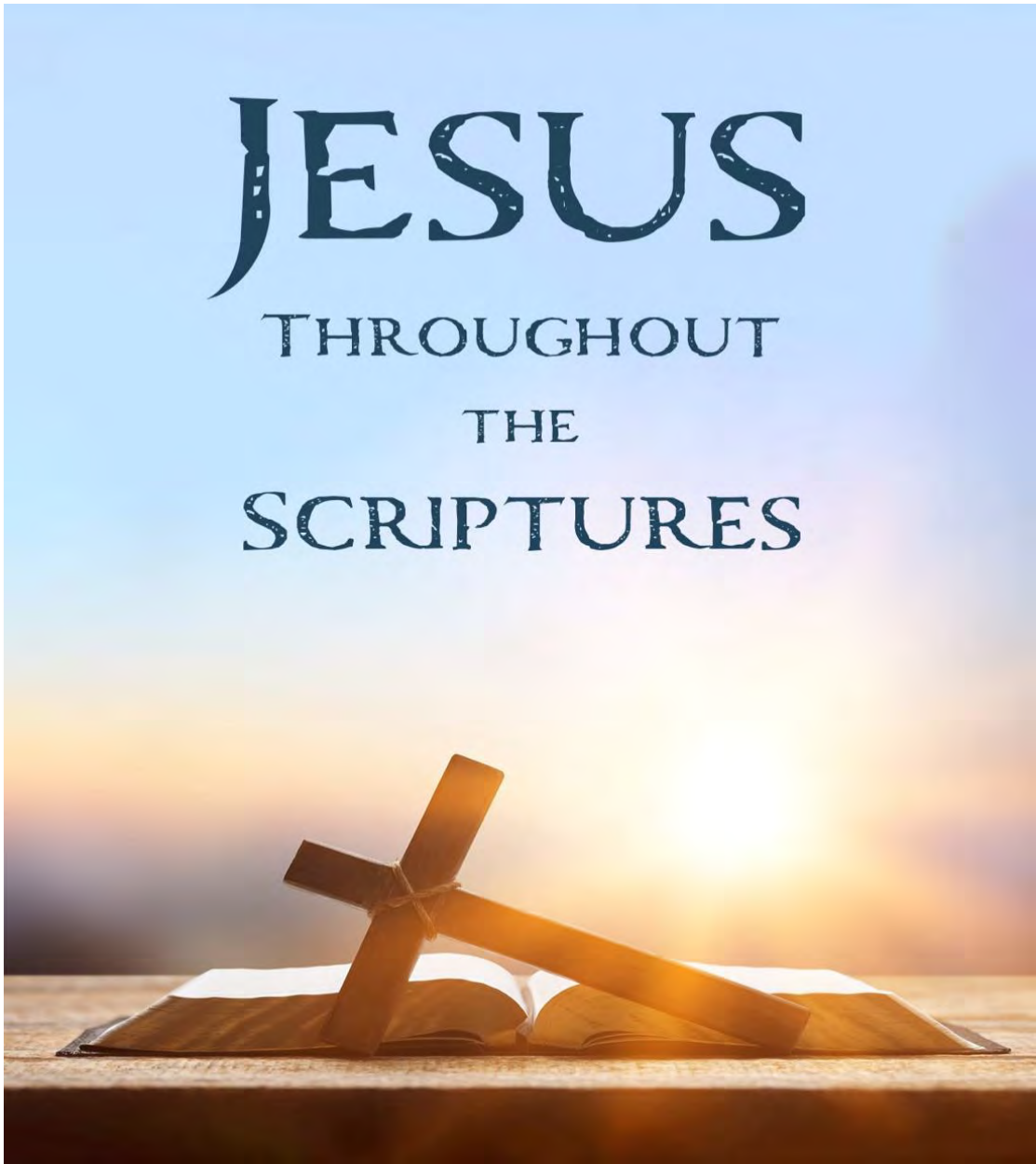


JESUS

THROUGHOUT
THE
SCRIPTURES



Part 8: The Psalms (1)

T. M. and Susie Moore

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Jesus throughout the Scriptures
Part 8: The Psalms (1)
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Jesus throughout the Scriptures: The Psalms (1)—Introduction

No book in Scripture points us to Jesus more consistently or with such clarity as the book of Psalms. In Part 1 of our journey through the Psalms, we will see that Jesus fairly leaps from the pages of the Psalms to the eyes of us who know Him. For those who lived during the time the Psalms were being written, those we will study in this part of our series, “Jesus throughout the Scriptures”, must have provoked a good bit of wonder and hope.

We are pleased to offer this resource at no charge to readers, but we encourage to pray and seek the Lord whether He might have you join in supporting the work of The Fellowship of Ailbe. You can use the contribute button at our website to give online, or you may send a check to The Fellowship of Ailbe, P. O. Box 8213, Essex, VT 05451.

We hope you find these studies helpful so that you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to increase in love for God and your neighbors.

T. M. Moore
Principal

1 Who Is the Righteous One?

Pray Psalm 1.1, 2.

