

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

October 2023

Luther on the Psalms

Martin Luther

MANY OF THE HOLY FATHERS prized and praised the Psalter above all the other books of the Scripture. To be sure, the work itself gives praise enough to its Author; nevertheless we must give evidence of our own praise and thanks.

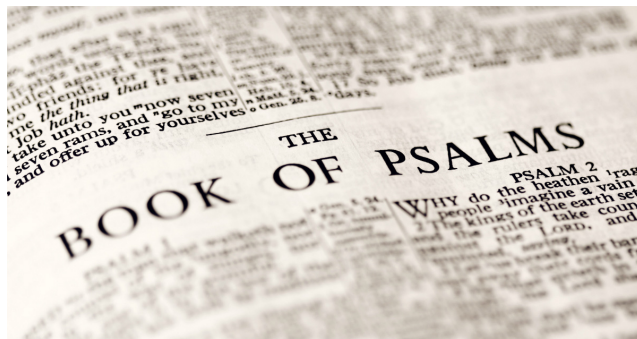
Over the years a great many legends of the saints, and passionals, books of examples, and histories have been circulated; indeed, the world has been so filled with them that the Psalter has been neglected. It has lain in such obscurity that not one psalm was rightly understood. Still it gave off such a fine and precious fragrance that all pious hearts felt the devotion and power in the unknown words and for this reason loved the book.

I hold, however, that no finer book of examples or of the legends of the saints has ever come, or can come, to earth than the Psalter. If one were to wish that from all the examples, legends, and histories, the best should be collected and brought together and put in the best form, the result would have to be the present Psalter. For here we find not only what one or two saints have done, but what he has done who is the very head of all saints. We also find what all the saints still do, such as the attitude they take toward God, toward friends and enemies, and the way they conduct themselves amid all dangers and sufferings. Beyond that there are contained here all sorts of divine and wholesome teachings and commandments.

The Psalter ought to be a precious and beloved book, if for no other reason than this: it promises Christ's death and resurrection so clearly—and pictures His kingdom and the condition and nature of all Christendom—that it might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible. It is really a fine enchiridion or handbook. In fact, I have a notion that the Holy Spirit wanted to take the trouble Himself to compile a short Bible and book of examples of all Christendom or all saints, so that anyone who could not read the whole Bible would here have anyway almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book.

The Words of the Saints

Beyond all that, the Psalter has this noble virtue and quality. Other books make much ado about the works of the saints, but say very little about their words. The Psalter is a gem in this respect. It gives forth so sweet a fragrance when one reads it because it relates not only the works of the saints, but also their words, how they spoke with God and prayed, and still speak and pray. Compared to the Psalter, the other legends and examples present to us nothing but mere silent saints; the Psalter, however, pictures for us real, living, active saints.



Compared to a speaking man, a silent one is simply to be regarded as a half-dead man; and there is no mightier or nobler work of man than speech. For it is by speech, more than by his shape or by any other work, that man

is most distinguished from other animals. By the carver's art even a block of wood can have the shape of a man; and an animal can see, hear, smell, sing, walk, stand, eat, drink, fast, thirst—and suffer from hunger, frost, and a hard bed—as well as a man.

The Hearts of the Saints

Moreover the Psalter does more than this. It presents to us not the simple, ordinary speech of the saints, but the best of their language, that which they used when they talked with God Himself in great earnestness and on the most important matters. Thus the Psalter lays before us not only their words instead of their deeds, but their very hearts and the inmost treasure of their souls, so we can look down to the foundation and source of their words and deeds. We can look into their hearts and see what kind of thoughts they had, how their hearts were disposed, and how they acted in all kinds of situations, in danger and in need. The legends and examples, which speak only of the deeds and miracles of the saints, do

not and cannot do this, for I cannot know how a man's heart is, even though I see or hear of many great deeds that he does. And just as I would rather hear what a saint says than see the deeds he does, so I would far rather see his heart, and the treasure in his soul, than hear his words. And this the Psalter gives us most abundantly concerning the saints, so that we can be certain of how their hearts were toward God and of the words they spoke to God and every man.

