loud the billows raised their cry;
Fierce the stormy billows broke
Sounding to the echoing sky
Strong the breakers tossing high,
Stronger is Jehovah's might,
True thy words; and sanctify
Well becomes thy temples bright.*

(Richard Mant)

When the storm raises billows to the sky the Lord can easily restrain them. So when impious men rage against the Lord, He is able to subdue them and overrule their malice.

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 93:2.)

PRAYER: (Praise and thank God for what He has done in your life.)

LORD'S DAY, APRIL 7

PSALM 93:2

REVELATION 1:8

He is the eternal God.

THE EVERLASTING CHRIST

Christ is everlasting. Of Him we may sing with David, *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever..."* (Ps 45:6). Rejoice, believer, in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Jesus always was. The Babe born in Bethlehem was united to the Word, which was in the beginning, by whom all things were made. The title by which Christ revealed Himself to John in Patmos was, *"Him which is, and which was, and which is to come..."* (Rev 1:4). If He were not God from everlasting, we could not so devoutly love Him; we could not feel that He had any share in the eternal love which is the fountain of all covenant blessings; but since He was from all eternity with the Father, we trace the stream of divine love to Himself equally with His Father and the blessed Spirit. As our Lord always was, so also He is for evermore. Jesus is not dead; He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Resort to Him in all your times of need, for He is waiting to bless you still.

Moreover, Jesus our Lord ever shall be. If God should spare your life to fulfil your full day of threescore years and ten, you will find that His cleansing fountain is still opened, and His precious blood has not lost its power; you shall find that the Priest who filled the healing fount with His own blood, lives to purge you from all iniquity. When only your last battle remains to be fought, you shall find that the hand of your conquering Captain has not grown feeble — the living Saviour shall cheer the dying saint. When you enter heaven you shall find Him there bearing the dew of His youth; and through eternity the Lord Jesus shall still remain the perennial spring of joy, and life, and glory to His people. Living waters may you draw from this sacred well! Jesus always was, He always is, He always shall be. He is eternal in all His attributes, in all His offices, in all His might, and willingness to bless, comfort, guard, and crown His chosen people.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: How does the fact that Christ is everlasting affect my life?

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for the stability that I can have in my life knowing that Thou art an everlasting God.

MONDAY, APRIL 8

PSALM 94

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

"Pray without ceasing."

RIGHT IS MIGHT, NOT MIGHT IS RIGHT

This is an oppressive world. A young Christian who goes out to earn a living immediately finds himself surrounded by evil workers. Those who are stronger than him are big fish ready to eat the small fish. This is what is meant by our Lord's alert to His disciples, *"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"* (Matt 10:16).

The Psalmist here has experienced the humiliation of being oppressed by the strong and mighty. He sees others who are weak being gobbled up. *"They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless"* (Ps 94:6). This happens in any age. Jesus exposes the bullies of His day, who were real cowards, *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation"* (Matt 23:14). Have you suffered oppression like the writer of Psalm 94?

Praise the Lord, the Psalmist is not left in the lurch. He worships a sovereign God, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. He has recourse to his Maker. He calls upon Him to judge against his oppressors. So we have the same God who will make things right for us.

God uses the oppression of man to chastise us. In the meantime, He will judge the oppressor for his wickedness. "Not might is right, but right is might." Let us run to Him for salvation and deliverance.

THOUGHT: Big fish eat small fish. This is the world.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, that I am not eaten up by the wicked because I have recourse to Thee.

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

PSALM 95

MALACHI 1:6-11

*“...worship the LORD
in the beauty of holiness.”*

**EXHORTATION TO WORSHIP
AND WARNING TO A
WAYWARD PEOPLE**

This Psalm is a Hebrew song exhorting the people to worship and warning the nation from being a wayward people since the days of their forty-year sojourn in the wilderness. It surely exhorts the Church today to worship God likewise, and surely warns us of backsliding like the Israelites in the desert.

Spurgeon says of this Psalm: “It has about it a ring like that of the church bells, and like the bells it sounds both merrily and solemnly, at first ringing out a lively peal, and then dropping into a funeral knell as if tolling at the funeral of the generation which perished in the wilderness.”

The dividing line of the two different sentiments of this Psalm, the first expressed in the bells ringing merrily and the second in the ringing falling to a funeral note is at the end of verse 7. Thus, it will form:

1. an invitation with happy reason, and
2. an invitation with grave warnings.

A word to the pastor or pulpit chairman at the Lord’s Day worship: It is exhilarating at the commencement of worship to call the congregation’s attention, to prepare their hearts for worship. The hortatory utterances in many of the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving are usually used. For example, Psalm 100 is a good one.

THOUGHT: It is important to plan a worship service from beginning to end.

PRAYER: Father, give me Thy Holy Spirit that I may do Thy work.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

PSALM 96

1 CHRONICLES 16:7-36

*Preach the gospel
to everyone.*

**DAVID SEES THE CONVERSION
OF THE GENTILES**

This Psalm is evidently taken from that longer Psalm which David composed for the removal of the Ark of God to the tent David had prepared for it. This sacred account is recorded in 1 Chronicles 15 and 16. Psalm 96 is of the latter part of that longer Psalm, the first part referred exclusively to Israel, whereas the latter part is directed to the Gentiles.

Psalm 96 fitly follows Psalm 95 which describes the obstinacy of Israel and the consequent taking of the Gospel from them that it might be preached to Gentile nations who would receive it. This Psalm 96 speaks to the Gentile nations from David's large-heartedness. When David rejoiced and danced before the Ark, he saw in vision all the earth turning from idols to the living and true God.

Had Michal, Saul's daughter, only been able to enter into David's delight, she would not have reproached him, and if the Jews of his day could only be enlarged in heart to feel sympathy with all mankind, they also would sing for joy at the great prophecy of David that all the world shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Spurgeon calls Psalm 96 a Missionary Hymn.

THOUGHT: I should adopt a world view of missions.

PRAYER: Father, help me to go wherever Thou wantst me to go.

THURSDAY, APRIL 11

PSALM 97

ZECHARIAH 4:6

*“It is the spirit
that quickeneth...”*

THE FORESHADOWING OF THE WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As the last Psalm sang the praises of the Lord in connection with the proclamation of the Gospel among the Gentiles, so this appears to foreshadow the mighty working of the Holy Spirit in subduing error and the casting down of idol-gods.

Across the sea a voice cries for rejoicing at the reign of Jesus (v.1).

The sacred fire descends (v.3).

Like lightning the Gospel flames forth (v.4).

Difficulties vanish (v.5).

All the nations see the glory of God (v.6).

The idol worshippers are confounded (v.7).

The Church rejoices (v.8).

The Lord is exalted (v.9).

The Psalm closes with an exhortation to holy steadfastness under the persecution which would follow. It further bids the saints rejoice that their path is bright and their rewards certain.

The Psalm divides itself into four portions, each containing three verses:

1. The coming of the Lord (vv.1-3)
2. The effect upon the earth (vv.4-6)
3. The influence on the heathen and God's people (vv.7-9)
4. Exhortation to holiness and happiness (vv.10-12).

THOUGHT: God moves in a mysterious way.

PRAYER: Father, help me to see the wonder working of the Holy Spirit.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

PSALM 97:1

REVELATION 19:6

*God defends who
in Him trusts.*

THE LORD REIGNS

Causes for disquietude there are none so long as Psalm 97:1 is true. On earth the Lord's power as readily controls the rage of the wicked as the rage of the sea; His love as easily refreshes the poor with mercy as the earth with showers. Majesty gleams in flashes of fire amid the tempest's horrors, and the glory of the Lord is seen in its grandeur in the fall of empires, and the crash of thrones. In all our conflicts and tribulations, we may behold the hand of the divine King.

"God is God; He sees and hears All our troubles, all our tears. Soul, forget not, 'mid thy pains, God o'er all for ever reigns."

In hell, evil spirits own, with misery, His undoubted supremacy. When permitted to roam abroad, it is with a chain at their heel; the bit is in the mouth of behemoth, and the hook in the jaws of leviathan. Death's darts are under the Lord's lock, and the grave's prisons have divine power as their warder. The terrible vengeance of the Judge of all the earth makes fiends cower down and tremble, even as dogs in the kennel fear the hunter's whip.

"Fear not death, nor Satan's thrusts, God defends who in Him trusts; Soul, remember, in thy pains, God o'er all for ever reigns."

In heaven none doubt the sovereignty of the King Eternal, but all fall on their faces to do Him homage. Angels are His courtiers, the redeemed His favourites, and all delight to serve Him day and night. May we soon reach the city of the great King!

"For this life's long night of sadness He will give us peace and gladness. Soul, remember, in thy pains, God o'er all for ever reigns."

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Why do I become disquieted knowing that my Lord reigns?

PRAYER: Father, may I always adore and submit to Thee, the reigning King.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

PSALM 97:10

PROVERBS 3:7

*"Devise not evil
against thy neighbour..."*

HATE EVIL!

Thou hast good reason to *"hate evil,"* for only consider what harm it has already wrought thee. Oh, what a world of mischief sin has brought into thy heart! Sin blinded thee so that thou couldst not see the beauty of the Saviour; it made thee deaf so that thou couldst not hear the Redeemer's tender invitations. Sin turned thy feet into the way of death, and poured poison into the very fountain of thy being; it tainted thy heart, and made it *"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."* Oh, what a creature thou wast when evil had done its utmost with thee, before divine grace interposed! Thou wast an heir of wrath even as others; thou didst *"follow a multitude to do evil."* Such were all of us; but Paul reminds us: *"ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* We have good reason, indeed, for hating evil when we look back and trace its deadly workings. Such mischief did evil do us, that our souls would have been lost had not omnipotent love interfered to redeem us. Even now it is an active enemy, ever watching to do us hurt, and to drag us to perdition. Therefore *"hate evil,"* O Christians, unless you desire trouble. If you would strew your path with thorns, and plant nettles in your death-pillow, then neglect to *"hate evil;"* but if you would live a happy life, and die a peaceful death, then walk in all the ways of holiness, hating evil, even unto the end. If you truly love your Saviour, and would honour Him, then *"hate evil."* We know of no cure for the love of evil in a Christian like abundant intercourse with the Lord Jesus. Dwell much with Him, and it is impossible for you to be at peace with sin.

"Order my footsteps by Thy Word, And
make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord, But
keep my conscience clear."

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Do I harbour evil in my heart?

PRAYER: Father, make me to hate every evil way and walk in Thy holy path only.

MONDAY, APRIL 15

PSALM 99

1 PETER 5:6-11

*Jesus, my Lord,
my God, and my all.*

**THE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY
PSALM**

Psalm 99 may be called THE SANCTUS, or THE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY PSALM, for the word "holy" is the conclusion and the refrain of its main divisions.

Its subject is the holiness of the divine government, the sanctity of the mediatorial reign. It seems to us to declare the holiness of Jehovah Himself in verses 1, 2, 3; it mentions the equity of the king whom the Lord has appointed, as an illustration of the Lord's love of holiness, or more probably it describes the Lord as Himself the King, in verses 4 and 5, and it then sets forth the severely righteous character of God's dealings with those favoured persons whom in former times he had selected to approach Him on behalf of the people (Ps 99: 6-9).

It is a hymn fitted for the cherubim who surround the throne, who are mentioned in verse 1; it is a Psalm most fitting for saints who dwell in Zion, the holy city, and especially worthy to be reverently sung by all who, like David the king, Moses the lawgiver, Aaron the priest, or Samuel the seer, are honoured to lead the church of God, and plead for her with her Lord.

If no others adore Him, let His own people render to Him the most ardent worship. Infinite condescension makes Him stoop to be called our God, and truth and faithfulness bind Him to maintain that covenant relationship; and surely we, to whom by grace He so lovingly gives Himself, should exalt Him with all our hearts. He shines upon us from under the veiling wings of cherubim, and above the seat of mercy, therefore let us come and worship at His footstool. It becomes us to unite earnestness and humility, joy and adoration, and prostrate ourselves before Him. Do we need to be thus excited to worship? It ought to be our daily delight to magnify so good and great a God. *"For he is holy"* (v.5).

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 99:2.)

PRAYER: I exalt Thee, O Lord, my God, the most holy God.

TUESDAY, APRIL 16

PSALM 100

HEBREWS 13:15-17

*Praise God from whom
all blessing flow.*

THE HUNDREDTH PSALM

The title of Psalm 100 is "A Psalm of Praise." Praise, I would say, is the highest form of worship. For example, we celebrate Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. But we must begin with singing Hosannas, with the children of Jerusalem, to welcome the lowly King in His Triumphal Entry. As the multitudes cut down branches of trees and wave palm fronds to greet their King, so we call that Sunday, Palm Sunday.

In the Holy Land the re-enactment of the spontaneous outburst of praising God in the Highest cannot be resisted. And who can forbid a local Church from praising God waving palm fronds, marching around their Church grounds? I know of some churches that have done this.

Do you know Psalm 100 is often sung without our realizing it? (Psalm 100 is also often used as a call to worship.)

Verse 5 sums up God's character and contains a mass of reasons for praise. He is good, gracious, kind, bountiful, loving; yea God is love. He who does not praise the good is not good himself. God is not mere justices, stern and cold; He has bowels of compassion, and wills not the sinner's death. He has entered into covenant with His people, and He will never revoke it. Our heart leaps for joy as we bow before One who has never broken His word or changed His purpose.

Dear reader, if you have Jesus in your heart, you too can sing and praise God like the Psalmist. Praise your Lord daily. Thank Him for who He is and for His every blessing in your life daily.

THOUGHT: I am but a sheep.

PRAYER: Lord, Thou art my Shepherd.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

PSALM 100:2

ACTS 20:24

*“... count it all joy when
ye fall into divers temptations.”*

DELIGHTFUL SERVICE

Delight in divine service is a token of acceptance. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not serving Him at all; they bring the form of homage, but the life is absent. Our God requires no slaves to grace His throne; He is the Lord of the empire of love, and would have His servants dressed in the livery of joy. The angels of God serve Him with songs, not with groans; a murmur or a sigh would be a mutiny in their ranks. That obedience which is not voluntary is disobedience, for the Lord looketh at the heart, and if He seeth that we serve Him from force, and not because we love Him, He will reject our offering. Service coupled with cheerfulness is heart-service, and therefore true. Take away joyful willingness from the Christian, and you have removed the test of his sincerity. If a man be driven to battle, he is no patriot; but he who marches into the fray with flashing eye and beaming face, singing, "It is sweet for one's country to die," proves himself to be sincere in his patriotism. Cheerfulness is the support of our strength; in the joy of the Lord are we strong. It acts as the remover of difficulties. It is to our service what oil is to the wheels of a railway carriage. Without oil the axle soon grows hot, and accidents occur; and if there be not a holy cheerfulness to oil our wheels, our spirits will be clogged with weariness. The man who is cheerful in his service of God, proves that obedience is his element; he can sing,

"Make me to walk in Thy commands,
'Tis a delightful road."