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

Sing Psalm 1.1, 2.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Blessed the one who walks not in the counsel of ungodly men;
stands not in the path of sinners, joins not scorners in their sin.
But his joy is in the LORD's law, and he meditates therein.

Read Psalm 1.1-6; meditate on verse 6.

Preparation

1. What does the blessed person *not* do?
2. What does God promise for the righteous person?

Meditation

Who of us matches up to this description of the blessed man? Unacquainted with sin. Delighting in the Law of God and meditating on it day and night. Bringing forth the fruit of righteousness consistently in all we do.

Yeah, not me. And not you either, I suspect.

But then, as this and all the psalms will insist, if we are not righteous, we are wicked, ungodly sinners. We might like to think of ourselves as better than others, but righteousness stands on the far side of a gorge that none of us can jump nor bridge, and jumping farther than your neighbor, since you cannot reach the other side, means that you both will nevertheless fall like chaff into the flames of God's judgment. We cannot attain righteousness on our own efforts.

But we *desire* to be righteous! We believe, Lord; help our unbelief! For those who despair of attaining righteousness on their own, God will provide. Psalm 1 leads us to consider ourselves, to know ourselves as God does. We fall short of His requirements, expectations, and glory. But we long to be righteous!

And God knows our heart. He will provide. Righteousness is a recurrent theme of the Psalms, and we are continuously reminded that it comes from God alone. Thus, here in this first of two "cornerstone" psalms, we are pointed to Jesus, the Righteous One, Whose righteousness is credited to us who long for Him and the gift of righteousness He bestows.

And, in case we miss it here, God will be even more explicit in Psalm 2.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8.1).

After we accept the Gift of salvation, it is then incumbent upon us to walk according to the Spirit. And since we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will want to please Him. But to please Him, we must learn how, from Him. The way to learn from Him, how to please Him, is through His Word. Jesus is the Word, and through Him we learn how to please God. God gave us His Word in the flesh and in writing. He also gave His creation as a testimony. Creation, Jesus, and the Bible. Get into all three and learn of Him.

“Thus says the LORD:

‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls’” (Jer. 6.16).

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.

For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit” (Jer. 17.7, 8).

Wisdom—Jesus—says:

“Listen to Me, My children, for blessed are those who keep My ways. Hear instruction and be wise; and do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors. For whoever finds Me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD; but he who sins against Me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate Me love death” (Prov. 8.32-36).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1.1-4).

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (Jn. 5.39, 40).

“With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119.10, 11).

We can never be godly on our own. True.

But after we accept the righteousness of God, and we are clothed in Jesus’ saving grace, we must give our best and utmost attention to delighting in His Word and meditating in it day and night. “For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Ps. 1.6).

Reflection

1. We need to learn Jesus, to be firmly planted in Him. What can we learn about Jesus from creation?
2. Jesus said that all of Scripture is about Him (Jn. 5.39). What is your approach to discerning Jesus in all of Scripture?
3. We are being transformed into the very image of Jesus by His Spirit, working within us (2 Cor. 3.12-18; Phil. 2.12). What is our responsibility in this process?

The river of temporal things carries [us] along, but like a tree growing near a river is our Lord Jesus Christ. He assumed flesh, died, rose again, ascended into heaven. He wanted, so to speak, to plant himself near the river of temporal things. Are you being swept headlong? Take hold of the wood. Does love of the world whirl you about? Take hold of Christ. Augustine (354-430), Homilies on 1 John 2.10.2

Pray Psalm 1.3-6.

Pray that the Lord will transform you increasingly into the likeness of Jesus, and that He will guide and direct your steps along the Jesus Path today.

Sing Psalm 1.3-6.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

He shall flourish like a tree transplanted by the streams of grace;
rooted near life-giving waters, growing strong in this blessed place—
ever fruitful, never with'ring, prospering before God's face.

Not so rooted are the wicked, like chaff blowing in the wind.

They shall not stand with the righteous but shall be judged in their sin.
For the LORD knows all the righteous, but the wicked's ways shall end.

2 Point Our Sad World to Jesus

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”

Sing Psalm 2.1-3.

(Agincourt: *O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High*)

Why do the nations vainly rage, conspiring together from age to age?
Earth’s kings and all of their couns’lers stand against the LORD and His Right Hand:

“Now let us cast His yoke below, His Kingdom authority overthrow!
Cast off His Law, reject His Word; no more be governed by this LORD!”

Read Psalm 2; meditate on verses 4-6.

Preparation

1. What were the nations doing?
2. How did God respond?

Meditation

Neglect, indifference, or mere superficiality in matters of faith are as abominable to God as outright rebellion. Nations, peoples, governments, institutions, cultures, and individuals who come under any of these categories are subject to the condemnation and wrath of God. And putative Christians who reject the Law of God had better think twice about where they stand in relationship to Him.

The psalms are as relevant to our day as any, for they help us see, not only into our own hearts but into the heart of our world as well. And our world and its hubris, its flippancy toward God, and its rejection of His Law put them in the firing line of His wrath. God mocks the rebellious of this world. But before He comes to pour out His wrath in judgment, He offers them the great gift of grace—The Messiah (v. 2), our Lord Jesus Christ.