A human heart is like a ship on a wild sea, driven by the storm winds from the four corners of the world. Here it is stuck with fear and worry about impending disaster; there comes grief and sadness because of present evil. Here breathes a breeze of hope and of anticipated happiness; there blows security and joy in present blessings. These storm winds teach us to speak with earnestness, to open the heart and pour out what lies at the bottom of it. He who is stuck in fear and need speaks of misfortune quite differently than he who floats on joy; and he who floats on joy speaks and sings of joy quite differently than he who is stuck in fear. When a sad man laughs or a glad man weeps, they say, he does not do so from the heart; that is, the depths of the heart are not open, and what is in them does not come out.

What is the greatest thing in the Psalter but this earnest speaking amid these storm winds of every kind? Where does one find finer words of joy than in the psalms of praise and thanksgiving? There you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, yes, as into heaven itself. There you see what fine and pleasant flowers of the heart spring up from all sorts of fair and happy thoughts toward God, because of His blessings. On the other hand, where do you find deeper, more sorrowful, more pitiful words of sadness than in the psalms of lamentation? There again you look into the hearts of all the saints, as into death, yes, as into hell itself. How gloomy and dark it is there, with all kinds of troubled forebodings about the wrath of God! So, too, when they speak of fear and hope, they use such words that no painter could so depict for you fear or hope, and no Cicero or other orator so portray them.

And that they speak these words to God and with God, this, I repeat, is the best thing of all. This gives the words double earnestness and life. For when men speak with men about these matters, what they say does not come so powerfully from the heart; it does not burn and live, is not so urgent. Hence it is that the Psalter is the book of all saints; and everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation psalms and words that fit his ease, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake, so that he could not put it better himself, or find or wish for anything better.

The Communion of Saints

This also serves well another purpose. When these words please a man and fit his case, he becomes sure that he is in the communion of saints, and that it has gone with all the saints as it goes with him, since they all sing with him one little song. It is especially so if he can speak these words to God, as they have done; this can only be done in faith, for the words [of the saints] have no flavor to a godless man.

Finally there is in the Psalter security and a well-trying guide, so that in it one can follow all the saints without peril. The other examples and legends of the silent saints present works that one is unable to imitate; they present even more works which it is dangerous to imitate, works which usually start sects and divisions, and lead and tear men away from the communion of saints. But the Psalter holds you to the communion of saints and away from the sects. For it teaches you in joy, fear, hope, and sorrow to think and speak as all the saints have thought and spoken.



In a word, if you would see the holy Christian Church painted in living color and shape, comprehended in one little picture, then take up the Psalter. There you have a fine, bright, pure mirror that will show you

what Christendom is. Indeed you will find in it also yourself and the true ["Know yourself"], as well as God Himself and all creatures.

So, then, let us see to it also that we thank God for all these unspeakable blessings. Let us receive them and use them diligently and carefully, exercising ourselves in them to the praise and honor of God, lest with our ingratitude we earn something worse. Heretofore, in the time of darkness, how one would have treasured a right understanding of a psalm, and a reading or hearing of it in intelligible German; but we did not have it. Now, however, blessed are the eyes which see what we see, and the ears which hear what we hear. And still I fear—no, sad to say, we see it!—that things are going with us as with the Jews in the wilderness, when they said of the bread from heaven, "We loathe this worthless food" (Numbers 21:5). We should remember, however, that at the same spot there stands also the story of how they were plagued and died (Numbers 21:6), lest this same thing happen to us.

To this may God the Father of all grace and mercy help us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be praise and thanks, honor and glory, for this German Psalter and for all His innumerable and unspeakable blessings to all eternity. Amen, Amen.