Reader, let us put this question — do you serve the Lord with gladness? Let us show to the people of the world, who think our religion to be slavery, that it is to us a delight and a joy! Let our gladness proclaim that we serve a good Master.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Do I serve the Lord with gladness?

PRAYER: Father, may others be attracted to Thee because they see my joy in serving Thee.

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

PSALM 100:4

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

“...when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

BE THANKFUL

Our Lord would have all His people rich in high and happy thoughts concerning His blessed person. Jesus is not content that His brethren should think meanly of Him; it is His pleasure that His espoused ones should be delighted with His beauty. We are not to regard Him as a bare necessary, like to bread and water, but as a luxurious delicacy, as a rare and ravishing delight. To this end He has revealed Himself as the *"pearl of great price"* in its peerless beauty, as the *"bundle of myrrh"* in its refreshing fragrance, as the *"rose of Sharon"* in its lasting perfume, as the *"lily"* in its spotless purity.

As a help to high thoughts of Christ, remember the estimation that Christ is had in beyond the skies, where things are measured by the right standard. Think how God esteems the Only Begotten, His unspeakable gift to us. Consider what the angels think of Him, as they count it their highest honour to veil their faces at His feet. Consider what the blood-washed think of Him, as day without night they sing His well deserved praises. High thoughts of Christ will enable us to act consistently with our relations towards Him. The more loftily we see Christ enthroned, and the more lowly we are when bowing before the foot of the throne, the more truly shall we be prepared to act our part towards Him. Our Lord Jesus desires us to think well of Him, that we may submit cheerfully to His authority. High thoughts of Him increase our love. Love and esteem go together. Therefore, believer, think much of your Master's excellencies. Study Him in His primeval glory, before He took upon Himself your nature! Think of the mighty love which drew Him from His throne to die upon the cross! Admire Him as He conquers all the powers of hell! See Him risen, crowned, glorified! Bow before Him as the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, for only thus will your love to Him be what it should.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: How deep is God's love for me?

PRAYER: Father, may I respond to Thy great love for me.

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

PSALM 101

EXODUS 20:16

"...a flattering mouth worketh ruin."

NO EVIL-SPEAKING IN DAVID'S PALACE

Like St. Augustine's Table Talk to his students not to speak bad of anyone in his monastery, this Psalm of David warns those who serve in his palace against any kind of backbiting. Those who are faithful and loyal to him, He will bless. A great king like him has many followers, the good and the bad. So are followers of Jesus Christ. Among His twelve disciples there hid one Judas until he was exposed after the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:70).

David himself has suffered the effects of the slandering tongues of his enemies. Therefore, as king, he wants to deal severely with these snakes so that others may be spared.

"To give one's neighbour a stab in the dark is one of the most atrocious of crimes, and cannot be too heartily reprobated, yet such as are guilty of it often find patronage in high places Proud men are generally hard, and therefore very unfit for office; persons of high looks provoke enmity and discontent, and the fewer of such people about a court the better for the stability of a throne."

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Joab and Ahithophel were traitors to David as Judas Iscariot was to the Lord Jesus.

PRAYER: Lord, help me to be a Peter, faithful to Thee to the very end.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

PSALM 101:1

2 CORINTHIANS 4:17-18

Singing everywhere I go.

A SINGING CHRISTIAN

Faith triumphs in trial. When reason is thrust into the inner prison, with her feet made fast in the stocks, faith makes the dungeon walls ring with her merry notes as she cries, *"I will sing of mercy and of judgment.*

Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing." Faith pulls the black mask from the face of trouble, and discovers the angel beneath. Faith looks up at the cloud, and sees that:

"'Tis big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on her head."

There is a subject for song even in the judgments of God towards us. For, first, the trial is not so heavy as it might have been; next, the trouble is not so severe as we deserved to have borne; and our affliction is not so crushing as the burden which others have to carry. Faith sees that in her worst sorrow there is nothing penal; there is not a drop of God's wrath in it; it is all sent in love. Faith discerns love gleaming like a jewel on the breast of an angry God. Faith says of her grief, "This is a badge of honour, for the child must feel the rod"; and then she sings of the sweet result of her sorrows, because they work her spiritual good. Nay, more, says Faith, "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So Faith rides forth on the black horse, conquering and to conquer, trampling down carnal reason and fleshly sense, and chanting notes of victory amid the thickest of the fray.

"All I meet I find assists me In my path
to heavenly joy:

Where, though trials now attend me,
Trials never more annoy.

Blest there with a weight of glory, Still
the path I'll ne'er forget,

But, exulting, cry, it led me To my
blessed Saviour's seat."

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Why do I sing about Jesus?

PRAYER: May the song on my lips have its root in a joyful and thankful heart.

LORD'S DAY, APRIL 21

PSALM 102

ROMANS 8:17-28

God will provide.

**A PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED,
AND POURING OUT HIS
COMPLAINT BEFORE THE
LORD**

Psalm 102 is a prayer far more in spirit than in words. A strong stream of supplication runs from beginning to end. It is a prayer of the afflicted or the "sufferer." It is not a penitential Psalm, for the sorrow of it is rather of one suffering than sinning.

The sufferer is more afflicted for others than for himself. More for Zion and the House of God than for his own house. He is overwhelmed and sorely troubled. When a cup is overwhelmed and turned bottom over, all that is within is naturally poured out. So is the soul poured out without restraint. But here comes the grace of God to refill it. The afflicted's mourning is turned into consolation.

This Psalm may be called the Patriot's Plaint.

Division:

1. Outpouring of sorrow (vv.1-11)
2. The gracious Lord and His care for His people (vv.12-28).

The whole composition may be compared to a day which, opening with wind and rain, clears up at noon and is warm with the sun, continues fine, with intervening showers, and finally closes with a brilliant sunset.

Are the wind and rain beating down on you? Or is the warmth of the sun enveloping your life now? Whatever the day is like, look up to the Lord. He cares for you.

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 102:8.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 102:1.)

MONDAY, APRIL 22

PSALM 102:13-14

HEBREWS 2:12-13

Pray for others.

LOOK AWAY FROM SELF

A selfish man in trouble is exceedingly hard to comfort, because the springs of his comfort lie entirely within himself, and when he is sad all his springs are dry. But a large-hearted man full of Christian philanthropy, has other springs from which to supply himself with comfort beside those which lie within. He can go to his God first of all, and there find abundant help; and he can discover arguments for consolation in things relating to the world at large, to his country, and, above all, to the church.

David in this Psalm was exceedingly sorrowful; he wrote, "*...I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.*" The only way in which he could comfort himself, was in the reflection that God would arise, and have mercy upon Zion: though he was sad, yet Zion should prosper; however low his own estate, yet Zion should arise. Christian man! learn to comfort thyself in God's gracious dealing towards the church. That which is so dear to thy Master, should it not be dear above all else to thee? What though thy way be dark, canst thou not gladden thine heart with the triumphs of His cross and the spread of His truth? Our own personal troubles are forgotten while we look, not only upon what God has done, and is doing for Zion, but on the glorious things He will yet do for His church. Try this receipt, O believer, whenever thou art sad of heart and in heaviness of spirit: forget thyself and thy little concerns, and seek the welfare and prosperity of Zion. When thou bendest thy knee in prayer to God, limit not thy petition to the narrow circle of thine own life, tried though it be, but send out thy longing prayers for the church's prosperity, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,*" and thine own soul shall be refreshed.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Self is taken care of when I look away from self.

PRAYER: Father, may I continually thank Thee for Thy love and great work for the Church.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

PSALM 103

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

*O, give thanks
unto the LORD.*

**DAVID REMINDS US OF
THANKSGIVING
WHICH WE SO EASILY FORGET**

So often we have received so plentifully from God's hands, and so often we forget to return thanks.

The greatest gift of life is the forgiving of all our sins. The spiritual is followed by the physical — the healing of our sickness. In the physical realm we may meet with a severe accident that leads to death. Or God may give us radiant health by blessing us with a good appetite.

The reasons why we must give thanks to God are many more than just stated. God is the Judge above all judges to whom He is to be appealed when we are oppressed by biased judges. God has given us His Law to guide to a righteous life. God is ever gracious and pardoning our recurring sins. He forgives and He forgets, which shows our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west.

He is a loving Father who pities His children. He the Everlasting Father sees us as children of dust. He sees us as grass and our glory as flowers of grass. But the mercies of God are everlasting to them that worship Him in fear.

The Lord must be thanked and praised simply because He is the Mighty Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus all the angels and heavenly hosts and the whole creation are all gathered at His feet, together with us His redeemed children to thank Him and praise His Name.

Are we praising and thanking Him enough? We can never praise and thank Him enough! Our eyes are often focused earthwards. Let us lift them heavenward to our loving, heavenly Father.

THOUGHT: Remembrance is the hallmark of gratitude.

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to live a life of thanksgiving hence forth and always.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

PSALM 103:3

LUKE 4:16-21

*Come to Jesus to be healed
of your disease of sin.*

THE PHYSICIAN OF PHYSICIANS

Humbling as is the statement, yet the fact is certain, that we are all more or less suffering under the disease of sin. What a comfort to know that we have a great Physician who is both able and willing to heal us! Let us think of Him awhile today. His cures are very speedy — there is life in a look at Him; His cures are radical — He strikes at the centre of the disease; and hence, His cures are sure and certain. He never fails, and the disease never returns. There is no relapse where Christ heals; no fear that His patients should be merely patched up for a season, He makes new men of them: a new heart also does He give them, and a right spirit does He put with them. He is well skilled in all diseases. Physicians generally have some specialty. Although they may know a little about almost all our pains and ills, there is usually one disease which they have studied above all others; but Jesus Christ is thoroughly acquainted with the whole of human nature. He is as much at home with one sinner as with another, and never yet did He meet with an out-of-the-way case that was difficult to Him. He has had extraordinary complications of strange diseases to deal with, but He has known exactly with one glance of His eye how to treat the patient. He is the only universal doctor; and the medicine He gives is the only true catholicon, healing in every instance. Whatever our spiritual malady may be, we should apply at once to this Divine Physician. There is no brokenness of heart which Jesus cannot bind up. "His blood cleanseth from all sin." We have but to think of the myriads who have been delivered from all sorts of diseases through the power and virtue of His touch, and we shall joyfully put ourselves in His hands. We trust Him, and sin dies; we love Him, and grace lives; we wait for Him and grace is strengthened; we see Him as He is, and grace is perfected for ever.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: How am I trusting the Physician of physicians?

PRAYER: May I always come to Thee, Father, for Thy healing.

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

PSALM 104

JUDE 24-25

Praise ye the Lord!

A POET'S VERSION OF GENESIS

This is one of the loftiest and longest inspired poetry on creation and providence. The poem contains a complete cosmos.

Traces of the six days of creation are very evident, and though the creation of man is not mentioned, it is because man is himself the singer. Some have even detected marks of the divine rest upon the seventh day in verse 31. A hint is given of the new earth out of which the sinner shall be consumed (v.35). The spirit of praise to God runs through the whole poem.

Division:

After ascribing blessedness to the Lord, the Psalmist sings of light and the firmament, the works of Days 1 and 2 (vv.1-6).

By an easy transition, he describes the separation of water from the dry land, the growth of vegetation in Day 3 (vv.7-18).

Then the appointment of sun, moon and stars as guardians of day and night in Day 4 (vv.19-25).

The Psalmist sings of the life that fills land, air, sea in Days 5 and 6 (vv.24-30).

We may regard verses 31 to 35 a sabbath meditation.

While reading of God's wonderful works of creation, let us render due praise to Him. Amen.

THOUGHT: God created in six days.

PRAYER: Create within me a clean heart, O Father.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

PSALM 104:16

PSALM 64:9-10

*“What is man, that thou
art mindful of him?...”*

GOD THE GREAT CREATOR

Lebanon's cedars are emblematic of the Christian, in that they owe their planting entirely to the Lord. This is quite true of every child of God. He is not man-planted, nor self-planted. The mysterious hand of the divine Spirit dropped the living seed into a heart which He had Himself prepared for its reception. Every true heir of heaven owns the great Husbandman as his planter. Moreover, the cedars of Lebanon are not dependent upon man for their watering; they stand on the lofty rock, unmoistened by human irrigation; and yet our heavenly Father supplieth them. Thus it is with the Christian who has learned to live by faith. He is independent of man, even in temporal things; for his continued maintenance he looks to the Lord his God, and to Him alone. The dew of heaven is his portion, and the God of heaven is his fountain. Again, the cedars of Lebanon are not protected by any mortal power. They owe nothing to man for their preservation from stormy wind and tempest. They are God's trees, kept and preserved by Him, and by Him alone. It is precisely the same with the Christian. He is not a hot-house plant, sheltered from temptation; he stands in the most exposed position; he has no shelter, no protection, except this, that the broad wings of the eternal God always cover the cedars which He Himself has planted. Like cedars, believers are full of sap, having vitality enough to be ever green, even amid winter's snows. Lastly, the flourishing and majestic condition of the cedar is to the praise of God only. The Lord, even the Lord alone hath been everything unto the cedars, and, therefore David very sweetly puts it in one of the psalms, *"Praise ye the Lord, fruitful trees and all cedars."* In the believer there is nothing that can magnify man; he is planted, nourished, and protected by the Lord's own hand, and to Him let all the glory be ascribed.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: See God's hand in everything.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for Thy hand over every minute detail in my life.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

PSALM 104:16

COLOSSIANS 3:1-7

*“And be not drunk with wine...
but be filled with the Spirit.”*

A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

Without sap the tree cannot flourish or even exist. Vitality is essential to a Christian. There must be life, or we cannot be trees of the Lord. The mere name of being a Christian is but a dead thing, we must be indwelt and filled with the spirit of divine life. This life is mysterious. We do not understand the circulation of the sap, by what force it rises, and by what power it descends again. So the life within us is a sacred mystery. Regeneration is wrought by the Holy Ghost entering into man and becoming man's life....