God pointing to Jesus in Psalm 2 is what this entire series, “Jesus throughout the Bible”, is all about. In every place in Scripture, many more than we have pointed out thus far, God points the wrong-believing world to Jesus, offering them grace for salvation but warning of judgment to come.

And how does God do this? Through us, His appointed ambassadors and witnesses. Our generation has dropped the baton that was handed to us by the generations of witnesses who preceded us and who even now watch us stumbling and fumbling along in our race (Heb. 12.1, 2). We must take up the baton of witness-bearing, my friends, that the race of faith may continue in the generations to come.

Embrace your [Personal Mission Field](#) and work it day by day, pointing your world, like our heavenly Father did, to Jesus.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

The sad wrong-believing world, plus a raft of wrong-thinking and wrong-behaving Christians, are all in dire straits with God. Do any one of them want to be derided and laughed at by God? Is their hubris preventing them from hearing it? “They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear, which will not heed the voice of charmers, charming ever so skillfully” (Ps. 58.4, 5).

But mistaken thinking, or willful ignorance, does not prevent a thing from being true. And truly, God is greatly displeased, angry even, when anyone does not love and respect His King, His only begotten Son, His Jesus.

“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little” (Ps. 2.12).

So, why would anyone knowingly poke this bear? Why would it ever be a good idea to rage against God, or to plot vain things against Him and His people? How could this ever be a good idea?

Elihu broached the question of why with Job: “Why do you contend with Him?” (Job 33.13). And really, as Job eventually saw, there is no sensible answer to that question.

Questioning God, being hubristic with Him, striving against Him, is as useless and silly as the preposterously posing guards at the tomb of Jesus. “So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard” (Matt. 27.66). Right. Who could stop the resurrection? Absolutely no one. Who can contend with God? No one.

And as an aside: those bonds and cords that the Psalm 2 rebellious were cavalierly throwing aside? The Law of God (Ex. 20.1-17) and the Word of God (Jesus).

And God’s words to Jesus? God’s words of encouragement. God’s Fatherly wrath understood: “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’” (Ps. 110.1). God will not look favorably on those who are the unrepentant enemies of His Son. God’s will, will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10). “I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2.6). “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You” (Ps. 2.7).

Because of Jesus, we can approach the Father, not with a question, but with a hopeful boldness (Heb. 4.16):
“Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous” (Ps. 143.1, 2).

And yet. We are through Jesus. Only Jesus.

And we have the joy of pointing ourselves, and those in our Personal Mission Field, to Jesus. He is the power of God to salvation for everyone who rightly believes (Rom. 1.16). “For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him” (2 Cor. 1.20 ESV)!

Reflection

1. How can you know when you are ignoring or just drifting away from God and His ways?
2. Why is this not a good pattern for your life (Heb. 12.3-11)?
3. How can believers help one another to stay on the Jesus Path and not listen to voices that want to pull us

off our proper course?

The Lord Jesus has all power both in heaven and in earth, and is Head over all things to the church, notwithstanding the restless endeavors of his enemies. Christ's throne is set up in his church, that is, in the hearts of all believers. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 2.1-6

Pray Psalm 2.4-12.

Pray that Christians everywhere will be revived and emboldened to proclaim Jesus to the world. Pray for those you will see today and for an opportunity to speak and point them to the Lord.

Sing Psalm 2.4-12.

(Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High)

The LORD in heaven laughs in wrath at all who embark on this cursed path.
His angry Word to them is plain: "Yet shall My King in Zion reign!"

I will declare the LORD's decree. He said, "My Son I have begotten Thee.
Ask Me, and I will give every land for You to rule as I have planned."

Be wise, O kings, O judges, hear, and tremble with joy, serve the LORD with fear.
Embrace the Son, keep His wrath at bay, or you shall perish in the way.

His wrath is kindled like a flame at all who refuse to bow to His Name.
Beware His anger and judgment grim: How blessed are all who trust in Him!

3 The Lord Our Defender

Pray Psalm 5:1-3.

Give ear to my words, O LORD,
Consider my meditation.
Give heed to the voice of my cry,
My King and my God,
For to You I will pray.
My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;
In the morning I will direct *it* to You,
And I will look up.

Sing Psalm 5:1-3.

(Angel's Story: *O Jesus, I Have Promised*)

O LORD, attend and hear me, consider how I groan.
Receive my cries and near be, great King and God my own.
By morning, LORD, You hear me; I pray, LORD, fill my cup!
I long to see You clearly, as to You I look up.

Read Psalm 5; meditate on verses 11, 12.

Preparation

1. In this wicked world, who can rejoice?
2. Why are they able to rejoice?

Meditation

The psalmist rejoices in the Lord, His Defender (vv. 11, 12). He defends us by hearing our prayers (vv. 1, 2), by making us both to know sin and that sin does not please Him (vv. 4-6), by opening His Presence to us and robing us in His mercy (v. 7), showing us the path of righteousness (v. 8), and giving us clear warning to beware those who would flatter and mislead us (vv. 9, 10).