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

That I May Know Him

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

Philippians 3:1-14: Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

THE PASSAGE ABOVE IS ONE of my favorite passages in the Holy Bible. Paul in his letter to the Philippians is writing a letter of thanksgiving and joy. We hear him speak of finding your joy in the Lord and also of the exaltation of the person of Jesus Christ. He shares the experiences of his life and how it is working for the further-

ance of the Gospel, Christ is preached and this brings him great joy. He describes his life as completely caught up in the person of Jesus; to live is Christ and to die is gain. He speaks of the Lordship of Christ and the exaltation of His Name. God has exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Paul says to us the reader/hearer of this letter that we need to know Jesus Christ. So how do we know him? Paul says we know Him as our righteousness: He became sin who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We have been given the righteousness of God by faith, or maybe better said by the faith of Jesus Christ. We know Him as our resurrection: He who was dead came to life again and we now live in that life, the power of His resurrection. We have no life of our own but are completely alive in Jesus. We know Him in His sufferings: His sufferings become ours as well, the fellowship of His sufferings, as we suffer in this world for the sake of Jesus. We know Him in His death: we have been joined to Jesus in His death. We are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God. We know Him in the resurrection from the dead: in Christ Jesus we have an abiding hope. We continue to press forward in life with our eyes on the prize. Our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body.

So, rejoice in the Lord, my loved fellow believers, and come to know Him in all of His fullness and splendor. To know Him is our ultimate quest in life. It is the highest achievement, the loftiest goal, the pinnacle of our existence, and the completeness of who we are as human. Jesus, the Son of God, became human so that we in our humanness can know Him. God be praised for His Amazing Grace and Loving Kindness toward humanity.

God's peace.

Christ in the Psalms

BEFORE CHRIST CAME AMONG US, God sketched the likeness of this perfect life for us in words, in this same book of Psalms; in order that, just as He revealed Himself in flesh to be the perfect, heavenly Man, so in the Psalms also men of goodwill might see the pattern life portrayed, and find therein the healing and correction of their own.

Athanasius

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I certify that all information above is true and complete.

Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

Faith, a Furnace and a Mighty God

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I do hope this finds you well. Summer vacation here has come to an end and the children are returning to school. It always a little bit of a sad time to have the summer end. Many of you have or are returning to your studies also, and I pray that all of you have a safe, blessed year. Keep your eyes and ears open to the temptations that the devil will throw in your path. Keep fighting for the Lord.

I want to share an account with you that shows the steadfast faith of three young men who only wanted to serve the Lord. This is found in Daniel 3.

King Nebuchadnezzar ruled on Babylon sod;
He did not worship the one true God.

He made an image out of gold and his pride
Ninety feet high and nine feet wide.

It was for his people for worship and meditation;
He also called all the provincial officers and rulers
to the dedication.

All stood before the image and a herald cried aloud,
"When you hear the instruments of music,
to the image you must bow.

Whoever does not bow, into a furnace you'll be thrown."
The music was sounded. Strings were strummed,
others blown.

At the sound of the music all the people bowed the knee,
But some Chaldeans among them saw an 'unruly' three.
They went and told the king and he was very wroth;
He ordered mighty men to bring them forth.

Nebuchadnezzar asked them, "Is it true what I have heard?
You did not bow the knee, even though it was my word?
Young men do as I say – worship my image or into the
furnace you'll go."

These three stood firm – Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

The three young men served the one true God;
They answered the king, taking care with their words.

"Our God is mighty to save us from this fire,
But if not, just know we serve our God who is higher."

More furious than ever was the king in a rage!
His heart towards the young men was so very changed.
He had his men heat the furnace seven times hotter
than before.

"Bind these three who know what's in store.
Into the furnace they go, clothes and all."

So the three men were forced and in the flames they did fall.
The mighty men who bound them, were slain from the heat.

Their god couldn't save them for it was weak.

Nebuchadnezzar watched the fire through the door;
As he watched he jumped up, for in the furnace he saw four.

He saw four men freely walking in the fire - how odd.

"They are not hurt, and they are loose; the fourth is like
the Son of God!"

The king came near and called, "Servants of the
most high God, come out."

Astonished at seeing no harm from the fire,
The king and his men witnessed a God who's much higher.