What a secret thing the sap is! The roots go searching through the soil with their little spongioles, but we cannot see them suck out the various gases, or transmute the mineral into the vegetable; this work is done down in the dark. Our root is Christ Jesus, and our life is hid in Him; this is the secret of the Lord. The radix of the Christian life is as secret as the life itself. How permanently active is the sap in the cedar! In the Christian, the divine life is always full of energy — not always in fruit-bearing but in inward operations. The believer's graces, are not every one of them in constant motion? But his life never ceases to palpitate within. He is not always working for God, but his heart is always living upon Him. As the sap manifests itself in producing the foliage and fruit of the tree, so with a truly healthy Christian, his grace is externally manifested in his walk and conversation. If you talk with him, he cannot help speaking about Jesus. If you notice his actions, you will see that he has been with Jesus. He has so much sap within, that it must fill his conduct and conversation with life.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: To be Spirit-filled is to be Spirit-controlled.

PRAYER: Father, may I always allow Thy Spirit to control my life.

LORD'S DAY, APRIL 28

PSALM 105

EPHESIANS 5:14-21

"...him only shalt thou serve."

ANOTHER HISTORICAL PSALM

This historical Psalm is composed by King David, for the first 15 verses were used as a hymn at the carrying up of the Ark from the house of Obed (Edom). This is recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:7 onwards, *"Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren."*

Such a Psalm is appropriate for the occasion, for it describes the movements of the Lord's people and His care for them in every place they went. All these on account of the covenant of which the Ark they were moving was a symbol. Our last Psalm 104 talks of Genesis and this takes up its closing chapter and conducts us into Exodus and Numbers.

Division:

The first verses call up the people to praise Jehovah (vv.1-7)

The earliest days of the infant nation are described (vv.8-15)

The going into Egypt (vv.16-23)

The exodus from Egypt (vv.24-38)

The wilderness journey and entrance into Canaan (vv.39-45)

The review of sacred history to the children of Israel is a means of grace to keep them from straying from their God. So let us remember how God has saved us and gathered us into the church that we might keep on serving Him.

THOUGHT: It is important to review our Protestant history.

PRAYER: Save me, Father, from being led astray from my fathers' faith.

MONDAY, APRIL 29

PSALM 106

JOHN 8:34-36

*Be ye therefore faithful
as your Father is also faithful.*

A NATIONAL CONFESSION OF SINS

Psalm 106 begins and ends with Hallelujah, Praise ye the LORD.

The space between these two words is filled up with mournful details of Israel's sins and the extraordinary patience of God.

This sacred song bespeaks of the historical part of the Old Testament. Israel's history is here written with the view of showing up human sin even as the preceding Psalm 105 was composed to show Divine goodness. It is in fact a national confession.

It acknowledges the transgressions of Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan. It has devout petitions for forgiveness. Such a Psalm is suitable for use by succeeding generations and especially in time of national captivity.

While we study this holy Psalm, let us see ourselves in the Lord's ancient people, and bemoan our own provocations of the Most High. At the same time let us admire His infinite patience and adore Him because of it.

*"Thou blest, for ever blest, be He,
The same throughout eternity,
Our Israel's God adored!
Let all the people join the lay
And loudly, Hallelujah, say.
Praise ye the living Lord!"*

THOUGHT: Sin is the way of all flesh!

PRAYER: Father, forgive this people's transgressions.

TUESDAY, APRIL 30

PSALM 107

ACTS 8:22-23

*“Looking unto Jesus the author
and finisher of our faith...”*

A CHOICE SONG FOR THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD

Psalm 107 is a choice song for the redeemed of the Lord (v.2). Although it celebrates the various kinds of God's deliverances, and may be sung by any man preserved from danger, it magnifies rather the Lord for His protective care. The theme is thanksgiving and the reason for it. The construction of the Psalm is highly poetical.

Division:

1. The redemption of those in captivity (vv.1-3)
2. E.g. Travellers in their difficulties (vv.4-9)
3. Prisoners in iron bondage (vv.10-16)
4. The sick (vv.17-22)
5. Sailors tossed in a storm (vv.23-32)
6. God's judgment on the rebellious and mercies to His own afflicted (vv.33-42)
7. Conclusion: those who study the works and ways of the Lord shall see His praise and goodness.

Spurgeon writes: “If we complained less, and praised more, we should be happier, and God would be more glorified. Let us daily praise God for common mercies: common as we frequently call them, and yet so priceless, that when deprived of them we are ready to perish... But, beloved, the sweetest and the loudest note in our songs of praise should be of redeeming love. God's redeeming acts towards His chosen are for ever the favourite themes of their praise. If we know what redemption means, let us not withhold our sonnets of thanksgiving... Child of God, canst thou be silent? Awake, awake, ye heritors of glory, and lead your captivity captive, as ye cry with David, *‘Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.’*”

THOUGHT: We are a lost people.

PRAYER: Lord, save me!

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

PSALM 107:7

JOHN 12:24-26

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples... follow me."

FOLLOW GOD ALL THE WAY

Changeful experience often leads the anxious believer to enquire "Why is it thus with me?" I looked for light, but lo, darkness came; for peace, but behold trouble. I said in my heart, my mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved. Lord, Thou dost hide Thy face, and I am troubled. It was but yesterday that I could read my title clear; today my evidences are bedimmed, and my hopes are clouded. Yesterday I could climb to Pisgah's top, and view the landscape o'er, and rejoice with confidence in my future inheritance; today, my spirit has no hopes, but many fears; no joys, but much distress. Is this part of God's plan with me? Can this be the way in which God would bring me to heaven? Yes, it is even so. The eclipse of your faith, the darkness of your mind, the fainting of your hope, all these things are but parts of God's method of making you ripe for the great inheritance upon which you shall soon enter. These trials are for the testing and strengthening of your faith - they are waves that wash you further upon the rock - they are winds which waft your ship the more swiftly towards the desired haven. According to David's words, so it might be said of you, *"so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."* By honour and dishonour, by evil report and by good report, by plenty and by poverty, by joy and by distress, by persecution and by peace, by all these things is the life of your souls maintained, and by each of these are you helped on your way. Oh, think not, believer, that your sorrows are out of God's plan; they are necessary parts of it. *"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* Learn, then, even to *"count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Will I really follow Jesus wherever He leads?

PRAYER: Father, soften my heart to submit to Thy leading, trusting Thee each step of the way.

FRIDAY, MAY 3

PSALM 109

COLOSSIANS 3:23-25

We are on the Lord's side.

AN IMPRECATORY PSALM

To imprecate means to curse. And it is from the mouth of King David. Dispensational theologians like Scofield teach that such a Psalm is for the Hebrews of Old Testament times when they can hate their enemies and not for Christians today who are taught in the Sermon on the Mount (in the New Testament) to love their enemies. This is a mistaken idea as if God can contradict Himself. The Old Testament also teaches love for our enemies. Exodus 23:4-5 says, *"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him."* The love of enemy in the Old Testament extends even to the animals!

Where the Dispensational teachers have erred is they do not know that Jesus is talking of private enemies in the New Testament. "Vengeance is Mine." We should leave the matter to God.

In this Psalm 109, David is talking of an enemy intent on destroying him when he is doing the Lord's work. Such an enemy is not only against a person but also against the Lord whom he represents. Therefore such an imprecatory Psalm is right. It can be used whether you are a Hebrew or a Christian. Proof: *"Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies"* (Ps 139:19-22).

Let us not mix private and public justice. A murderer is righteously punished with death under public justice. If someone hates you, one to one, you, whether Hebrew or Christian, are exhorted to forgive and let God judge between you and him. In David's case, it is right for him to hate those who hate God. Amen.

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 139:21.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 139:23-24.)

SATURDAY, MAY 4

PSALM 109:4

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

*"I will therefore that
men pray every where..."*

PRAY EFFECTIVELY

Lying tongues were busy against the reputation of David, but he did not defend himself; he moved the case into a higher court, and pleaded before the great King Himself.

Prayer is the safest method of replying to words of hatred. The Psalmist prayed in no cold-hearted manner, he gave himself to the exercise — threw his whole soul and heart into it — straining every sinew and muscle, as Jacob did when wrestling with the angel. Thus, and thus only, shall any of us speed at the throne of grace. As a shadow has no power because there is no substance in it, even so that supplication, in which a man's proper self is not thoroughly present in agonizing earnestness and vehement desire, is utterly ineffectual, for it lacks that which would give it force. "Fervent prayer," says an old divine, "like a cannon planted at the gates of heaven, makes them fly open." The common fault with the most of us is our readiness to yield to distractions. Our thoughts go roving hither and thither, and we make little progress towards our desired end. Like quicksilver our mind will not hold together, but rolls off this way and that. How great an evil this is! It injures us, and what is worse, it insults our God. What should we think of a petitioner, if, while having an audience with a prince, he should be playing with a feather or catching a fly?

Continuance and perseverance are intended in the expression of our text. David did not cry once, and then relapse into silence; his holy clamour was continued till it brought down the blessing. Prayer must not be our chance work, but our daily business, our habit and vocation. As artists give themselves to their models, and poets to their classical pursuits, so must we addict ourselves to prayer. We must be immersed in prayer as in our element, and so pray without ceasing. Lord, teach us so to pray that we may be more and more prevalent in supplication.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: How can I pray without ceasing?

PRAYER: Father, may I be very aware of Thee as I enter into Thy presence.

LORD'S DAY, MAY 5

PSALM 110

MATTHEW 22:41-46

*"The fear of the LORD
is the beginning of knowledge..."*

HOW IS DAVID'S SON HIS LORD?

"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps 110:1). This verse is quoted by our Lord to silence the Pharisees who had badgered Jesus many a time with loaded questions to catch Him.

This is recorded in Matthew 22:41-46, *"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."*

The answer taught us by the Holy Spirit is that the Son of David is God's Son by the Virgin Birth. So He is called "Lord" by David. If the Jews knew this they would not say no. If they did, then why didn't they submit to Jesus, the Christ? Instead of catching Jesus, they were caught!

The subject of this Psalm is the Priest-King. Although David performed some acts linked to the priesthood, yet he was no priest. He belonged to the kingly tribe of Judah. Moreover David was far too devout a man to thrust himself into the priestly office uncalled.

The Priest-King here spoken of is David's Lord, who is typified by Melchizedek and looked for by the Jews as the Messiah. He is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. This Psalm describes the Kingly Priest, His followers, His battles and His victories.

THOUGHT: Puny man tries to outwit God!

PRAYER: Father, pay them back in their own coin.

MONDAY, MAY 6

PSALM 111

REVELATION 4:9-11

*Worship not the creature
more than the Creator.*

THE LORD IN CREATION, PROVIDENCE AND GRACE

This is an alphabetical Psalm. It teaches the mightiness of God in creation, providence and grace. Such knowledge becomes man's true wisdom as pointed out by Calvin in the opening chapter of his Theology.

Many are ignorant of what their Creator has done and hence they are foolish in heart. They never praise the Lord. A Christian should always praise the Lord through the knowledge he has received of Him as Creator, Provider, Redeemer.

*All my heart shall praise Jehovah,
Before the congregation of the
righteous;
Deeds of goodness are the deeds of
Jehovah,
Earnestly desired of all them that have
pleasure therein;
For his righteousness endureth for
ever,
Glorious and honourable is his work;
He hath made his wonderful works to
be remembered,
In Jehovah is compassion and
goodness;
Jehovah hath given meat to them that
fear him,
Keeping his covenant for ever,
Learning his people the power of his
works,
Making them to possess the heritage of
the heathen;
Nought save truth and equity are the
works of his hands,
Ordered and sure are his commands,
Planted fast for ever and ever,
Righteous and true are his testimonies;
Salvation hath he sent unto his people,
Their covenant hath he made fast for
ever;
Upright and holy is his name,
Verily, the fear of the Lord is the
beginning of wisdom,
Yea, a good understanding have all
they that do thereafter;
Zealously shall he be praised for ever.*

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 19.)

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to see Thy wonderful works in Creation.

TUESDAY, MAY 7

PSALM 111:9

ACTS 3:25-26

*“Ye are the children
... of the covenant...”*

JOY FROM THE COVENANT

The Lord's people delight in the covenant itself. It is an unfailing source of consolation to them so often as the Holy Spirit leads them into its banqueting house and waves its banner of love. They delight to contemplate the antiquity of that covenant, remembering that before the day-star knew its place, or planets ran their round, the interests of the saints were made secure in Christ Jesus. It is peculiarly pleasing to them to remember the sureness of the covenant, while meditating upon *"the sure mercies of David"* (Isa 55:3). They delight to celebrate it as "signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well." It often makes their hearts dilate with joy to think of its immutability, as a covenant which neither time nor eternity, life nor death, shall ever be able to violate — a covenant as old as eternity and as everlasting as the Rock of ages. They rejoice also to feast upon the fulness of this covenant for they see in it all things provided for them. God is their portion, Christ their companion, the Spirit their Comforter, earth their lodge, and heaven their home. They see in it an inheritance reserved and entailed to every soul possessing an interest in its ancient and eternal deed of gift. Their eyes sparkled when they saw it as a treasure-trove in the Bible; but oh! how their souls were gladdened when they saw in the last will and testament of their divine kinsman, that it was bequeathed to them! More especially it is the pleasure of God's people to contemplate the graciousness of this covenant. They see that the law was made void because it was a covenant of works and depended upon merit, but this they perceive to be enduring because grace is the basis, grace the condition, grace the strain, grace the bulwark, grace the foundation, grace the topstone. The covenant is a treasury of wealth, a granary of food, a fountain of life, a store-house of salvation, a charter of peace, and a haven of joy.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: God gives and keeps His covenant.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for the assurance I can have in Thy Word for Thou art a covenant-keeping God.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

PSALM 112

GALATIANS 5:22-26

"...faith without works is dead."

THE RIGHTEOUS MAN IS BLESSED

Psalm 112 is companion to the preceding, Psalm 111. It is another alphabetical Psalm. Even in the number of verses, and the clauses of each verse, it coincides with its predecessor. Let the reader carefully compare the two Psalms line by line.

The subject before us is "the blessedness of the righteous man." It bears the same relation to the preceding which the moon does to the sun. For while the first declares the glory of God, the second reflects the brightness in men that are born of God. God is here praised for the manifestation of glory which is seen in His people, just as in the preceding Psalm He is magnified for His own personal acts.

Psalm 111 praises the Father. Psalm 112 tells of His children renewed after His own image. Psalm 112, which commences with "*Praise ye the LORD*" is intended to give God all the honour which is reflected in the righteous.

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings" (v.7). Spurgeon says, "Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea, '*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD*' (Exod 14:13). For if you give way to fear when you hear of evil tidings, you will be unable to meet the trouble with that calm composure which nerves for duty, and sustains under adversity. How can you glorify God if you play the coward? Saints have often sung God's high praises in the fires, but will your doubting and desponding, as if you had none to help you, magnify the Most High? Then take courage, and relying in sure confidence upon the faithfulness of your covenant God, '*...let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*' (John 14:27)."