And He defends us by reminding us of the promise of blessing which He continually holds out to all who love His Name (vv. 11, 12), thus leading us by a true and unfailing hope.

Jesus said that He is our Good Shepherd because He defends His sheep from the wolf who would devour them (Jn. 10:11-13; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8, 9). We live in a world of lies, half-truths, and deception. The psalmist knew a similar experience, and he looked to the Lord as His Defender. At the same time, he pointed forward to Jesus, our Defender and Shield.

We do not have to fear being misled or duped by our age in flight from God. We have His Word, and His Word reveals the nature of sin and, by God's Law, the path of righteousness. Through Jesus, God opens the door to His Presence, that we may come freely before Him to find mercy and grace to help in our time of need.

Thus we can rejoice in Jesus and His strong defense against everything in this lying world that threatens to rob us of our peace, hope, faith, and joy. And looking to Him, in Whom all the promises of God are "Yes!" and "Amen!", we can go rejoicing into our day, working to advance Jesus' rule on earth as it is in heaven.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13:52; Psalm 119:162

"But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;

let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;
let those also who love Your Name be joyful in You.
For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;
with favor You will surround him as with a shield” (Ps. 5.11, 12).

David, who wrote this psalm, experienced safety through many battles, many personal problems, many national crises, he fought off bears and lions, and killed a giant. He died, probably in his own bed, an old man.

Jesus, fought with Satan, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and Roman rulers and soldiers, and was crucified and died the most heinous death possible whilst carrying the sins of the entire world—past, present, and future.

Peter, fought against prejudice, religious rulers, soldiers, was rescued from prison, and died a martyr’s death.

But for all of them, God’s protection—being surrounded as with a shield—was true.
God protects, heals, saves, cares for, loves, forgives; and then we die. When or how is His business.
“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die...” (Eccl. 3.1, 2).

But while we are alive, God does amazing things to protect us—spiritually and physically.

Let’s look at the time God rescued Peter: he had been arrested and four squads of soldiers were guarding him in prison. Herod was going to bring him out the next day, no doubt to kill him. He had already killed James, the brother of John.

“That night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers;
and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.”
So far, so good, for Herod’s team.

“Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison;
and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands.
Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals’; and so he did.
And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me.’ So he went out and followed him,
and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.
When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city,
which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the
angel departed from him” (Acts 12.1-10).

Rescued by the Lord, his Defender.

Just like no one could hinder the resurrection, no one, no prison, no chains, no guards, nothing can hinder God from doing what God wants to do (Matt. 6.10). When, or how He chooses best.

“But I AM the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared—The LORD of hosts is His Name” (Is. 51.15). He chose roaring water to divide, not a simple trickle. He IS GOD. “Hear Him!” (Matt. 17.5).

And God, Who divides roaring water, and removes chained, guarded, imprisoned men from captivity, has promised to protect us. Until protection is no longer necessary, and we are taken home to be with Him. Snuggled eternally in His faithful arms (Deut. 33.27).

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I AM gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11.28-30).

Reflection

1. How do you experience Jesus as your Defender?
2. How does knowing Jesus continuously defends us encourage you in working your Personal Mission Field?
3. Whom will you encourage today by reminding them that Jesus is our Defender?

Accordingly the reason of this joy is added, because the Lord will cover or protect them. As often as God bestows any blessings upon any of the faithful, the rest, as I have said before, ought to conclude that he will show himself beneficent towards them. Again, this passage teaches us, that true joy proceeds from no other source than from the protection of God. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 5.11, 12

Pray Psalm 5.4-12.

What trials or adversity are you facing today? Bring it to the Lord and rest it in His defending care! Praise God that He is your Shield, and call on Him to help you love His Name more and more.

Sing Psalm 5.4-12.

(Angel's Story: O Jesus, I Have Promised)

In sin You take no pleasure; no evil dwells with You.
Vain boasts earn Your displeasure, and those who boasting do.
Sin kindles Your hot anger, You crush all those who lie;
deceivers live in danger of Your all-searching eye.

O LORD, Your lovingkindness escorts me in this place.
I bow before Your Highness and praise Your glorious grace!
In righteous ways You guide me; Your pathway I will know.
No good will be denied me as I with You, LORD, go.

My foes would fain deceive me and crush me in the way;
Their lying tongues would grieve me and lead my soul astray.
Their guilt hangs on above them; their guile shall be their fall;
they spurn the One Who loves them: reject them, one and all!

Let those rejoice who seek You and shelter 'neath Your wing.
Their tongues shall rise to speak to Your praise; Your grace they sing.
Your people You will bless, LORD, all those who to You yield.
Preserve them with Your best Word, and guard them like a shield.

4 See Jesus

Pray Psalm 8.1, 2.

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens!
Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

Sing Psalm 8.1, 2.

(Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation)

O LORD our Lord how great is Your Name in all the earth!
The heav'ns display Your glory, and tell Your wondrous worth!
From babes and nursing infants, LORD, let Your strength increase,
'til all Your foes surrender, and all their boasting cease.

Read Psalm 8; meditate on verse 4.

Preparation

1. To what do the heavens bear witness?
2. Why did God make people?

Meditation

What a privilege, blessing, and charge are granted us as the image-bearers of God! Not only may we discern the glory of God in great things—the heavens—and small—a nursing infant, but God deigns to visit us every day (Job 7.17, 18) and, by His Word and Spirit, to remind us of our charge—to exercise dominion in His Name—and equip us for each day's work.

But now, the writer of Hebrews observed, we do not yet see our charge being fully accomplished (Heb. 8. 9). As true as that was toward the end of the first century, it's just as true in ours. The task seems impossible. People and their cultures and societies nurse at the breast of God's common grace, then go their way to deny, reject, and scorn Him and His salvation. And we in the Church have become content with a Gospel that is true but narrow, confined merely to whatever we choose to do in or through our church.

But "all things" is bigger than that. It includes all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities; and in the larger scenario, all of creation, culture, and society. *All* things. God calls us, every believer in Jesus, to extend the rule of His righteousness, peace, and joy throughout our Personal Mission Field, our community, and our world, that the reality of the Kingdom, coming on earth as it is in heaven, may be increasingly known.

But now, though we do not yet see this happening, we do not despair, because we see Jesus. We gaze, with the eyes of faith, upon His beauty and goodness. We bask in His truth. We seek to be transformed into His image. And, as we do, He makes us more like Himself and gives us the power of His living Word and Holy Spirit to restore the reconciled world for God's glory.

Psalm 8 presents a great privilege and an impossible task. It leaves us crying out, "O God, visit us to help us fulfill our charge!" And He is pleased to satisfy that deep longing by sending Jesus and His Kingdom.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

In the superscription for Psalm 8, David noted that the instrument he used to accompany his song was from Gath—plundered, no doubt, from his enemies (1 Sam. 17.4). So, the psalm starts on a victorious note.

But then he asks us to ponder an existential question, stated thus:

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
and the son of man that You visit him?” (Ps. 8.3, 4).

“LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?
Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow” (Ps. 144.3, 4).

“What is man, that You should exalt him,
that You should set Your heart on him,
that You should visit him every morning,
and test him every moment?” (Job 7.17, 18).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights,
with Whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
Of His Own will He brought us forth by the word of truth,
that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (Jms. 1.17, 18).

Jesus is The Good and Perfect Gift. God sent Him for us.
We are the beneficiaries of His Gift.

Our only response then, to the question at hand--why?
Why would God create us, love us, be mindful of us, and set His heart on us?

Silence.

We cannot answer why God created man,
nor why He made covenants with man,
nor why He chose to forgive and save man.
We can only respond as David did:
O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your Name in all the earth!” (Ps. 8.1, 9)

But then there is this amazing truth:
Jesus said,
“You did not choose Me,
but I chose you
and appointed you
that you should go and bear fruit,
and that your fruit should remain...” (Jn. 15.16).
Playing some tunes on an instrument of Gath.

Victorious in Him.

“How excellent is Your Name in all the earth!” Jesus.

Reflection

1. What do you do during your visits with the Lord each day? What is God's purpose for these visits?
2. What does it mean for you to "have dominion" in your Personal Mission Field?
3. Jesus has appointed you to bear fruit. Which fruit?

In Hebrews 2:6-8, the apostle, to prove the sovereign dominion of Christ, shows he is that Man, that Son of man, here spoken of, whom God has made to have dominion over the works of his hands. The greatest favor ever showed to the human race, and the greatest honor ever put upon human nature, were exemplified in the Lord Jesus. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 8

Pray Psalm 8:3-9.

What has God given you to do today? Offer it to Him in prayer, asking that He will glorify Himself in all your work, and that you will know Him present with you, to strengthen and bless you.

Sing Psalm 8:3-9.

(Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation)

When I regard the heavens, the work of Your own hand,
the moon and stars which all in their courses You command,
then what am I, O Savior, that You take thought of me,
or I should know Your favor and thus delivered be?

Yet we in Your own image with glory have been crowned,
to worship and to serve You throughout creation 'round.
These works that sing Your glory in our poor hands are placed,
that we may rule before You to magnify Your grace.

Let every beast and creature, in sky or sea or field,
in our hands bring You glory as we Your favor wield.
Let all things sing Your praises, let all declare Your worth!
O LORD our Lord how great is Your Name in all the earth!

5 The Lord in His Temple

Pray Psalm 11.1, 2, 7.

In the LORD I put my trust;
How can you say to my soul,
“Flee as a bird to your mountain”?
For look! The wicked bend their bow,
They make ready their arrow on the string,
That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart...
For the LORD is righteous,
He loves righteousness;
His countenance beholds the upright.

Sing Psalm 11.1, 2, 7.