Their clothes were not burned, and not a singed hair,
and no trace of smoke was smelled anywhere.

This was astonishing but the message was clear:

These three only worshiped the God that they feared.

They bravely offered their bodies and had entered the fray.

They had faith that God would protect them that day.

Nebuchadnezzar was amazed and said, "Blessed be God,
The one who saved these from my terrible word."

He then made a decree for all people everywhere,
"Do not speak anything bad about the God that worked here.

If one bad word comes off of your tongue,
You'll be cut into pieces and your houses made as dung.

Because NO God can deliver after this sort, it's true.

Hear me, O people, this decree is for you."

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were promoted by
the Babylon king.

They were important helpers—much good they would bring.
God would work through them;

Him they would serve.

I pray this is our heart, to stand fast on His Word.



Exodus 20:3-6

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,
or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above,
or that is in the earth beneath,
or that is in the water under the earth:
Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them,
nor serve them:*

*for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children
unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;
And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me,
and keep my commandments.*

God's peace.

The Book of Psalms

Paul Kretzmann

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Psalms, or the Psalter, is the great prayer-book of the Church of all times, the collection of divinely inspired odes or songs whose singing was of old accompanied by instruments of music. Under the guidance of God the Psalms as we now know them were at various times collected, five sections, or books, being distinguished (Ps. 41, 13; 72, 18, 19; 89, 52; 106, 48; 150), the final arrangement being made after the Babylonian Captivity by Ezra, as the tradition of the Jews has it.

To more than one hundred psalms are prefixed inscriptions which give one or more particulars and directions for the public rendering of the sacred song, such as the name of the author, of the instrument on which the accompaniment was to be played, of the style of the music or of the poetry, of the melody which the choirmaster was to choose, of the subject or occasion for which it was written. The “chief musician” was the superintendent of the Temple music, who was probably at the same time the leader of the Temple orchestra and the director of the Temple chorus of priests and Levites.

The Psalter is usually called “The Psalms of David,” since he is the only author mentioned in the New Testament, Luke 20, 42, and because his name appears in more titles than that of any other writer. The name of David appears in the heading of about one half of the psalms; besides, the authorship of Ps. 2 and Ps. 95 is ascribed to him, Acts 4, 25; Heb. 4, 7, He may have written others which are not credited to him. To Asaph, a Levite and one of the three heads of David’s choir at Jerusalem, are ascribed twelve psalms; to the sons of Korah, a celebrated family of singers and poets in the time of David, eleven, including Ps. 88, whose author, Heman, belonged to the sons of Korah; to Solomon, two; to Moses, one; and to Ethan, one of the three masters of the Temple music, one.

Of special interest to us are the Messianic psalms, including Ps. 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 45, 47, 68, 69, 72, 89, 93, 97, 110, 118; they refer to the Messiah, the promised Redeemer of the world, portraying more or less vividly and completely His person and work, His birth, betrayal, agony, and death, His triumph over death, His ascension into heaven and enthronement at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

Of the general contents of the psalter, Luther writes: “It should be noted that the entire Psalter deals with five subjects; therefore we divide it into five parts. In the first place, some psalms prophesy of Christ and of the Church, or the saints, what would happen to them, etc.; and to this class belong all the psalms in which there are promises given to the pious and threats to the ungodly. In the second place, there is a number of doctrinal psalms, which teach us what we should do and what omit according to the Law of God; and to this class belong all the psalms which condemn the doctrine of men and extol the Word of God. In the third place, there are several psalms of consolation, which comfort the sorrowing and suffering saints and, on the other hand, condemn and terrify the tyrants. ... In the fourth place, there are a few psalms of prayer, in which we pray to God and cry in all distress; and to this class belong all psalms which lament and mourn and cry over the enemies. In the fifth place, we have psalms of thanksgiving, in which we laud and praise God for His various benefits and His assistance; and to this class belong all psalms which praise God in His works, these being the finest and principal psalms. ... But we must know that the psalms cannot be just exactly and evenly divided into such parts and verses, for sometimes two, three, and even all five divisions, as noted above, are found in one psalm, so that prophecy, doctrine, consolation, prayer, and thanksgiving are found together. But this division serves for the better understanding of the psalms and that we may the more easily learn and remember them.” ~