THOUGHT: Do something good for Jesus every day.

PRAYER: Father, help me to do good to all who need help as I am saved to serve others.

THURSDAY, MAY 9

PSALM 113

HEBREWS 13:12-16

*“...Ye cannot serve
God and mammon.”*

THE BEGINNING OF THE HALLEL PSALM

This Psalm is one of pure praise and requires no explanation. The subject is the greatness and condescending goodness of the God of Israel in lifting up the poor and needy from their low estate.

With this Psalm begins the Hallel or Hallelujah of the Jews which was sung at their solemn feasts. It commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Therefore, the Psalm opens with *"Praise ye the LORD, Praise, O, ye servants of the LORD,"* and no longer servants of Pharaoh.

Its allusions to the poor in the dust and the needy on the dunghill are all in keeping with Israel in Egypt. And so also is the reference to the birth of many children where they were least expected.

*Hallelujah, praise the Lord
Praise, ye servants, praise his name!
Be Jehovah's praise ador'd.
Now and evermore the same!
Where the orient sun-beams gleam,
Where they sink in ocean's stream,
Through the circuit of his rays
Be your theme Jehovah's praise.*

(Richard Mant)

THOUGHT: God the Almighty is the best Master to serve.

PRAYER: Help me to serve Thee, Father, with my whole heart and soul, mind and strength.

FRIDAY, MAY 10

PSALM 113:8

2 TIMOTHY 4:8

“...worship him that liveth
for ever and ever,
and cast their crowns
before the throne...”

SET WITH PRINCES

Our spiritual privileges are of the highest order. *"With princes"* is the place of select society. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Speak of select society, there is none like this! *"We are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood."* "We are come unto the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven." The saints have courtly audience: princes have admittance to royalty when common people must stand afar off. The child of God has free access to the inner courts of heaven. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." *"Let us therefore come boldly,"* says the apostle, *"unto the throne of grace."* Among princes there is abundant wealth, but what is the abundance of princes compared with the riches of believers? for *"all things are yours... And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."* *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"*

Princes have peculiar power. A prince of heaven's empire has great influence: he wields a sceptre in his own domain; he sits upon Jesus' throne, for He *"hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."* We reign over the united kingdom of time and eternity. Princes, again, have special honour. We may look down upon all earth-born dignity from the eminence upon which grace has placed us. For what is human grandeur to this, that He *"hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"*? We share the honour of Christ, and compared with this, earthly splendours are not worth a thought. Communion with Jesus is a richer gem than ever glittered in imperial diadem. Union with the Lord is a coronet of beauty outshining all the blaze of imperial pomp.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Do I appreciate the honour that is prepared for me?

PRAYER: Father, lift my eyes above earthly splendours!

SATURDAY, MAY 11

PSALM 114

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10

Lord, I need Thee every hour.

SONG OF THE EXODUS

This sublime song of the Exodus has reached its climax. It describes in sublimest language God leading forth His people through the wilderness to Canaan. Here is Isaac Watts' (1712) restatement in his own words.

*When Israel, freed from Pharaoh's
hand,
Left the proud tyrant and his land,
The tribes with cheerful homage own
Their King, and Judah was his throne.
Across the deep their journey lay,
The deep divides to make them way;
The streams of Jordan saw, and fled
With backward current to their head.*

*The mountains shook like frightened
sheep,
Like lambs the little hillocks leap;*

*Not Sinai on her base could stand,
Conscious of sovereign power at hand.
What power could make the deep
divide?
Make Jordan backward roll his tide?*

*Why did ye leap, ye little hills?
And whence the fright that Sinai feels?
Let ev'ry mountain, ev'ry flood,
Retire, and know th' approaching God,
The King of Israel! see him here:
Tremble, thou earth, adore and fear.
He thunders — and all nature mourns;
The rock to standing pools he turns;
Flints spring with fountains at his
word,
And fires and seas confess their Lord.*

THOUGHT: We can see God's mighty works!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I believe.

LORD'S DAY, MAY 12

PSALM 115

JAMES 3:6-13

Jesus, come into my heart.

“WHERE IS NOW THEIR GOD?”

In the former Psalm, the past wonders of God were recounted. In the present Psalm, God is entreated to glorify Himself because the heathens were insulting. In the absence of miracles, they asked, "Where is now their God?"

The Psalmist is evidently indignant that the worshippers of the heathen idols should be able to taunt the people who worship the only living and true God. Having spent his indignation in sarcasm upon the images and their makers, he proceeds to exhort the House of Israel to trust God and bless His Name. He closes with an exulting Hallelujah. Should not the living sons of men extol their living God?

Division:

1. Entreaty of God to vindicate His own honor (vv.1-2)
2. Contemptuous description of false gods and their worshippers (vv.3-8)
3. Exhortation to the faithful to trust in God (vv.9-15)
4. Explanation of God's relationship to their present state (v.16)
5. Reminder that not the dead but the living must praise God (vv.17-18)

When the prayers and tears of the godly seem to be unregarded, and their miseries are rather increased, then do the wicked multiply their taunts and jeers (v.2). Our afflictions and depressions of spirit shall not cause us to suspend our praises (v.18). The spiritually dead cannot praise God, but the life within us constrains us to do so. Even eternity cannot exhaust the reasons why God should be glorified. Though the dead cannot, and the wicked will not, and the careless do not praise God, yet we will shout "Hallelujah" for ever and ever.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Idols are false gods and their makers are dumb like them.

PRAYER: Father, help me to praise Thy Name while I have breath.

MONDAY, MAY 13

PSALM 116

COLOSSIANS 1:3-6

*“...love the Lord thy God
with all thy heart...”*

**A PERSONAL SONG SPEAKING
WITH GRATITUDE TO THE
LORD**

A commentator has a threefold division of this Psalm. He says, "This Psalm is a threefold engagement of the Psalmist unto thanksgiving unto God, for His mercy unto him, and in particular for some notable delivery of him from death, both bodily and spiritual. The first engagement is that he shall out of love have recourse unto God by prayer (vv.1-2). The reasons and motives whereof are set down, because of his former deliverance (vv.3-8).

The second engagement is to a holy conversation (v.9) and the reasons are in verses 10 to 13.

The third engagement is to continual praise and service, and specially to pay those vows before the church which he had made in days of sorrow, the reasons are given in verses 14 to 19."

It is of little use to be harping on the string of man's imperfection and deceitfulness; it is infinitely better to praise the perfection and faithfulness of God. The Lord has rendered so much mercy to us that we ought to look about us, and look within us, and see what can be done by us to manifest our gratitude. We ought not only do what is plainly before us, but also with holy ingenuity to search out various ways by which we may render fresh praises unto our God.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?

PRAYER: Father, help me to pay my vows unto Thee now in the presence of all Thy people.

TUESDAY, MAY 14

PSALM 117

REVELATION 15

*“...Go ye into all the world,
and preach the gospel
to every creature.”*

THE SHORTEST PSALM IN THE HEART OF THE BIBLE

This Psalm, which is very little in its letter, is exceedingly large in its spirit; for, bursting beyond all bounds of race or nationality, it calls upon all mankind to praise the name of the Lord. In all probability it was frequently used as a brief hymn suitable for almost every occasion, and especially when the time for worship was short. Perhaps, it was also sung at the commencement or at the close of other Psalms, just as we now use the doxology. It would have served either to open a service or to conclude it. It is both short and sweet. The same divine Spirit which expatiates in the 119th, here condenses his utterances into two short verses, but yet the same infinite fulness is present and perceptible. It may be worth noting that this is one of the shortest chapter of the Scriptures and the central portion of the whole Bible.

"For his merciful kindness is great toward us..." (v.2). The Lord is kind to us as His creatures, and merciful to us as sinners, hence His merciful kindness to us as sinful creatures. This mercy has been very great, or powerful. The mighty grace of God has prevailed even as the waters of the flood prevailed over the earth: breaking over all bounds, it has flowed towards all portions of the multiplied race of man.

In Christ Jesus, God has shown mercy mixed with kindness, and that to the very highest degree. We can all join in this grateful acknowledgement, and in the praise which is therefore due. *"And the truth of the LORD endureth for ever."* He has kept His covenant promise that in the seed of Abraham should all nations of the earth be blessed, and He will eternally keep every single promise of that covenant to all those who put their trust in Him. This should be a cause of constant and grateful praise, wherefore the Psalm concludes as it began, with another Hallelujah, *"Praise ye the LORD."*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: All nations are comprehended in the mind of God.

PRAYER: Help me, O Father, to see as Thou seest.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

PSALM 118

1 TIMOTHY 1:15-17

Jesus, my best Friend!

DAVID AND THE GREATER DAVID

This Psalm seems to describe either David or some other man of God who was appointed to a high honour in Israel. This elect champion found himself rejected by his friends and at the same time opposed by his enemies. Trusting God he battles for his appointed place and in due time he obtains it in such a way as to display the power of God in his life. He then goes up to the House of God to offer sacrifices to express gratitude for the divine interposition. All the people blessed him, wishing him abundant prosperity. This person who we think is David typified our Lord.

Division:

1. The faithful are to magnify the everlasting mercy of the Lord (vv.1-4)
2. The Psalmist tells of his experience and an expression of his faith (vv.5-18)
3. The Psalmist asks admittance into the house of God (vv.19-21)
4. The priests and people recognise their ruler and bless him (vv.22-27)
5. The grateful hero exalts God the ever merciful One (vv.28-29).

Does today's reading meet the eye of a child of God anxious about temporals? You trust in Jesus, and only in Jesus, for your salvation, then why are you troubled?

“Christian, mix not only thy wine with water, do not alloy thy gold of faith with the dross of human confidence. Wait thou only upon God, and let thine expectation be from Him. Let the sandy foundations of terrestrial trust be the choice of fools, but do thou, like one who foresees the storm, build for thyself an abiding place upon the Rock of Ages.”
(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.

PRAYER: Father, Thou art my strength and song, and art become my salvation.

THURSDAY, MAY 16

PSALM 118:12

DEUTERONOMY 1:29-30

*“Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD
your God he shall fight for you.”*

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

Our Lord Jesus, by His death, did not purchase a right to a part of us only, but to the entire man. He contemplated in His passion "the sanctification of us wholly, spirit, soul, and body; that in this triple kingdom He Himself might reign supreme without a rival. It is the business of the newborn nature which God has given to the regenerate to assert the rights of the Lord Jesus Christ. My soul, so far as thou art a child of God, thou must conquer all the rest of thyself which yet remains unblest; thou must subdue all thy powers and passions to the silver sceptre of Jesus' gracious reign, and thou must never be satisfied till He who is King by purchase becomes also King by gracious coronation, and reigns in thee supreme. Seeing, then, that sin has no right to any part of us, we go about a good and lawful warfare when we seek, in the name of God, to drive it out. O my body, thou art a member of Christ: shall I tolerate thy subjection to the prince of darkness? O my soul, Christ has suffered for thy sins, and redeemed thee with His most precious blood: shall I suffer thy memory to become a storehouse of evil, or thy passions to be firebrands of iniquity? Shall I surrender my judgment to be perverted by error, or my will to be led in fetters of iniquity? No, my soul, thou art Christ's, and sin hath no right to thee.

Be courageous concerning this, O Christian! be not dispirited, as though your spiritual enemies could never be destroyed. You are able to overcome them — not in your own strength — the weakest of them would be too much for you in that; but you can and shall overcome them through the blood of the Lamb. Do not ask, "How shall I dispossess them, for they are greater and mightier than I?" but go to the strong for strength, wait humbly upon God, and the mighty God of Jacob will surely come to the rescue, and you shall sing of victory through His grace.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?...”* (Ps 42:11)

PRAYER: I hope in Thee, Father, and I praise Thee still in the face of adversities.

FRIDAY, MAY 17

PSALM 119:1-16

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5

*The Bible is the inerrant,
infallible, inspired Word of God.*

**THE LONGEST PSALM
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF
GOD'S WORD**

Psalm 119 is composed after the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet: Aleph (A), Beth (B), and so on. They are cast in eight stanzas after every letter, so they add up to 176 verses. The theme of the importance of knowing and keeping the Word of God, the commandments, statutes and judgments recurs all the time. This is to keep us straight, from wandering into sin and from falling into disaster.

"Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart. Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps 119:65-72).

Professor William Lyon Phelps of Yale University says, "A knowledge of the Bible without a college education is better than a college education without the Bible." How true this is, as reflected in verses 97 to 100: *"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."*

With these introductory words, may you be moved to seek to be blessed by studying this Psalm.

THOUGHT: The Word of God is none other than the Bible.

PRAYER: O Father, help me to be a diligent student of Thy Word.

SATURDAY, MAY 18

PSALM 119:15

PSALM 1

*“...in his law doth he
meditate day and night.”*

MEDITATE UPON GOD’S WORD

There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in His service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. Truth is something like the cluster of the vine: if we would have wine from it, we must bruise it; we must press and squeeze it many times. The bruisers feet must come down joyfully upon the bunches, or else the juice will not flow; and they must well tread the grapes, or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted. So we must, by meditation, tread the clusters of truth, if we would get the wine of consolation therefrom. Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth, but the process which really supplies the muscle, and the nerve, and the sinew, and the bone, is the process of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with the inner life. Our souls are not nourished merely by listening awhile to this, and then to that, and then to the other part of divine truth. Hearing, reading, marking, and learning, all require inwardly digesting to complete their usefulness, and the inward digesting of the truth lies for the most part in meditating upon it. Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord, and be this our resolve today, "I will meditate in Thy precepts."

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Is Psalm 119:97 true in my life?

PRAYER: Forgive me, Father, for my lack of love for Thy Word.

LORD'S DAY, MAY 19

PSALM 119:37

ECCLESIASTES 12:8-14

My life is not mine own.

“QUICKEN THOU ME”

There are divers kinds of vanity. The cap and bells of the fool, the mirth of the world, the dance, the lyre, and the cup of the dissolute, all these men know to be vanities; they wear upon their forefront their proper name and title. Far more treacherous are those equally vain things, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. A man may follow vanity as truly in the counting-house as in the theatre. If he be spending his life in amassing wealth, he passes his days in a vain show. Unless we follow Christ, and make our God the great object of life, we only differ in appearance from the most frivolous. It is clear that there is much need of the first prayer of our text.