(Tidings: O Zion, Haste, Your Mission High Fulfilling)

I trust You, LORD, my great eternal refuge!
How can you say: “Friend, flee now like a bird!
Haste to the hills! The wicked would destroy you”?
Would you cast doubts on God and on His Word?

Refrain v. 7

LORD, You are righteous, loving the just;
all will behold Your face who on Your mercy trust.

Read Psalm 11.1-7; meditate on verse 4.

Preparation

1. Where is the Lord enthroned?
2. What is He doing there?

Meditation

We have already seen, in Psalm 2, that God has set His Messiah—Jesus—on the throne in His dwelling place. In Psalm 11 we learn a bit more about how He conducts His rule.

David is responding here to some advice from an anonymous associate. The NKJV stops the advice at the end of verse 1, making David the speaker in verses 2 and 3. I think this is wrong, as do other versions. The advisor’s urgent recommendation should extend through verse 3.

Enemies are stringing their bows and ready to shoot at David. What can he possibly do to save himself but flee? He can stand his ground, looking to the Lord, exalted in glory, Who sees all things and knows how to deal with the wicked (vv. 4-6).

David sensed the Lord was testing him in this situation (v. 5). Would he trust Him for deliverance from evil? Jesus taught us to pray this way (Matt. 6.13). We cannot simply hide ourselves away from the sinful world. We must make our way in it, knowing that Jesus is on His eternal throne and dwells among us. He is with us always, and He will always do battle for righteousness. Will we trust Him to shepherd us through our trials?

Look to the Lord, David replied to his advisor. And so should we: Look to Jesus, exalted in glory. Gaze long and meditate deeply to see the glory in His face (2 Cor. 4.6). Then go your way into the wicked world, calling on your soul to be still, for the Lord is on your side.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

When our enemies begin stringing their bows for the attack, we would very much like to “flee like a bird”. But we must stand firm in our faith, and do so courageously. And courageous we will be when “our hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus’ blood and righteousness” (E. Mote, 1834).

As David’s counselor questioned: “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11.3).

The actual salvation story, the whole of it, needs to be firmly implanted in our minds, hearts, and souls for our foundation to be secure enough to righteously do what should be done. To stand. Not flee.

In [the Crosfigell article, dated 30 January 2025](#), the definition of a Christian is succinctly spelled out—the foundation upon which we firmly place our lives, our beliefs, our hopes, and our actions.

“One is a Christian who fears and loves God,
believes in Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins,
and lives increasingly a life of holiness, righteousness, and goodness,
which is the result of obedience to God’s Law and all His Word.
This is a lifetime commitment, and not just a periodic blip on the radar screen of one’s life...”

“They maintain a ready witness for Christ, to encourage their fellow believers and lead others into the Kingdom.”

“They seek God’s Kingdom and righteousness as their defining priority in all things,
and they apply themselves to working out their salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2.12, 13).”

“They hunger for the Word of God and engage with Him there and in prayer, so that they may be prepared for whatever obedience may be required of them through the day...”

“Jesus said you would know true believers by their fruit (Matt. 7.15-20).
And the fruit of true Christian faith is perseverance in trusting Jesus and keeping His Word...”

“Being a Christian is serious business, engaging us in all our thoughts, affections, values, priorities, and practices.”

“We are not free to be Christians on our own terms.”

“True Christians are defined by God as those who hold fast their testimony and continue in His Word.”

“Faith in Jesus and obedience to God’s Word issue in love for God and neighbors as the defining mark of a true believer.”

“God blesses all who belong to Him, who hold fast the testimony of Jesus and keep His commandments, with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit.”

When our hope is built on this firm foundation we will be on solid ground. Standing firm.
But we must stand on the full Gospel. The whole Gospel.
Not just the gospel of “pray this prayer and life will be good.”

But the Gospel with the Black Box Warning attached:

“No one having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom” (Lk. 9.62).

Jesus, the One Who gave His all for us, is the One Who said those words.

Jesus, from His heavenly throne, is watching, waiting, and willing us onward (Ps. 11.4, 7).
“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen” (Rom. 16.20).

Reflection

1. What can you do to keep the whole Gospel in mind as you go forth to serve the Lord each day?
2. How does knowing that Jesus rules from His throne on high help you get through the day?
3. Whom will you encourage today by reminding them that Jesus is Lord of all?

Do you see a ready ally, a well-prepared aid, present everywhere, seeing everything, gazing on all things, having as his particular role—even if no one requests it—to exercise providence and care, to pursue wrongdoers, to assist the wronged, to award recompense to the virtuous, to assign punishment to sinners? He is, therefore, ignorant of nothing: his eyes in fact look attentively on the whole world. John Chrysostom (344-407), Commentary on the Psalms 11.2

Pray Psalm 11.3-7.

Give thanks to Jesus that His eyes are always upon you to guide and direct your steps. Call on Him to keep you from all sin today and to show you the glory in His face (v. 7; cf. 2 Cor. 4.6).

Sing Psalm 11.3-7.

