



**Bible Study: The Book of Psalms**

**Week Two: September 29, 2021**

**1. Honorable Welcome**

- a. Did you memorize a verse from a Psalm from last week? Did you use it? Notice anything?
- b. What is ONE PROBLEM FACING SOCIETY TODAY that you are passionate about?
- c. Our Opening Prayer: Psalm 85 (A Prayer for Complete Restoration)

**2. The Psalms as Hebrew Poetry: Part One**

- a. Large portions of the Old Testament are written in a form of poetry:
  - i. **Gnomic:** Wisdom or Thought Poetry focused on the human condition in society. Bible: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Sirach
  - ii. **Lyric:** Word comes from “lyre” in Greek as these were meant to be sung; they are expressive of feelings. Bible: Psalms (praise), Lamentations (mourning), Song of Songs, and portions of Moses’ blessings and curses.
  - iii. **Tribal Songs:** Lamech
  - iv. **Mashals** – parables as in Judges 14, 14
  - v. **Paean**s – Songs of Victory (Moses at Ex. 15, 1-18 delighting in Victory over pharaoh)
  - vi. **Dirges** – Funeral Songs like that of David in 2 Samuel 1, 17-27 (praising Saul’s memory)
- b. Lyrical writing is the most ancient texts that we have (older than “narratives”) in Babylon and Greece. Poets sang songs before philosophers or others write their words.
- c. Editors of the Bible learned this over time and thus layouts of the text changed over time
- d. In the Bible, some of our most ancient texts are poetry: consider the response of Adam at the creation of Eve (Genesis 2, 23-24); Lamech response in Genesis 4, 23-24; the sun stood still as is recorded in the Book of Jashar (which is lost to us) (Joshua 10, 12-13);
- e. There is emotion in poetry and allows us to find power in our own imagination – different than simply writing facts! The medium is essential: how we say it is as important as what we are saying!
- f. Hebrew poetry has RHYTHM of thought and ideas (but not always in its flow like in English poetry and music). It is not about syllables (or rhyming) but thought. Each line is broken into two or three STICHS with several words each (see Ps. 54, 1-2).
- g. There are “plays on words” in the poetry that do not mean anything to us in English but would make sense in the Hebrew. In Jeremiah 1, 11-12: almond is SHAQUED and watching is SHOQUED. The almond blooms first in the spring and God is always watching to see who will respond to His grace! Get it?
- h. More next week...

**3. GROUP TWO: Psalms that cry: Thy Kingdom Come**

- a. The problems of evil for people who desire to believe in God’s goodness: where are you God?
- b. Jesus taught us to pray: THY KINGDOM COME. The Beatitudes seek to establish a kingdom where things are different than the world in which we are currently living. Where heaven

- breaks in and the poor matter, the weak are cared for, the hurting are consoled...but it does not happen automatically...God needs each Christian to act in accord with kingdom values. Do we?
- c. The Jewish people has an expectant faith that God would act in an imminent way to restore all things (get this in order to understand the trials of Judas who quit Team Jesus)
  - d. Let's Pray Psalm 10 & Psalm 80 (out loud as intended)
    - i. What phrase do you notice?
    - ii. A modern correlation may be from music that cried out for change (folk, rebel, even "some" modern hip-hop)
    - iii. At times, the Psalms can seem distrustful or disrespectful towards God. But it is not that...they are speaking to God with confidence (with raised voices). Times are tough – but God is here. The "problem of evil" is left to Job...no answers here, just cries! But they want ACTION from God. We KNOW you are just – so BE JUST (your kingdom come)!
  - e. Psalm 10 (Help against Oppressors)
    - i. What are the EVIL DEEDS that are mentioned (vs. 2-11)? What does the Psalmist believe God is doing (v. 1)? What does he want from God (vs. 12-14)? Since it is poetry, the offenses are not specific – we need to use our imagination.
    - ii. A return to praise happens in vs. 16-18
  - f. Psalm 80 (Restore the Lord's Vineyard)
    - i. We begin with a cry to be saved (vs. 2-7); there is passion (people are crying)
    - ii. A war has been lost and the enemy has pillaged (leading to enslavement).
    - iii. Did God allow the vine (which had been flourishing as we see in vs. 9-12) to be destroyed (vs. 13-16)? Who is destroying the Church today?
    - iv. The Psalmist wants those responsible to PERISH (vs. 17-18). Does God care that this is happening?
    - v. Is the conclusion a form of "deal making" (vs. 19-20) done with trust? Sound familiar to you?

#### 4. Honorable Closure

- a. HOMEWORK: Pray the Psalms (10 & 80): be quiet, breathe deeply, imagine God, pray the words. Pay attention to what is happening in your heart. Additional Psalms with this theme are 89, 111, 37, 99, 33, 85, 106
- b. Join us for the Blessing of Animals Sunday at 1pm
- c. Join us next week and try to invite a friend to join you too! In person crowd – snacks???
- d. Join Virtual Small Group Discussion as well...

#### 5. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- a. From your perspective who are the "innocent ones" who are ambushed by the rich and powerful (to the point of pain or death) in the world of 2021?
- b. Often in tragic moments (school shootings, acts of terror, people fleeing their country in large numbers) people offer "thoughts and prayers". Is that enough? Do Psalms 10 and 80 call for more from God? From others in the human family?
- c. When God seems distant because you feel the pain of so many problems – do you continue to cry out like the Psalmist or do you stop praying? Have you always been like this?
- d. Is there a verse from Psalms 10 or 80 that you will try to memorize this week and recite often throughout the day?
- e. Close with the Lord's Prayer