"Quicken Thou me in Thy way." The Psalmist confesses that he is dull, heavy, lumpy, all but dead. Perhaps, dear reader, you feel the same. We are so sluggish that the best motives cannot quicken us, apart from the Lord Himself. What! will not hell quicken me? Shall I think of sinners perishing, and yet not be awakened? Will not heaven quicken me? Can I think of the reward that awaiteth the righteous, and yet be cold? Will not death quicken me? Can I think of dying, and standing before my God, and yet be slothful in my Master's service? Will not Christ's love constrain me? Can I think of His dear wounds, can I sit at the foot of His cross, and not be stirred with fervency and zeal? It seems so! No mere consideration can quicken us to zeal, but God Himself must do it, hence the cry, *"Quicken Thou me."* The Psalmist breathes out his whole soul in vehement pleadings: his body and his soul unite in prayer. *"Turn away mine eyes,"* says the body; *"Quicken Thou me,"* cries the soul. This is a fit prayer for every day. O Lord, hear it in my case today.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: I must not linger in the world.

PRAYER: Father, may I live my life very conscious of what Thy Son has done for me.

MONDAY, MAY 20

PSALM 119:33-40

1 TIMOTHY 2:8

“...let your requests
be made known unto God.”

PRAY, PRAY, PRAY

What a prayer-laden section this is! A sense of dependence and a consciousness of extreme need pervade this prayer-portion, with its succession of pleas.

In verse 33, the Psalmist prays for direction in its more superficial form. There were several paths leading down to death, but one path leads to life. So he besought Jehovah to show him His way, and he vowed that once seeing it he would follow it to the end. *"Teach me"* literally means "point out" or "indicate to me" and hence "to show."

The phrase *"I shall keep it unto the end"* can be rendered, "So that I may attend to it as a reward" implying that the result of Jehovah's teaching is obedience, and this obedience is a reward from Him.

Verse 34 is an enlargement of verse 33. Having been shown the way of truth, the Psalmist seeks the gift of understanding it, in order that he might apply it to every phase of his life. Spiritual discernment is a spiritual endowment. *"Understanding"* means mental comprehension, different from mere direction. The repeated phrase *"whole heart"* stresses the importance of undivided obedience and love to all God reveals through His Word. "The heart is never one with God till it is one within itself."

Then in verse 35, having received visual and mental perception of the way, David seeks power to walk in this Divine path. In verse 36, knowing the waywardness of his own heart, David confesses his weakness, rather than defend his own strength.

As it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, it is useless for the eyes to see, the mind to understand, and the feet ready to go the way of truth, if the heart be not inclined thereunto also. What is your own heart condition?

(Herbert Lockyer)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 119:36.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 119:33-36.)

TUESDAY, MAY 21

PSALM 119:49

ISAIAH 43:22-25

*"... with great mercies
will I gather thee."*

GOD WILL DO AS HE HAS SAID

Whatever your especial need may be, you may readily find some promise in the Bible suited to it. Are you faint and feeble because your way is rough and you are weary? Here is the promise — *"He giveth power to the faint."* When you read such a promise, take it back to the great Promiser, and ask Him to fulfil His own word. Are you seeking after Christ, and thirsting for closer communion with Him? This promise shines like a star upon you — *"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."* Take that promise to the throne continually; do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this — *"Lord, Thou hast said it, do as Thou hast said."* Are you distressed because of sin, and burdened with the heavy load of your iniquities? Listen to these words — *"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."* You have no merit of your own to plead why He should pardon you, but plead His written engagements and He will perform them. Are you afraid lest you should not be able to hold on to the end, lest, after having thought yourself a child of God, you should prove a castaway? If that is your state, take this word of grace to the throne and plead it: *"The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of My love shall not depart from thee."* If you have lost the sweet sense of the Saviour's presence, and are seeking Him with a sorrowful heart, remember the promises: *"Return unto me, and I will return unto you," "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee."* Banquet your faith upon God's own word, and whatever your fears or wants, repair to the Bank of Faith with your Father's note of hand, saying, *"Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: My God can be trusted.

PRAYER: Take my unbelief away, Father, and grant me faith and trust in Thee.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

PSALM 119:53

COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

*“...but if ye through the Spirit do
mortify the deeds of the body,
ye shall live.”*

DETEST SIN

My soul, feelest thou this holy shuddering at the sins of others? for otherwise thou lackest inward holiness. David's cheeks were wet with rivers of waters because of prevailing unholiness; Jeremiah desired eyes like fountains that he might lament the iniquities of Israel, and Lot was vexed with the conversation of the men of Sodom. Those upon whom the mark was set in Ezekiel's vision, were those who sighed and cried for the abominations of Jerusalem. It cannot but grieve gracious souls to see what pains men take to go to hell. They know the evil of sin experimentally, and they are alarmed to see others flying like moths into its blaze. Sin makes the righteous shudder, because it violates a holy law, which it is to every man's highest interest to keep; it pulls down the pillars of the commonwealth. Sin in others horrifies a believer, because it puts him in mind of the baseness of his own heart: when he sees a transgressor he cries with the saint mentioned by Bernard, "He fell to-day, and I may fall tomorrow." Sin to a believer is horrible, because it crucified the Saviour; he sees in every iniquity the nails and spear. How can a saved soul behold that cursed kill-Christ sin without abhorrence? Say, my heart, dost thou sensibly join in all this? It is an awful thing to insult God to His face. The good God deserves better treatment, the great God claims it, the just God will have it, or repay His adversary to his face. An awakened heart trembles at the audacity of sin, and stands alarmed at the contemplation of its punishment. How monstrous a thing is rebellion! How direful a doom is prepared for the ungodly! My soul, never laugh at sin's fooleries, lest thou come to smile at sin itself. It is thine enemy, and thy Lord's enemy — view it with detestation, for so only canst thou evidence the possession of holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Is sin my bosom buddy?

PRAYER: Forgive me, Father, for my many sins. Help me to hate them utterly and live with a view of holiness in every aspect of my life.

THURDAY, MAY 23

PSALM 119:57

MATTHEW 6:19-20; HEBREWS 13:5

*“And having food and raiment
let us be therewith content.”*

“I HAVE ALL THINGS”

Look at thy possessions, O believer, and compare thy portion with the lot of thy fellowmen. Some of them have their portion in the field; they are rich, and their harvests yield them a golden increase; but what are harvests compared with thy God, who is the God of harvests? What are bursting granaries compared with Him, who is the Husbandman, and feeds thee with the bread of heaven? Some have their portion in the city; their wealth is abundant, and flows to them in constant streams, until they become a very reservoir of gold; but what is gold compared with thy God? Thou couldst not live on it; thy spiritual life could not be sustained by it. Put it on a troubled conscience, and could it allay its pangs? Apply it to a desponding heart, and see if it could stay a solitary groan, or give one grief the less? But thou hast God, and in Him thou hast more than gold or riches ever could buy. Some have their portion in that which most men love — applause and fame; but ask thyself, is not thy God more to thee than that? What if a myriad clarions should be loud in thine applause, would this prepare thee to pass the Jordan, or cheer thee in prospect of judgment? No, there are griefs in life which wealth cannot alleviate; and there is the deep need of a dying hour, for which no riches can provide. But when thou hast God for thy portion, thou hast more than all else put together. In Him every want is met, whether in life or in death. With God for thy portion thou art rich indeed, for He will supply thy need, comfort thy heart, assuage thy grief, guide thy steps, be with thee in the dark valley, and then take thee home, to enjoy Him as thy portion for ever. *“I have enough* (Hebrew: rab),” said Esau; this is the best thing a worldly man can say, but Jacob replies, *“I have all things* (Hebrew: kol)” which is a note too high for carnal minds.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: “With God for thy portion thou art rich.”

PRAYER: Father, let me see the spiritual wealth that I have in Thee, so that I will not hanker after the corrupt riches of earth.

FRIDAY, MAY 24

PSALM 119:129-136

MATTHEW 22:29

*"...blessed are they that hear
the word of God, and keep it."*

THY TESTIMONIES ARE WONDERFUL

"Thy testimonies" (Ps 119:129): Robert, King of Sicily, said, "The Scriptures are dearer to me than my kingdom; and if I must be deprived of one of them, I had rather lose my diadem than the Scriptures." David declared that he obeyed with his *"soul."* Not only with head and hand did he keep the testimonies, but with his soul, his truest and most real self, held fast to them, and they became part and parcel of his life.

"Thy Words" (Ps 119:130): *"Entrance"* means an opening, unfolding, unveiling. Both *"light"* and *"understanding"* come through such an unveiling. We see the sun by its own light. The same is true of Scripture: we see light in its light. Then it gives understanding also... .

The Divine Word, entering the chambers of the heart, is for the *"simple"*: those who are characterised by simplicity, who have a character opposed to all craftiness, underhandedness, and scheming.

"Thy Commandments" (Ps 119:131): The open mouth implies an attitude of expectancy. "The mouth of the inward man, which in effect is the heart" (Ambrose). David thirsted for the water of the Word. Do we share ... the same burning desire to obey all we read?

Psalm 119:132-134 is a triple intercession that comes from an intense soul.

In the two concluding verses (Ps 119:135-136), we see two faces: God's benign, glorious face and the tear-stained face of His servant caused by the wicked's rejection of God's law.

Reader, treasure His Word and live out His Word. May grace be ours to keep our hearts free from sin, but our eyes ever wet with tears of compassion over those whose hearts are not right with God!

(Herbert Lockyer)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 119:130.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 119:133.)

SATURDAY, MAY 25
PSALM 119:169-176
EPHESIANS 3:3-5

*"...If ye continue in my word,
then are ye my disciples indeed."*

GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING

In Psalm 119:169-172, David prays for three things: that God would hear his prayer; give him understanding and deliverance. And praise is promised for answered prayers. Lips requesting favours become rejoicing lips. To praise God is the noblest employment of life, and one that glorifies Him.

In Psalm 119:173-175, David confesses that he could do nothing and is nothing of himself. First, he prays directly: *"Let thine hand help me..."* Second, there is the indirect plea: *"...let thy judgments help me."* Having chosen God's precepts to live by, and have them in his daily delight, his soul lives a new life, and his lips praise both God Himself and His Word, the twin sources of assistance in every time of need.

In Psalm 119:176, David closes his magnificent Psalm in deepest self-humiliation, begging to be sought out like a lost or perishing sheep. The blessed truth to note is that although a straying sheep, David is still God's servant, and as such he desires Him to seek him out, and bring him back to the fold. Had he been only a lost sheep he would not have prayed to be sought. But being also a servant he had the deep desire to pray for restoration, forgiveness, and taken into service again by his gracious Master.

In spite of his past and present failures, David presents a most forcible argument: *"...I do not forget thy commandments."* With a loving memory of them, and a longing to know and obey them better, he knows that he is not utterly lost but is still under the Shepherd's eye. He has left the King's Highway for By-path meadow, but yearns to be back in full fellowship with the King.

Reader, are you yearning for the same thing?

(Herbert Lockyer)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 119:169.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 119:170.)

LORD'S DAY, MAY 26

PSALM 120

ROMANS 2:1-11

*“Whoso keepeth his mouth
and his tongue keepeth
his soul from troubles.”*

THE LYING TONGUE

Commenting on the language of this Psalm, some scholars think this is written by David against Doeg, who falsely reported on him to Saul. David who came to remove the Ark, remembered former days when he received from Ahimelech the priest shewbread from the Tabernacle, for he was hungry. This was noted by Doeg, his Edomite enemy.

Here David pours out the complaints against him to the Arbiter of right and wrong, *"from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue."* If you compare this psalm with Psalm 52 (where the title states clearly, "A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech"), the language is the same, *"Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully."*

*Woe's me that I in Mesech am
A sojourner so long;
That I in tabernacles dwell
To Kedar that belong.*

*My soul with him that hateth peace
Hath long a dweller been;
I am for peace; but when I speak,
For battle they are keen.*

*My soul distracted mourns and pines
To reach that peaceful shore,
Where all the weary are at rest,
And troublers vex no more.*

THOUGHT: My enemy devises my hurt.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, that Thou art my Judge.

MONDAY, MAY 27

PSALM 120:5

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-7

*"Let your light so shine
before men..."*

HERE ON EARTH BY GOD'S WILL

As a Christian you have to live in the midst of an ungodly world, and it is of little use for you to cry *"Woe is me."* Jesus did not pray that you should be taken out of the world, and what He did not pray for, you need not desire. Better far in the Lord's strength to meet the difficulty, and glorify Him in it. The enemy is ever on the watch to detect inconsistency in your conduct; be therefore very holy. Remember that the eyes of all are upon you, and that more is expected from you than from other men. Strive to give no occasion for blame. Let your goodness be the only fault they can discover in you. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, *"We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."* Seek to be useful as well as consistent. Perhaps you think, "If I were in a more favourable position I might serve the Lord's cause, but I cannot do any good where I am;" but the worse the people are among whom you live, the more need have they of your exertions; if they be crooked, the more necessity that you should set them straight; and if they be perverse, the more need have you to turn their proud hearts to the truth. Where should the physician be but where there are many sick? Where is honour to be won by the soldier but in the hottest fire of the battle? And when weary of the strife and sin that meets you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried on beds of down to heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you will not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Therefore, *"stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Why does God keep me on earth?

PRAYER: Keep me focused, Father, on Thy mission for me here on earth.

TUESDAY, MAY 28

PSALM 121

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.”*

THE TRAVELLER'S PSALM

The context of this Psalm is a vast desert country through which the psalmist is travelling. The most trying situation is a plain full of nothing but burning sand, under a burning sun. A saving feature is the sudden appearance of a hill in the distance. Such a hill is a shelter for the traveller, where there are rock caves and a source of flowing water. Engedi is such a place where tourists to the Holy Land visit. It is an oasis.

We are travellers on a spiritual journey. On such a journey the weary traveller also needs succour. We need first of all to come to Golgotha, the hill where our Saviour was crucified for our sins to give us life. But even before that, we have to go to Mt Sinai where Moses gave us God's law. We cannot keep the law, and this drives us to Christ.

How many mountains with spiritual significance are there in the Bible that you can count? Scofield gives us a list of twenty. What spiritual significance connected with the following selected ten can you find?

Ararat	Olivet
Carmel	Seir
Horeb	Sinai
Moriah	Tabor
Nebo	Zion

THOUGHT: “Lest I forget Gethsemane, Lest I forget Thy agony, Lest I forget Thy love for me, Lead me to Calvary.”

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 24:3-4.)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

PSALM 122

JUDE 2

*"But glory, honour, and peace,
to every man that worketh good,
to the Jew first, and also to the
Gentile."*

PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM

We have conducted ten pilgrimages to the Holy Land from 1983 to 2001 and we go in the spirit of Psalm 122: *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."* Why must we go to Jerusalem? "Because it is the City founded by the Lord Himself. Jerusalem is Zion, the City of David and Jerusalem is the place God has appointed His temple to be built."