LET ME FIRST COMMENT ON the Psalms as words to Christ (*vox ad Christum*). When the Psalms address God, the Fathers have little hesitation in seeing in these words also prayers addressed to Christ. Since Christ is the incarnate Son of God, the Fathers consider it entirely legitimate that Christ is addressed as God in the very words of the Psalms. So when the Psalmist appeals to God for help, forgiveness, and justice, and so on, all of these petitions may be interpreted also as petitions addressed to Christ. Thus, the Fathers consciously allow theological convictions to influence their reading of the text.

The Psalms also speak *about* Christ (*vox de Christo*). This becomes particularly clear when we look at the Fathers’ exegesis of Psalm 1. “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,” begins Psalm 1. The immediate question, of course, is: who is “the man” who is the object of the psalmist’s speech? Fascinatingly, the very first words of Augustine’s commentary on the Psalms are Christ-filled words. “This statement,” he says, “should be understood as referring to our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the Lord-Man.” He then continues to speak about Christ’s faithfulness in contrast to Adam’s lack thereof: “Blessed is the person who has not gone astray in the council of the ungodly, as did the earthly man who conspired with his wife, already beguiled by the serpent, to disregard God’s commandments.” When he then reflects on the man of Psalm 1 as not standing in the way of sinners, Augustine takes this as an opportunity to comment on the incarnation itself: “Christ most certainly came in the way of sinners by being born as sinners are; but he did not stand in it, for worldly allurements did not hold him.” Augustine distinguishes here between “coming” and “standing”: Christ “came” in the way of sinners since in the incarnation he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, but he did not “stand” in the way of sinners, which is to say he did not become sinful. Without any hesitation, therefore, Augustine begins with a christological reading of the Psalm. The psalmist’s voice is here a *vox de Christo*; a voice about Christ.

Hans Boersma

Reformation

Pastor Chuck Bylka
South Range, Michigan

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Isaiah 55:1-11



During the time of the Reformation, Martin Luther sought to correct some of the abuses in the church by bringing it back under the authority of God's Word. Luther understood that the problems within the church were a result of a departure from the teachings of the Holy Scripture. This is no less true in the church today. As the Body of Christ seeks to minister to the various concerns of a fallen world, our temptation is to listen to reason or emotion, rather than to the voice of God.

In the midst of our turmoil, God continues to cry out: *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live...* God's Word gives life to all who hear in faith. It does so, because all of Scripture points us to the Living Word, Jesus Christ. It is the redemption by His blood that gives life and salvation for sinful mankind. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (v. 11)*

As both a preacher and hearer of Gospel, this second promise gives great comfort to me. It means that God's Word will bear fruit regardless of the skills or efforts of the preacher or the understanding of the hearer. God has the power to minister to us in this marvelous way through the power of His glorious Word. May God grant us grace to hearken unto the voice of the Good Shepherd, so that we may hear and live.

Yours in Christ.

Let's Be Honest

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington

ARE YOU HONEST WITH GOD? That seems like an odd question to ask Christians; after all as Christians we know that God is all-knowing. So it wouldn't seem to make any sense to try to be dishonest with Him. Yet it is possible for us to have a view of God which doesn't permit us to be completely honest with Him.

For instance, someone can believe that God's love for them is conditional, based on their obedience. Or that God is primarily a means to gain the good things in this life. For one who believes either of those things, it would be unimaginable to complain to God. For the former that would constitute a form of disobedience, and for the latter a possible hindrance to God's generosity.

Yet consider how often we read in the Psalms and find the writer complaining to God. For instance in Psalm 13 David begins: *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?* This was likely written after David had been declared by God to be the future king, and he was being pursued by King Saul who was jealously trying to kill him. In David's words you can hear the raw emotion as he wonders aloud to God if He's really going to help. And if so, when?