(Tidings: O Zion, Haste, Your Mission High Fulfilling)

“See how the wicked bend their bows to kill you;
now, even now, they take their deadly aim!
Shall you escape? Shall darkness deep conceal you?
What shall they do who lean upon God’s Name?”

Refrain v. 7

LORD, You are righteous, loving the just;
all will behold Your face who on Your mercy trust.

Know that the LORD is in His holy temple;
firmly His throne is fixed in heav’n on high.
His eyes behold the mighty and the simple,
His eyelids test, the sons of men they try.

Refrain

God tests the righteous as He tests the wicked;
see how His soul all evildoers hates.
He will rain coals; with fire will He afflict them.
Brimstone and burning wind shall ne’er abate.

Refrain

6 Our Only Good

Pray Psalm 16.1, 2, 5, 6.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.
O my soul, you have said to the LORD,
“You are my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart from You.”
O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.
The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.

Sing Psalm 16.1, 2, 5, 6, 11.

(All to Christ: *Jesus Paid It All*)

Preserve me, O my God; I refuge seek in You.
You alone are all my good, my LORD and Savior true!

Refrain v. 11

Make me know life’s way! Pleasures fill Your hand.
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

My portion and my cup are You, my Savior dear;
You help and hold me up and ever keep me near.

Refrain

Read Psalm 16.1-11; meditate on verses 8-11.

Preparation

1. How did David describe what the Lord meant to him?
2. How did he respond to that?

Meditation

This psalm astonishes me. David declares that God was his only good—the defining and only completely satisfying good of his life. He rejoiced to share in the company of the Lord’s “excellent ones”, the saints who were in (not “on”) the earth. David repudiated all idolatry, claimed the Lord as His portion and cup, gloried in His sovereign provision, acknowledged His beneficent care, blessed Him for His counsel and instruction, set Him always before the eyes of his heart, knew His Presence and rejoiced in it, basked in the hope of resurrection, sought the way of the Lord, and longed for the pleasures and joys of His unimpeded Presence.

All that in 11 verses!

We see Jesus in this psalm quite clearly. He is the only truly Good One. We fellowship with Him in His cup. David prophesies of the resurrection of Jesus in verses 8-11, which Peter turned to as he preached Jesus on that first day of the coming of the Kingdom to earth (Acts 2.25). Further, David encourages us, as Paul does (Col. 3.1-3), to set our minds on Jesus, exalted in glory, in the full expectation that one day we shall be like Him, for we will see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3.1-3). And he called on the Lord to show him the Jesus Path (1 Jn. 2.1-6), the path of life in our Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 14.6).

Only the Holy Spirit could pack so much glorious truth into one compact psalm. He convinces us—me, at least—that God, in Jesus Christ, is, indeed, our only and eternal Good.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—the Triune God is our only Good, now and eternally.

It is to this Great, Good God that we pledge our love and our loyalty—our lives—all we have to offer.

In a question regarding goodness, Jesus answered His young inquisitor carefully on the topic.

Here is their conversation: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

And He said to him, “Why do you ask Me about what is good?”

There is only One Who is good—that is, God.

If you would enter life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19.17 ESV/NKJV).

“I and My Father are One” (Jn. 10.30).

Therefore, Jesus is The Good and Perfect Gift (Jms. 1.17).

And “Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come [and that have come]”, and by His Own blood He obtained eternal redemption, once for all. Jesus, through the eternal Spirit, “offered Himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9.11-14). All Perfection, Beauty, and Goodness.

And to this Perfect One, our only good, we say:

“You are my LORD, my goodness is nothing apart from You.”

“O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot” (Ps. 16.2, 5).

“Whom have I in heaven but You?”

And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.

My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Ps. 73.25, 26).

“I cried out to You, O LORD:

I said, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living’” (Ps. 142.5).

“Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good...” (Ps. 135.3).

“You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes” (Ps. 119.68).

“Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God;

Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness” (Ps. 143.10).

“Seek good and not evil, that you may live;

So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken.

Hate evil, love good; establish justice in the gate.

It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious

to the remnant of Joseph” (Amos 5.14, 15).

And to His Church today.

Through Jesus, Who is our only Hope and Good.

Reflection

1. What’s so good about Jesus? How would you answer that question?
2. How have you experienced the goodness of Jesus?
3. Why do we say that Jesus is our great and good gift and hope?

Verses 8-11, are quoted by St. Peter in his first sermon, after the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:25-31; he declared that David in them speaks concerning Christ, and particularly of his resurrection. And Christ being the Head of

the body, the church, these verses may be applied to all Christians, guided and animated by the Spirit of Christ; and we may hence learn, that it is our wisdom and duty to set the Lord always before us. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Psalm 16.1-11*

Pray Psalm 16.7-11.

Rejoice in Jesus—resurrected, ascended, reigning in power, and coming again soon! Meditate on His beauty, majesty, and glory, and call on Him to show you the path of life and be present with you throughout this day.

Sing Psalm 16.7-11.

(All to Christ: *Jesus Paid It All*)

I bless Your Name, O LORD; my mind instructs each night;
You teach me by Your Word and guide me in the right.