In spite of the sins of God's people that had led to the destruction of both Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple and the dispersion of God's people to the ends of the earth, God has promised to regather them and build up the City again. God began to bring back the wandering Jews after the end of World War I (1914-18). God gave them their land (partly) again when Israel became an Independent Nation on May 14, 1948. (Editor's Note: In 2018, Israel has become a super power. Her population has risen from 650,000 to almost 8.5 million and Jerusalem has almost 860,000.)

This restoration that is recorded in thirty-four passages in the Old Testament is in preparation for the return of Christ (the Greater Son of David) to earth, to usher in the rule of a thousand years of peace.

In contrast to Jerusalem, Samaria (the capital city of the Ten Northern Tribes) was destroyed and according to Micah, it will never be restored (Micah 1:6). Today, if you visit Samaria you will see it in heaps.

Prior to the Lord's Return there are more and more nations from all over the world making pilgrimages to the City God has chosen. And you who go and pray for the peace of Jerusalem are blessed.

THOUGHT: What is my attitude toward the Jews? The whole world's attitude is overwhelmingly against them.
PRAYER: Father, have mercy upon both Jews and Arabs that they may cease from fighting.

THURSDAY, MAY 30

PSALM 123

JOHN 10:7-11

Emmanuel = God with us.

"THE PSALM OF THE EYES"

This is a short Psalm, written with singular art, containing one thought and expressing it in a most engaging manner. It is a favourite song among God's people. It is conjectured this brief Psalm was first heard in the days of Nehemiah. The afflicted ones in all periods after David's time found it ready to their hand.

*"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near."*

"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes" (Ps 123:1). It is good to have someone to look up to. The Psalmist looked so high that he could look no higher. The uplifted eyes naturally and instinctively represent the state of heart which fixes desire, hope, confidence, and expectation upon the Lord.

When we cannot look to any helper on a level with us it is greatly wise to look above us; in fact, if we have a thousand helpers, our eyes should still be toward the Lord. The higher the Lord is the better for our faith, since that height represents power, glory, and excellence, and these will be all engaged on our behalf. We ought to be very thankful for spiritual eyes. Yet we must use our eyes with resolution, for they will not go upward to the Lord of themselves, but they incline to look downward, or inward, or anywhere but to the Lord. If we cannot see God, at least we will look towards Him. God is in heaven as a king in his palace; He is there revealed, adored, and glorified: thence He looks down on the world and sends succours to His saints as their needs demand; hence we look up, even when in sorrow.
(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 123:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 123:3.)

FRIDAY, MAY 31

PSALM 124

COLOSSIANS 2:7

“...If God be for us,
who can be against us?”

BUT THE LORD WAS ON OUR SIDE

This short Psalm contains an acknowledgment of favour received by way of special deliverance (Ps 124:1-5), then a grateful act of worship in blessing Jehovah (Ps 124:6-7), and lastly, a declaration of confidence in the Lord for all future times of trial. May our experience lead us to the same conclusion as the saints of David's time. From all confidence in man may we be rescued by a holy reliance upon our God. (Spurgeon)

*Had not the Lord, my soul may cry,
Had not the Lord, been on my side;
Had he not brought deliverance nigh,
Then must my helpless soul have died.*

*Had not the Lord been on my side,
My soul had been by Satan slain;
And Tophet, opening large and wide,
Would not have gaped for me in vain.*

*Lo, floods of wrath, and floods of hell,
In fierce impetuous torrents roll;
Had not the Lord defended well,
The waters had o'erwhelm'd my soul.*

*As when the fowler's snare is broke,
The bird escapes on cheerful wings;
My soul, set free from Satan's yoke,
With joy bursts forth, and mounts, and
sings.*

*She sings the Lord her Saviour's
praise;
Sings forth his praise with joy and
mirth;
To him her song in heaven she'll raise,
To him that made both heaven and
earth.*

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 124:6.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 124:8.)

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

PSALM 125

2 THESSALONIANS 2:15-17

*“He shall cover thee
with his feathers,
and under his wings
shalt thou trust...”*

THEY THAT TRUST IN THE LORD

Faith has praised Jehovah for past deliverances. Here she raises to a confident joy with present and future safety for believers. She asserts that they shall forever be secure who trust themselves with the Lord.

Division:

1. First, we have a song of holy confidence (vv.1-2)
2. Then a promise (v.3)
3. Followed by a prayer (v.4)
4. And a warning (v.5)

What a privilege to be allowed to repose in God! How condescending is Jehovah to become the confidence of His people! To trust elsewhere is vanity; and the more implicit such misplaced trust becomes the more bitter will be the ensuing disappointment; but to trust in the living God is sanctified common sense which needs no excuse, its result shall be its best vindication. There is no conceivable reason why we should not trust in Jehovah, and there is every possible argument for so doing; but, apart from all argument, the end will prove the wisdom of the confidence.

The result of faith is not occasional and accidental; its blessing comes, not to some who trust, but to all who trust in the Lord. The trusting worshipper of Jehovah enjoys a restfulness which is the mirror of tranquility; and this not without cause, for his hope is sure, and of his confidence he can never be ashamed. As the Lord sitteth King for ever, so do His people sit enthroned in perfect peace when their trust in Him is firm. This is, and is to be, our portion. Faith in God is a settling and establishing virtue; He who by His strength setteth fast the mountains, by that same power stays the hearts of them that trust in Him. This steadfastness will endure *“for ever.”*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 125:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 125:4.)

LORD'S DAY, JUNE 2

PSALM 126

2 TIMOTHY 2:12

*"...I will never leave thee,
nor forsake thee."*

A PSALM OF DELIVERANCE

*When her sons from bonds redeeming,
God to Zion led the way,
We were like to people dreaming
Thoughts of bliss too bright to stay.*

*Fill'd with laughter, stood we gazing,
Loud our tongues in rapture sang;
Quickly with the news amazing
All the startled nations rang.*

*"See Jehovah's works of glory!
Mark what love for them he had!"
"Yes, FOR US! Go tell the story.
This was done, and we are glad."*

*Lord! Thy work of grace completing
All our exiled hosts restore,
As in thirsty channels meeting
Southern streams refreshing pour.*

*They that now in sorrow weeping
Tears and seed commingled sow,
Soon, the fruitful harvest reaping,
Shall with joyful bosoms glow.*

*Tho' the sower's heart is breaking,
Bearing forth the seed to shed,
He shall come, the echoes waking,
Laden with his sheaves instead
(from "The Hebrew Psalter")*

THOUGHT: Don't despair.

PRAYER: Father, help me to keep on believing.

MONDAY, JUNE 3

PSALM 126:3

HABAKKUK 3:16-19

*“Rejoice in the Lord always:
and again I say, Rejoice.”*

O, REJOICE IN THE LORD!

Some Christians are sadly prone to look on the dark side of everything, and to dwell more upon what they have gone through than upon what God has done for them. Ask for their impression of the Christian life, and they will describe their continual conflicts, their deep afflictions, their sad adversities, and the sinfulness of their hearts, yet with scarcely any allusion to the mercy and help which God has vouchsafed them. But a Christian whose soul is in a healthy state, will come forward joyously, and say, "I will speak, not about myself, but to the honour of my God. He hath brought me up out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings: and He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad." Such an abstract of experience as this is the very best that any child of God can present. It is true that we endure trials, but it is just as true that we are delivered out of them. It is true that we have our corruptions, and mournfully do we know this but it is quite as true that we have an all-sufficient Saviour, who overcomes these corruptions, and delivers us from their dominion. In looking back, it would be wrong to deny that we have been in the Slough of Despond, and have crept along the Valley of Humiliation, but it would be equally wicked to forget that we have been through them safely and profitably; we have not remained in them, thanks to our Almighty Helper and Leader, who has brought us "out into a wealthy place." The deeper our troubles, the louder our thanks to God, who has led us through all, and preserved us until now. Our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise, we reckon them to be the bass part of our life's song. "He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: Always look up to the LORD!

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 42:5.)

TUESDAY, JUNE 4
PSALM 127
GALATIANS 6:10

*Where He leads,
I will follow.*

THE BUILDER'S PSALM

This is a Song of degrees for Solomon. From the title of this Psalm it is thought David is the author who wrote it for his son, builder of the Temple. Or it may be Solomon himself who was the author.

God's blessing on His people is here spoken of. We are taught that builders of houses and cities, empires and churches all labour in vain without the Lord. Sons, who are in Hebrew called "builders," are set forth as building up families under the same divine blessing, to the honour of their parents. "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God."

*If God build not the house, and lay
The groundwork sure — whoever
build,
It cannot stand one stormy day.
If God be not the city's shield,
If he be not their bars and wall,
In vain is watch-tower, men, and all.*

*Though then thou wak'st when others
rest,
Though rising thou prevent'st the sun,
Though with lean care thou daily feast,
Thy labour's lost, and thou undone;
But God his child will feed and keep,
And draw the curtains to his sleep.*

(Phineas Fletcher)

THOUGHT: Every building is built by God!

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to see myself only as a servant.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5

PSALM 128

ACTS 16:30-34

*Christ is the Head
in my home.*

"HOME SWEET HOME"

In this Song of degrees, there is an evident ascent from the last Psalm. A house may be built up, but this shows a picture of the house built, and adorned with bliss, through God's benediction.

There is clearly an advance in age. For here we go beyond children to children's children. We also progress in happiness. Children which in the last Psalm were arrows are here olive plants. Thus we sing step by step as we ascend.

This is a family hymn: a song for marriage, or a birth or for any day in which a happy household has met to the praise of God. It is a short Psalm but exceedingly full and suggestive. This is a "Home Sweet Home" Psalm.

*"Thy wife shall be in the inner part of
thy house
Like a fruitful vine;
Thy children round about thy table
Like the shoots of the olive."*

The religious life, which God declares to be blessed (Ps 128:1), must be practical as well as emotional. It is idle to talk of fearing the Lord if we act like those who have no care whether there be a God or not. God's ways will be our ways if we have a sincere reverence for Him: if the heart is joined unto God, the feet will follow hard after Him. A man's heart will be seen in his walk, and the blessing will come where heart and walk are both with God. God's ways are blessed ways.

Dear reader, don't you want the blessed ways?

THOUGHT: There is no place like home.

PRAYER: Father, bless my home.

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

PSALM 129

1 CORINTHIANS 4:12-16

*“...My grace is
sufficient for thee...”*

MINGLED SORROW AND STRONG RESOLVE

This Psalm is a hymn of mingled sorrow and strong resolve. Though sorely smitten, the afflicted is of strong heart. He scorns to yield in the least to the enemy.

1. The poet sings the trials of Israel (vv.1-3)
2. The interposition of the Lord (v.4)
3. The unblessed condition of Israel's foes (vv.5-8)

It is a rustic song, full of allusions to husbandry. It reminds us of the book of Ruth and the book of Amos.

Explanation:

"The plowers plowed upon my back." The scourgers tore the flesh as ploughmen furrow a field. The people were maltreated like a criminal given to the lictors with cruel whips. The back of the nation was scored and furrowed by oppressors.

See how godly men are roughly ploughed by their adversaries, and yet a harvest comes of it which endures and produces blessing; while the ungodly, though they flourish for a while and enjoy a complete immunity, dwelling, as they think, quite above the reach of harm, are found in a short time to have gone their way and to have left no trace behind.

Father, number me with Thy saints. Let me share their grief if I may also partake of their glory.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 129:4.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 129:5.)

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

PSALM 130

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

*We were purchased
with His blood.*

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

This Psalm follows upon the previous one. When we have overcome the trials which arise from men, we are better prepared to meet those sharper sorrows which arise out of our matters towards God. We name this Psalm, "Out of the Depths." Out of those depths we wait, watch and hope. In this Psalm we have the pearl of redemption (vv.7-8)

Division:

1. An intense desire (vv.1-2)
2. Confession of repentance and faith (vv.3-4)
3. Waiting watchfulness (vv.5-6)
4. Joyful expectation for oneself and for Israel (vv.7-8)

"Let Israel hope in the LORD" (v.7). Israel of old waited upon Jehovah and wrestled all the night long, and at last he went his way succoured by the Hope of Israel: the like shall happen to all his seed.

God has great things in store for His people; they ought to have large expectations. *"For with the LORD there is mercy."* This is in His very nature, and by the light of nature it may be seen. But we have also the light of grace, and therefore we see still more of His mercy. With us there is sin; but hope is ours, because with the Lord there is mercy. Our comfort lies not in that which is with us but in that which is with our God. Let us look out of self and its poverty to Jehovah and His riches of mercy. *"And with him is plenteous redemption."* He can and will redeem all His people out of their many and great troubles; nay, their redemption is already wrought out and laid up with Him, so that He can at any time give His waiting ones the full benefit thereof. The attribute of mercy, and the fact of redemption, are two most sufficient reasons for hoping in Jehovah. There is no mercy or deliverance elsewhere.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 130:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 130:2.)

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

PSALM 131

2 THESSALONIANS 2:15-17

*"...he that humbleth himself
shall be exalted."*

A SONG OF DEGREES OF DAVID

This Psalm written by David is based on his own experience. Spurgeon says he is the author and the subject of it. Many incidents in his life may be employed to illustrate it. Comparing all the Psalms to gems, we should liken this to a pearl. How beautifully it adorns the neck of patience.

Although it is one of the shortest Psalms, it is one of the longest to learn. It speaks of a young child, but it contains the experience of a man in Christ. Lowliness and humility are here seen in connection with a sanctified heart, a will subdued to the mind of God, and a hope looking to the Lord alone. Happy is the man who can without falsehood use these words as his own. For he can say with Jesus our Lord, *"I am meek and lowly in heart"* (Matt 11:29). And lowliness is one of the attainments of divine life. This Psalm is like a short ladder, but the thoughts rise to a great height: from deep humility to fixed confidence. One writer thinks that this is a song of the Jews who returned from Babylon with humbled hearts, weaned from their idols. At any rate, after any spiritual captivity, let it be the expression of our hearts.

The Psalmist had been upon his best behaviour (Ps 131:2), and had smoothed down the roughnesses of his self-will; by holy effort he had mastered his own spirit, so that towards God he was not rebellious, even as towards man he was not haughty. It is no easy thing to quiet yourself: sooner may a man calm the sea, or rule the wind, or tame a tiger, than quiet himself. We are clamorous, uneasy, petulant; and nothing but grace can make us quiet under afflictions, irritations, and disappointments.

To the weaned child his mother is his comfort though she has denied him comfort. It is a blessed mark of growth out of spiritual infancy when we can forego the joys which once appeared to be essential, and can find our solace in Him who denies them to us: then we behave manfully, and every childish complaint is hushed.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 131:1.)

PRAYER: Father, I pray for Israel, that it will hope in Thee.