God is not put off by our complaints. He knows our weaknesses, our frailty, even our lack of faith to believe that He will indeed fulfill all of His promises to us in the very best way possible. And He knows that the effects of living in a fallen creation are difficult for us at times. And He invites us to be honest with Him. This involves pouring out the pain and hurt and uncertainty that so often fills our hearts.

God knows your pain, but He also knows that He has provided that remedy for your pain. He has sent His Son Jesus on a mission to redeem us and to bring us into His eternal kingdom where pain shall be no more. So even as we pour out our complaints before Him, He puts into our hearts the faith to believe in Him through it all. He did so for David, and He'll do so for you. Just listen to how David concludes that Psalm: *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*

Whatever you are going through, cry out to God, because He is your ever present help in the time of your need. ~

Praying the Psalms

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

THE PSALMS HAVE BEEN A great comfort to generations of believers, in both good and bad times. The imagery and poetic beauty contained in the psalter speak peace in the dark night of the soul, when sin besets us, when doubts arise, when fear assails. The resounding joy and praise flowing from the pen of the psalmists cause our hearts also to overflow with thankfulness for providence and protection, for salvation, with the joy of the Lord.

Did you know that we can pray the Psalms? God has given us words to speak to Him in the various situations in our lives. We can use the Word of God to pray to the One Who gave us that Word.



In times of trial and suffering, Psalm 61 brings strong comfort:

Psalm 61:1-4: Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

Many of the Psalms have a title which gives the author and a hint as to the reason it was written. Psalm 18 praises God for His deliverance, and it has this title: *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,*

Psalm 18:1-6: I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so

shall I be saved from mine enemies. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

David was a psalmist, shepherd boy and great king of Israel. David knew the attributes of a good shepherd, and David's very familiar 23rd Psalm speaks of Jesus, the Good Shepherd:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

In the Psalms, we praise God for His marvelous works. Psalm 145 has this title: *David's Psalm of Praise.*

I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

Psalm 150 calls all people to praise the Lord:

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

Praying the Psalms, and other Scriptures, is a blessing and a privilege for God's people. We speak His Words back to Him, and He hears us. ~

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The Harvest

Pastor Jay Weidner
Laurium, Michigan

1. Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home; all is safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin. God our Maker doth provide for our wants to be supplied; come
to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

2. All the world is God's own field, fruit as praise to God we yield; wheat and tares together sown are to joy or sorrow
grown; first the blade and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear; Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and
pure may be.

3. For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take the harvest home; from the field shall in that day all offenses purge
away, giving angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast; but the fruitful ears to store in the garner evermore.

4. Even so, Lord, quickly come, bring thy final harvest home; gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin,
there, forever purified, in thy presence to abide; come, with all thine angels, come, raise the glorious harvest home.

THIS HYMN, AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY penned by Henry Alford, appears with different lyrics than those recorded in our
"Hymns and Songs of Zion" #652. The first verse is the same, addressing the issue of the earthly harvest and the
sustenance God so bountifully provides for our lives through it. The succeeding verses are very different, reflecting the
idea of the coming eschatological harvest as Jesus spoke in the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43: *Another
parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men
slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then
appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from
whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather
them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest:
and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the
wheat into my barn...*

*Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of
the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed
are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the
end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this
world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do
iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the
sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

As the idea of the harvest at the end of the age, this hymn serves as a perfect reminder of how we Christians should
approach the coming harvest season, with one eyes set on the goodness of God in providing our daily needs through the fruit
of the earth and one eye on the fields that are white for harvest continually in John, chapter 4:

*Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for
they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and
he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye
bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. (John 4:35-38)*

As we have been blessed by our Lord with the food we need through the harvest He provides, let us join in working to
bring in His harvest as He has appointed us to reap for Him. We thank you for your support as we continue to train laborers for
the harvest.

*I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore
will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found
trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord,
and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto
thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

Psalm 116:1-7