Refrain v. 11

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand.
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

You are ever with me, LORD; in You I shall not fall.
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.

Refrain

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.

Refrain

7 Into His Likeness

Pray Psalm 17.6, 7.

I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, *and* hear my speech.
Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand,
O You who save those who trust *in* You
From those who rise up *against* them.

Sing Psalm 17.6, 7.

(Park Street: *All You That Fear Jehovah's Name*)

When I have called, You answered me, LORD; hear now my fervent, seeking word!
Let kindness flow by Your command. Keep and preserve me by Your Right Hand,
keep and preserve me by Your Right Hand.

Read Psalm 17.1-15; meditate on verse 15.

Preparation

1. What was David facing in this psalm?
2. Where did he turn for encouragement?

Meditation

David often faced trouble and adversity, some of which he brought upon himself. But whether trials come because of our sin or the sin of others, they're never pleasant. Some, indeed, can be terrifying. Ask any believer in various parts of the world who daily faces the threat or reality of persecution.

God tests our heart at such times (v. 3). He wants us to make sure that no sin is harboring there and that all our commitments are to continue in His path (v. 4). Trials and troubles are also times to call upon the Lord for strength to continue in Him, come what may (vv. 4, 5). As David believed God would hear and answer him (vv. 6-9), so we can believe as well. And amid our trials and afflictions—which, after all, are only normal for life in the Kingdom of God (Jn. 16.33; Acts 14.21, 22; Rev. 1.9)—we can look to see the face of God—the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, exalted in glory (2 Cor. 4.6, 16-18).

David expected to see the face of the Lord in his day, with the eye of faith, of course (v. 15; cf. Ps. 27.4, 8, 9). We may do the same (Eph. 1.15-21), but not without searching the Scriptures diligently to discover what we can about Him, seated at the right hand of God. But David also expected to see the face of God when he woke up in glory (v. 15). We do as well (1 Jn. 3.1-3).

The first face we will see when we pass from this life will be the face of Jesus. Let us strain with the eye of the heart to see Him here and now, as fully as we can, and to know with anticipation the joy we will experience when we see Him there and then.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

To be more like Jesus, to daily be changing into His likeness, is the greatest desire of our heart. What could be more important? What could be more fulfilling? What could be more purposeful? Nothing. Nothing. And again, nothing.

But to experience this metamorphosis will take work and severe cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

“You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night;
You have tried me and have found nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress” (Ps. 17.3).
“I have made a covenant with my eyes” ...not to sin (Job 31.1).
“My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end” (Ps. 119.112 NIV).
“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties; and
See if there is any wicked way in me, and
Lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139.23, 24).
“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119.11).

We can't sit back and rest on our laurels, knowing that we are redeemed, rejoicing in that fact, but then doing nothing to “work out your own salvation in fear and trembling” (Phil. 2.12). We don't work to be saved; we work because we are saved (Eph. 2.8-10).

How glorious, it would be, to say with Paul: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4.6-8).

“...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...” (Heb. 12.1).

Running into His likeness takes purpose of heart, mind, soul, and strength; and a determined determination to be like Jesus. It is our goal. It is our one heart's desire. And then to see His face.

“I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved” (Ps. 16.8).

*Jesus the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy Presence rest.
(Bernard of Clairvaux, 1150)*

Reflection

1. How has Jesus been changing you into His likeness lately?
2. When, in prayer and meditation, you set your mind on Christ, how do you see Him? What do you see?
3. Whom will you encourage today to “run into His likeness”?

“To behold God's face” is nothing else than to have a sense of his fatherly favor, with which he not only causes us to rejoice by removing our sorrows but also transports us even to heaven. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Psalm 17.15

Pray Psalm 17.8-15.

Pray for believers everywhere who are being persecuted for their faith. Pray that they and you will see the glory in Jesus' face (2 Cor. 4.6) and be encouraged to stand firm for the Gospel. Pray that the Lord will come soon so that we may see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3.1-3).

Sing Psalm 17.8-15.

(Park Street: *All You That Fear Jehovah's Name*)

Treasure me in Your holy eye; shelter me from a troubling sky.

Around me all my enemies eagerly would despoil me,
eagerly would despoil me.

They their unfeeling hearts have closed, while with their mouths they loudly boast.
They set their eyes to cast us down, roaring and lurking all around,
roaring and lurking all around.

Rise up, O LORD, and bring them low! Brandish Your sword, and save my soul!
With children they are satisfied; treasures fulfill their hope and pride,
treasures fulfill their hope and pride.

But as for me, LORD, save and bless! Let me behold Your righteousness.
Your face in glory I would see, and thus forever blessed be,
and thus forever blessed be.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. How many ways have we seen Jesus in the psalms for this installment?
2. Which of these types, images, or foreshadowings speaks most powerfully to you? Why?
3. How do these psalms help us in understanding the gift of salvation we have received from Jesus?
4. How broad is the scope of the mandate we have received from Jesus? How can we fulfill this?
5. What's the most important lesson you have learned from seeing Jesus in these psalms?

For Prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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