LORD'S DAY, JUNE 9

PSALM 132

JAMES 1:2-4

*"...I will see you again,
and your heart shall rejoice,
and your joy no man taketh from you."*

A SONG OF DEGREES, OF ASCENT

This is a joyful Psalm. Let all the pilgrims to the New Jerusalem sing it. The degrees or ascents are very visible.

The theme ascends step by step, from "afflictions" to "crown," from "remember David" to "will I make the horn of David to bud." The latter half is like the over-arching sky bending alone. "The builders of the word" are found in the prayers of the former portion.

Division:

1. Statement of David's anxious care to build a house for the Lord (vv.1-7)
2. A prayer at the removal of the ark (vv.8-12)
3. A pleading of the divine covenant and its promises (vv.11-18)

Holiness and happiness go together; where the one is found, the other ought never to be far away. Holy persons have a right to great and demonstrative joy: they may shout because of it (v.9b). Saints are commanded to rejoice in the Lord. Where righteousness is the clothing, joy may well be the occupation.

(Spurgeon)

Dear reader, as a child of God, God's presence in your life will make you glad and fill your heart with joy and your mouth with songs.

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 132:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 132:7.)

MONDAY, JUNE 10

PSALM 133

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-24

*“...love thy neighbour
as thyself...”*

A SONG OF BROTHERLY LOVE

This song on brotherly love by David does not refer to his brothers in the flesh. David had three elder brothers serving in Saul's army. They were Eliab (the firstborn) and after him, Abinadab and Shammah. Instead of being kindly affectioned to David, their youngest brother, Eliab the eldest especially, spoke roughly to David when he went to watch the battle with the Philistines and with Goliath. So often brothers in the same family are not as close as they should be.

David is here singing the praises of brotherly love in the spirit. *"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"* (Prov 18:24). The story is told of one of David's closest commanders, *"And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men"* (2 Sam 23:14-17).

Such reciprocity of spiritual brotherly love far exceeds the bond of the natural. It is this bond of spiritual brotherly love that binds the lives of David's followers to their king. It is such a bond of Christian love that binds Christ's followers to their Saviour.

The effect of their service is like the special ointment poured on Aaron the high priest. It is like the dew from Hermon descending on the hills of Zion.

THOUGHT: (Read 1 John 4:7.)

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to love Thee as David's three commanders loved their king.

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

PSALM 134

1 TIMOTHY 2:8

Pray for our missionaries.

A SONG OF DEGREES

We have now reached the last of the Gradual Psalms. The Pilgrims are going home, and are singing the last song in their Psalter. They leave early in the morning, before the day has fully commenced, for the journey is long for many of them. While yet the night lingers, they are on the move. As soon as they are outside the gates they see the guards upon the temple wall, and the lamps shining from the windows of the chambers which surround the sanctuary. Therefore moved by the sight, they chant a farewell to the perpetual attendants upon the holy shrine. Their parting exhortation arouses the priests to pronounce upon them a blessing out of the holy place. This benediction is contained in the third verse. The priests as good as say, "You have desired us to bless the Lord and now we pray the Lord to bless you."

The Psalm teaches us to pray for those who are continually ministering before the Lord, and it invites all ministers to pronounce benediction upon their loving and prayerful people.

To this day the Lord blesses each one of His people through His church, His gospel, and the ordinances of His house. It is in communion with the saints that we receive untold benisons. May each one of us obtain yet more of the blessing which cometh from the Lord alone. Do we desire it? Let us then bless the Lord ourselves.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 134:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 134:2-3.)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

PSALM 135

1 PETER 5:10-11

Bible before breakfast.

A MOSAIC OF A PSALM

This Psalm has no title. It is mainly made up of selections from other Scriptures. It is a mosaic.

The whole Psalm is composed of many choice extracts, and yet it has all the continuity and freshness of an original poem.

The first fourteen verses are an exhortation to praise Jehovah for

1. His goodness (v.3)
2. His electing love (v.4)
3. His greatness (vv.5-7)
4. His judgments (vv.8-12)
5. His unchanging character (v.13)
6. His love towards His people (v.14)

This is followed by a destruction of idols (vv.15-18) and a further exhortation to bless His Name. It is a song full of life, vigour, variety and devotion.

It is not enough for us to praise God ourselves, we are quite unequal to such a work; let us call in all our friends and neighbours, and if they have been slack in such a service, let us stir them up to it with loving exhortations. "*Praise ye the name of the LORD.*" Do not only magnify the Lord because He is God; but study His character and His doings, and thus render intelligent, appreciative praise. We do not praise enough; we cannot praise too much.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 135:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 135:20.)

THURSDAY, JUNE 13

PSALM 136

REVELATION 4:8-11

*"I will praise thee, O LORD,
with my whole heart..."*

**"FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH
FOREVER"**

We know not by whom this Psalm was written, but we do know it was sung in Solomon's Temple (2 Chron 7:3, 6). This same Psalm, with the chorus, "*for his mercy endureth for ever,*" is also sung by the armies of King Jehoshaphat in the face of their enemies, Ammon, Moab and Mt Seir in the wilderness of Tekoa. From the form of it, we can infer it was a popular hymn among God's ancient people. It contains nothing but praise and is sung by those of a devoutly grateful heart.

Andrew A. Bonar outlines this Psalm as follows:

1. Praise Him for what He is (vv.1-3)
2. Praise Him for He is able to do (v.4)
3. Praise Him for what He has done in creation (vv.5-9)
4. Praise Him for what He did in redeeming Israel from bondage (vv.10-15)
5. Praise Him for what He did in His providence toward them (vv.16-22)
6. Praise Him for His grace in times of calamity (vv.23-24)
7. Praise Him for His grace to the world at large (v.25)
8. Praise Him at the remembrance that this God is the God of heaven (v.26)

THOUGHT: God's mercy endures forever.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for remembering me in my low estate.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

PSALM 137

ROMANS 1:21-24

God is omniscient.

ANOTHER IMPRECATORY PSALM

To know the word "imprecatory," turn back to the reading on Psalm 109. This is another such Psalm.

Israel as a nation had many enemies. Though God used the Assyrians to punish Samaria, He will in turn punish the Assyrians whose immediate motives were to rob a weaker people.

God also used Nebuchadnezzar to punish Judah but they did not know God was using them as His instrument. Their immediate motives were like the Assyrians to rob a weaker people. Therefore both Assyrians and Babylonians came under God's judgment at the end.

As the Jews had suffered terribly under the iron heel of the Babylonians, they had no one to turn to for justice but God Almighty. They had also another enemy, Edom (Esau) their own brother who mercilessly killed them.

So they prayed this, another imprecatory prayer.

“Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones” (Ps 137:7-9).

Can they cry out to God for justice? The answer is yours, dear reader!

THOUGHT: God is Judge of the nations.

PRAYER: Father, I turn to Thee for justice against those that eat me up.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15

PSALM 138

MARK 13:30-31

Trust and obey.

A PSALM OF DAVID

This Psalm is evidently of a Davidic character. It exhibits all the fidelity, courage and decision of Israel's greatest king.

Division:

In full confidence, David is prepared to own his God before the gods of the heathen, or before angels or rulers (vv.1-3).

He declares that he will instruct and convert kings and nations, till on every highway, men shall sing the praises of the Lord (vv.4-5).

Having thus spoken, he utters his personal confidence in Jehovah, who will help His lowly servant, and preserve him from all the malice of wrathful men.

Spurgeon comments: "For thou has magnified thy word above all thy name ... The word of promise made to David was in his eyes more glorious than all else that he had seen of the Most High. Revelation excels creation in the clearness, definiteness, and fulness of its teaching. The name of the Lord in nature is not so easily read as in the Scriptures, which are a revelation in human language ... Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the divine word will not pass away."

THOUGHT: The Bible is God's special revelation to man.

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to study Thy Word diligently for Thy Word says, *"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation"* (Ps 119:99).

LORD'S DAY, JUNE 16

PSALM 138:5

EPHESIANS 5:19-20

"...I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."

I WILL SING TO MY LORD A NEW SONG

The time when Christians begin to sing in the ways of the Lord is when they first lose their burden at the foot of the Cross. Not even the songs of the angels seem so sweet as the first song of rapture which gushes from the inmost soul of the forgiven child of God. You know how John Bunyan describes it. He says when poor Pilgrim lost his burden at the Cross, he gave three great leaps, and went on his way singing, "Blest Cross! blest Sepulchre! blest rather be The Man that there was put to shame for me!"

Believer, do you recollect the day when your fetters fell off? Do you remember the place when Jesus met you, and said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud thy sins; they shall not be mentioned against thee any more for ever"? Oh! what a sweet season is that when Jesus takes away the pain of sin. When the Lord first pardoned my sin, I was so joyous that I could scarce refrain from dancing. I thought on my road home from the house where I had been set at liberty, that I must tell the stones in the street the story of my deliverance. So full was my soul of joy, that I wanted to tell every snow-flake that was falling from heaven of the wondrous love of Jesus, who had blotted out the sins of one of the chief of rebels. But it is not only at the commencement of the Christian life that believers have reason for song; as long as they live they discover cause to sing in the ways of the Lord, and their experience of His constant lovingkindness leads them to say, "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth." See to it, brother, that thou magnifiest the Lord this day.

"Long as we tread this desert land, New mercies shall new songs demand!"

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Colossians 3:16.)

PRAYER: May I always sing Thy praise, Father!

MONDAY, JUNE 17

PSALM 138:8

PSALM 118:8-14

*"...O God of our salvation;
who art the confidence of all
the ends of the earth..."*

CONFIDENCE IN GOD ALONE

Most manifestly the confidence which the Psalmist here expressed was a divine confidence. He did not say, "I have grace enough to perfect that which concerneth me — my faith is so steady that it will not stagger — my love is so warm that it will never grow cold — my resolution is so firm that nothing can move it; no, his dependence was on the Lord alone."

If we indulge in any confidence which is not grounded on the Rock of ages, our confidence is worse than a dream, it will fall upon us, and cover us with its ruins, to our sorrow and confusion. All that Nature spins time will unravel, to the eternal confusion of all who are clothed therein. The Psalmist was wise, he rested upon nothing short of the Lord's work. It is the Lord who has begun the good work within us; it is He who has carried it on; and if he does not finish it, it never will be complete. If there be one stitch in the celestial garment of our righteousness which we are to insert ourselves, then we are lost; but this is our confidence, the Lord who began will perfect. He has done it all, must do it all, and will do it all. Our confidence must not be in what we have done, nor in what we have resolved to do, but entirely in what the Lord will do. Unbelief insinuates — "You will never be able to stand. Look at the evil of your heart, you can never conquer sin; remember the sinful pleasures and temptations of the world that beset you, you will be certainly allured by them and led astray." Ah! yes, we should indeed perish if left to our own strength. If we had alone to navigate our frail vessels over so rough a sea, we might well give up the voyage in despair; but, thanks be to God, He will perfect that which concerneth us, and bring us to the desired haven. We can never be too confident when we confide in Him alone, and never too much concerned to have such a trust.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Proverbs 3:26.)

PRAYER: Forgive me, Father, for my self-confidence. May I see my own follies and put my confidence in Thee alone.

TUESDAY, JUNE 18

PSALM 139

ROMANS 11:33-36

How great Thou art!

**OUR LIFE IS DOUBLY ASSURED
UNDER THE HAND OF AN ALL-
SAVING GOD**

When God permitted Satan to test Job by bringing great loss to his possessions and death to his children, he could only bow down in humble submission, "*The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*" (Job 1:21). Under further testing that miserably affected his body and skin, he abjected himself further, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him*" (Job 13:15). What is your understanding of your God?

David's understanding of his God may be judged the highest and most sublime as expressed in Psalm 139. Let me present you a most beautiful outline given by an American professor in four parts. Through this analysis you have as clear as crystal a description of God's attributes.

1. Genius of God's Omniscience (vv.1-6)
2. Grandeur of God's Omnipresence (vv.7-12)
3. Greatness of God's Omnipotence (vv.13-18)
4. Glory of God's Omniperfection (vv.19-24)

Dear reader, are God's attributes precious to you? Then hold to them. "Never be led astray by those philosophic fools who preach up an impersonal God, and talk of self-existent, self-governing matter. The Lord liveth and thinketh upon us, this is a truth far too precious for us to be lightly robbed of it If the Lord thinketh upon us, all is well, and we rejoice evermore." (Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: With such a great God I can rest with David, "*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety*" (Ps 4:8).

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for protecting me from all harm even as I rest through the night.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

PSALM 140

LUKE 18:1

*“But if ye forgive not men
their trespasses,
neither will your Father
forgive your trespasses.”*

DAVID'S CRY IN DISTRESS

The life of David when he comes in contact with Saul and Doeg is the best explanation of this Psalm. David wrote this Psalm in his exile and peril.

The tremendous outburst at the end has in it the warmth which was so natural to David, who was never lukewarm in anything. Yet it is noticed that concerning his enemies he was often hot in language through indignation, and yet he was cool in action, for he was not revengeful. His was no petty malice, but righteous anger. He foresaw, foretold and even desired the just vengeance of God upon the proud and wicked, and yet he would not avail himself of opportunities to revenge himself upon those who had done him wrong. It may be that his appeals to the great King cooled his anger and enabled him to leave his wrongs unredressed by any personal act of violence. *“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”* And David when most wounded by undeserved persecution and wicked falsehood was glad to leave his matters at the foot of the throne where they would be safe with the King of kings.

All through the Psalm, the writer is bravely confident, and speaks of things about which he had no doubt: in fact, no Psalm can be more grandly positive than this protest against slander. The slandered saint knew Jehovah's care for the afflicted, for he had received actual proofs of it himself (v.12).

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Romans 12:19.)

PRAYER: Help me, Father, to be like David, a man after Thine own heart.

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

PSALM 141

COLOSSIANS 3:23-25

*"...God shall judge
the righteous and the wicked..."*

DAVID LOOKS TO GOD FOR JUDGMENT

This is a Psalm of David. David is under suspicion, half afraid to speak, lest he should speak unadvisedly while trying to clear himself. David is slandered by his enemies. David is censured even by friends and he takes it kindly. David deplores the condition of the godly party of which he is acknowledged head. David waits upon God with confident expectation.

Division:

1. The Psalmist cries for acceptance in prayer (vv.1-2)
2. He begs to be kept as to his speech. He prefers to be rebuked by the righteous than to be flattered by the wicked (vv.3-6)
3. He represents the persecuted church and looks for punishment of his oppressors (vv.7-10)

David looks upward and keeps his eyes fixed there (v.8). He regarded duty more than circumstances; he considers the promise rather than the external providence; and he expects from God rather than from men. He gives his eyes to his God, and sees nothing to fear. David keeps to his God: in Him he trusted always, only, confidently, and unreservedly.

To be destitute in circumstance is bad, but to be destitute in soul is far worse. The comfort is that God hath said, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 141:5.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 141:1.)

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

PSALM 142

JAMES 5:13

*“Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.”*

**A DIDACTIC (TEACHING)
PSALM**

This Maschil of David is written for our instruction. It teaches us by example how to order our prayers in times of distress. He who has learned how to pray has been taught the most useful arts and sciences. David gives us a valuable lesson here by recording his own experience in prayer.

It was a prayer when he was in a cave. He was either at Engedi, or Adullam, or some other lone cavern wherein he could conceal himself from Saul. Caves make good closets for prayer. Their gloom and solitude are helpful to the exercise of devotion.

There can be little doubt that this song dates from the days when Saul was sorely persecuting David. David himself was in soul-trouble, probably produced by that lapse of faith which led him to ally with heathen princes. His fortunes were evidently at their lowest ebb. What was worse was that his repute had fearfully fallen. Yet he displayed a true faith in God, to whom he made known his pressing sorrows.

The gloom of the cave is over this Psalm. Yet, as if standing at the mouth of the cave, David sees a bright light shining a little beyond.

True prayers may differ in their diction, but not in their direction: an impromptu cry and a preconceived supplication must alike ascend towards the one prayer-hearing God, and He will accept each of them with equal readiness. The intense personality of the prayer is noteworthy: no doubt the Psalmist was glad of the prayers of others, but he was not content to be silent himself. See how everything is in the first person: *"I cried with my voice; with my voice did I make my supplication."* It is good to pray in the plural: *"Our Father,"* but in times of trouble we shall feel forced to change our note into *"Let this cup pass from me."*

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 142:7.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 142:3.)

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

PSALM 143

1 CORINTHIANS 14:15

*God, be merciful
to me a sinner.*

A PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

This Psalm of David has been classified as one of David's seven Penitential Psalms, but Spurgeon does not agree. It is rather a vindication of David's own integrity and an indignant prayer against his slanderers, than a confession of fault.

It is true the second verse shows that he never dreamed of justifying himself before the Lord. But even in it there is scarcely the brokenness of penitence. It is purely supplication for deliverance from trouble, than a weeping acknowledgement of transgressions.

It is an outcry of an overwhelmed spirit, unable to abide in the highest state of spiritual prayer, again and again descending to bewail its deep temporal distress, yet evermore struggling to rise to the best of things.

The singer moans at intervals. His hands are outstretched to heaven, but at his girdle hangs a sharp sword, which rattles in its scabbard as he closes his Psalm.

One historical association of this Psalm is related to Savonarola. He "was executed on May 23, 1498, by the Papal authorities for his fearless preaching of the truth, was the great dominican preacher who for five years held within the hollow of his hand the destinies of Florence and stands out as one of the most fascinating figures in history. That he had a deep affection for the Psalms is proved by his written meditations on many of them. As a hard-featured youth, he often pondered over the sin and misery of the world, praying, as he would tell his father, in the words of Psalm 143:8, "*...cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*" Seeking to escape the stifling atmosphere of wickedness surrounding him, Savonarola fled to the cloister and remained a man of unsullied morality."

(Herbert Lockyer)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 143:6.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 143:1.)

LORD'S DAY, JUNE 23

PSALM 144

TITUS 3:1-4

"Trust ye in the LORD for ever..."

GOD ALMIGHTY IS THY STRENGTH

The title of this Psalm is "Of David." The language no doubt is David's. As surely as we can say, this is of Tennyson or of Longfellow, we may say, This is of David.

It is to God the devout warrior sings when he extols Him as his strength and stay (vv.1-2). Man he holds in small account, and wonders at the Lord's regard for him (vv.3-4). But he turns in his hour of conflict to the Lord, who is declared to be "*a man of war,*" whose triumphant interposition he implores (vv.5-8). He again extols and entreats in verses 9 to 11 and then closes with a delightful picture of the Lord's work for His chosen people, who are congratulated upon having such a God to be their God.

When the heart is in a right state it must praise God, it cannot be restrained; its utterances leap forth as waters forcing their way from a living spring. With all his strength David blesses the God of his strength. We ought not to receive so great a boon as strength to resist evil, to defend truth, and to conquer error, without knowing who gave it to us, and rendering to Him the glory of it. Not only does Jehovah give strength to His saints, but He is their strength. The strength is made theirs because God is theirs. God is full of power, and He becomes the power of those who trust Him. In Him our great strength lieth, and to Him be blessings more than we are able to utter.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 144:3.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 144:1.)

MONDAY, JUNE 24

PSALM 145

1 PETER 1:3

"...marvellous are thy works..."

DAVID'S PSALM OF PRAISE

This is one of the alphabetical Psalms. It is David's very own. It is altogether praise, and praise pitched to a high key. David had blessed God many a time in other Psalms but this is regarded as his crown jewel of praise.

We may take David's Psalm as a model. Let each Christian reader present his own praise unto the Lord, and call it by his own name. What a wealth of varied praise will thus be presented through Jesus Christ!

"Every day will I bless thee" (v.2). Whatever the character of the day, or of my circumstances and conditions during that day, I will continue to glorify God. Were we well to consider the matter we should see abundant cause in each day for rendering special blessing unto the Lord. All before the day, all in the day, all following the day should constrain us to magnify our God every day, all the year round. Our love to God is not a matter of holy days: every day is alike holy to holy men.

David here comes closer to God than when he said, *"I will bless thy name,"* it is now, *"I (will) bless thee."* This is the centre and kernel of true devotion: we do not only admire the Lord's words and works, but Himself. Without realizing the personality of God, praise is well-nigh impossible; you cannot extol an abstraction. *"And I will praise thy name for ever and ever."* He said he would bless that name, and now he vows to praise it; he will extol the Lord in every sense and way.

Eternal worship shall not be without its variations; it will never become monotonous. Heavenly music is not harping upon one string, but all strings shall be tuned to one praise. Observe the personal pronouns here: four times he says, *"I will"*: praise is not to be discharged by proxy: there must be your very self in it, or there is nothing in it.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 145:3.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 145:1.)

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

PSALM 146

LUKE 1:46-55

"Oh how great is Thy goodness..."

A PSALM OF HIGH PRAISES

As we enter Psalm 146, we are among the Hallelujahs, all praise right up to the close of the Book. The key is high-pitched. The music is upon the high-sounding cymbals. O, for a heart full of joyful gratitude, that we may run, and leap, and glorify God, even as this Psalm does.

"Put not your trust in princes."
Shakespeare puts these sentiments into Wolsey's mouth:

*"O how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes'
favour!
There is, betwixt that smile we would
aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their
ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars and
women have:
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again."*

Herbert Lockyer notes that Psalm 146 proclaims Jehovah alone as the unfailing Deliverer and that the ten verses do not lend themselves to marked divisions. They appear without a break — "one pearl, a sacred censer of holy incense, pouring forth one sweet perfume." Yet two aspects appear to be discernible:

1. Jehovah alone is to be trusted, and not man. All who trust the Lord are blessed by Him (vv.1-5).
2. The reason lies in His Divine Perfections. Jehovah is Creator, Judge, Deliverer and King (vv.6-10).

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 146:9.)

PRAYER: Help me, Father, not to put my trust in princes, nor in the sons of man, in whom there is no help.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

PSALM 147

EPHESIANS 1:19-23

*“... thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me.”*

THE GREATNESS AND GOODNESS OF GOD

This is a specially remarkable song. It celebrates God's greatness and condescending goodness... From verse 1 to 6, Jehovah is extolled for building up Zion, and blessing his mourners. From verse 7 to 11, the like praise is given because of His provision for the lowly, and His pleasure in them; and then, from verse 12 to 20, He is magnified for His work on behalf of His people, and the power of His word in nature and in grace. (Spurgeon)

*O Thou who dry'st the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee!
The friends, who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes are flown;
And he who has but tears to give
Must weep those tears alone.
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded
part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.*

*When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And e'en the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears
Is dimmed and vanished too;
Oh! Who would bear life's stormy
doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come, brightly waiting through the
gloom
Our peace-branch from above?
Then sorrow, touched by Thee, grows
bright
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day!
(Thomas Moore)*

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 147:4.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 147:6.)

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

PSALM 148

1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9

*“For by him were
all things created...”*

**A PSALM OF NATURE AND OF
GRACE**

This song is one and indivisible. It seems almost impossible to expound it in detail, for a living poem is not to be dissected verse by verse. It is a song of nature and of grace. As a flash of lightning flames through space, and enwraps both heaven and earth in one vestment of glory, so doth the adoration of the Lord in this Psalm light up all the universe and cause it to glow with a radiance of praise. The song begins in the heavens, sweeps downward to dungeons and all deeps, and then ascends again, till the people near unto Jehovah take up the strain. For its exposition the chief requisite is a heart on fire with reverent love to the Lord over all, who is to be blessed for ever. (Spurgeon)

*Praise him thou golden-tressed sun,
Praise him, thou fair and silver moon,
And ye bright orbs of streaming light;
Ye floods that float above the skies,
Ye heav'ns, that vault o'er vault arise,
Praise him, who sits above all height.*

(Richard Mant)

*All creatures of the eternal God but
man,
In several sorts do glorify his name;
Each tree doth seem ten thousand
tongues to have,
With them to laud the Lord
omnipotent;
Each leaf that with wind's gentle
breath doth wave,
Seems as a tongue to speak to that
intent,
In language admirably excellent,
The sundry sorts of fragrant flowers do
seem
Sundry discourses God to glorify,
And sweetest volumes may we them
esteem;
For all these creatures in their several
sort
Praise God, and man unto the same
exhort.*

(Peter Pett)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 148:3.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 148:1.)

FRIDAY, JUNE 28

PSALM 148:14

REVELATION 21:1-3

*"Draw nigh to God,
and he will draw nigh to you."*

DRAW NIGH TO GOD

The dispensation of the old covenant was that of distance. When God appeared even to His servant Moses, He said, *"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet,"* and when He manifested Himself upon Mount Sinai, to His own chosen and separated people, one of the first commands was, *"Set bounds about the mount."* Both in the sacred worship of the tabernacle and the temple, the thought of distance was always prominent. The mass of the people did not even enter the outer court. Into the inner court none but the priests might dare to intrude; while into the innermost place, or the holy of holies, the high priest entered but once in the year. It was as if the Lord in those early ages would teach man that sin was so utterly loathsome to Him, that He must treat men as lepers put without the camp; and when He came nearest to them, He yet made them feel the width of the separation between a holy God and an impure sinner. When the gospel came, we were placed on quite another footing. The word "Go" was exchanged for "Come;" distance was made to give place to nearness, and we who aforetime were afar off, were made nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ. Incarnate Deity has no wall of fire about it. *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* is the joyful proclamation of God as He appears in human flesh. Not now does He teach the leper his leprosy by setting him at a distance, but by Himself suffering the penalty of his defilement. What a state of safety and privilege is this nearness to God through Jesus! Do you know it by experience? If you know it, are you living in the power of it? Marvellous is this nearness, yet it is to be followed by a dispensation of greater nearness still, when it shall be said, *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them."* Hasten it, O Lord.

(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: God wants me to be near Him.

PRAYER: Increase my love for Thee, Father, that I may desire to come near to Thee daily.

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

PSALM 149

1 PETER 1:3-6

"Surely I come quickly."

A NEW SONG

We are almost at the last Psalm, and still among the Hallelujahs. This is *"a new song,"* evidently intended for the new creation, and the men who are of a new heart. It is such a song as may be sung at the coming of the Lord, when the new dispensation shall bring overthrow to the wicked and honour to all the saints. The tone is exceedingly jubilant and exultant. All through one hears the beat of the feet of dancing maidens, keeping time to the timbrel and harp.

Be glad of heart, O believer, but take care that thy gladness has its spring in the Lord. Rejoice that He sits upon the throne, and ruleth all things! Every attribute of God should become a fresh ray in the sunlight of our gladness. That He is wise should make us glad, knowing as we do our own foolishness. That He is mighty, should cause us to rejoice who tremble at our weakness. That He is everlasting, should always be a theme of joy when we know that we wither as the grass. That He is unchanging, should perpetually yield us a song, since we change every hour. That He is full of grace, that He is overflowing with it, and that this grace in covenant He has given to us; that it is ours to cleanse us, ours to keep us, ours to sanctify us, ours to perfect us, ours to bring us to glory all this should tend to make us glad in Him.

This gladness in God is as a deep river; we have only as yet touched its brink, we know a little of its clear sweet, heavenly streams, but onward the depth is greater, and the current more impetuous in its joy. The Christian feels that he may delight himself not only in what God is, but also in all that God has done in the past. So let God's people now rehearse the deeds of the Lord! Let them tell of His mighty acts, and *"sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."* Nor let them ever cease to sing, for as new mercies flow to them day by day, so should their gladness in the Lord's loving acts in providence and in grace show itself in continued thanksgiving. Be glad ye children of Zion and rejoice in the Lord your God.
(Spurgeon)

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 149:1.)

PRAYER: (Use Psalm 149:3.)

LORD'S DAY, JUNE 30

PSALM 150

JOHN 4:24

*“...worship the LORD
in the beauty of holiness.”*

**ARE SUCH MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS
FOR WORSHIP IN THE NEW
TESTAMENT CHURCH?**

In this Psalm we have a full complement of ancient musical instruments for an orchestra as Israel as a nation celebrates. The Church and the State are bound together, whereas in the New Testament the Church and the State are separate. Hence cymbals that are an accompaniment of cultural dances are never used in our worship.

The Charismatic Church, however, claims Psalm 150 as a model for their worship. Whereas we use the organ or piano to enhance our singing they use every instrument that Israel as a nation uses. They have their drums and cymbals. As to the guitar we do not object as long as it is played with the right beat with solemnity.

On the other extreme we have others who totally forbid the use of musical instruments, even the organ. Not the pipe organ that drowns the congregational singing. But the gentle and persuasive strains of the pump organ can add to the spirit of worship and evangelism, as shown by Sankey in his support of Moody in Great Britain. As he played "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling" many, without Moody speaking a word, yielded in tears to receive the Saviour.

Those who forbid organ also forbid hymns and spiritual songs. They limit you to psalm singing, period. Why do they override the very Word of God?

We refute both Charismatics and Hypercalvinists. We follow the Church Triumphant above who sing with harps that make melody from the heart.

THOUGHT: (Read Ephesians 5:19.)

PRAYER: (Use Ephesians 5:20.)