

“Mirror to the Soul” & Relationship in the Psalms

- A Mirror to the Soul
- Relationship
- Praying the Psalms
- Imprecatory Psalms
- Worship
- Incarnation: Seeing the Psalms

“A Mirror to the Soul”

There is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.

-- John Calvin

- **In the Psalms, We Learn Not Only About God, but Ourselves.**
 - The Psalms are designed around the emotional aspect of human experience.
 - We don't just read the Psalms, we feel them, we relate to them. Our souls resound with the psalmists cries of sadness, anger, rage, doubt, fear, anxiety, shame, and love.

- **“Deep Calls to Deep...”**

Notes:

Psalm 42:1-7

As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So my soul pants for You, God.

² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God;
When shall I come and appear before God?

³ My tears have been my food day and night,
While *they* say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”

⁴ I remember these things and pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go over with the multitude *and* walk them to the house of God,
With a voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude celebrating a festival.

⁵ Why are you in despair, my soul?
And *why* are you restless within me?
Wait for God, for I will again praise Him
For the help of His presence, my God.

⁶ My soul is in despair within me;
Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan
And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

⁷ **Deep calls to deep** at the sound of Your waterfalls;
All Your breakers and Your waves have passed over me.

"The deep of man's need calleth unto the deep of God's fulness; and the deep of God's fulness calleth unto the deep of man's need. Between our emptiness and His all-sufficiency there is a great gulf. . . . Deep calleth unto deep. The deep mercy of God needs our emptiness, into which it might pour itself. . . . Nothing can fully meet the depth of our need but the depth of His Almighty fulness."

-- James Smith & Robert Lee, *Handfuls on Purpose for Christian Workers and Bible Students*

Psalm 13

How long, Lord? Will You forget me forever?

How long will You hide Your face from me?

² How long am I to feel anxious in my soul,

With grief in my heart all the day?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

³ Consider *and* answer me, O Lord my God;

Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the *sleep of death*,

⁴ And my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"

And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.

⁵ But I have trusted in Your faithfulness;

My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the Lord,

Because He has looked after me.



Sadness

Notes:

Psalm 6:6-7

I am worn out from sobbing.

All night I flood my bed with weeping,

drenching it with my tears.

⁷ My vision is blurred by grief;

my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.

Anger/Rage

Psalms 109:8-17

Let his years be few;
let someone else take his position.
⁹ May his children become fatherless,
and his wife a widow.
¹⁰ May his children wander as beggars
and be driven from their ruined homes.
¹¹ May creditors seize his entire estate,
and strangers take all he has earned.
¹² Let no one be kind to him;
let no one pity his fatherless children.
¹³ May all his offspring die.
May his family name be blotted out in the next generation.
¹⁴ May the Lord never forget the sins of his fathers;
may his mother's sins never be erased from the record.
¹⁵ May the Lord always remember these sins,
and may his name disappear from human memory.
¹⁶ For he refused all kindness to others;
he persecuted the poor and needy,
and he hounded the brokenhearted to death.
¹⁷ He loved to curse others;
now you curse him.
He never blessed others;
now don't you bless him.

Notes:

Doubt

Psalm 73:1-5, 13-14

Truly God is good to Israel,
to those whose hearts are pure.
² But as for me, I almost lost my footing.
My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.
³ For I envied the proud
when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness.
⁴ They seem to live such painless lives;
their bodies are so healthy and strong.
⁵ They don't have troubles like other people;
they're not plagued with problems like everyone else.

Did I keep my heart pure for nothing?
Did I keep myself innocent for no reason?
¹⁴ I get nothing but trouble all day long;
every morning brings me pain.

Fear/Anxiety

Notes:

Psalm 34:4-7

I sought the Lord and He answered me,
And rescued me from all my fears.

⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces will never be ashamed.

⁶ This wretched man cried out, and the Lord heard *him*,
And saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them.

Psalm 125:2

As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the Lord surrounds His people

Shame

Psalm 32:1-5

How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered!

² How blessed is a person whose guilt the Lord does not take into account,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

³ When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away
Through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality failed *as* with the dry heat of summer. *Selah*

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You,
And I did not hide my guilt;
I said, "I will confess my wrongdoings to the Lord";
And You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Love

Psalm 18:1 I love you, Lord; you are my strength.

Psalm 116:1 I love the Lord because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy.

Psalm 26:8 I love your sanctuary, Lord, the place where your glorious presence dwells.

Psalm 119:97 Oh, how I love your instructions! I think about them all day long.

The range of emotional expression often allows the reader to express his inner life. They assist him in verbalizing what he heretofore has been unable to communicate. In doing so, he often crystallizes the nature and identity of his problems.

-- S. G. Meyer

Relationship

- **As evidenced above, the vast majority of psalms were written describing the messy, often challenging development of a relationship between God and human beings.**
 - This happens on both a **community and individual level** in the Psalter.
 - It is an **emotive snapshot of what relationship with God looks like** in the midst of our horizontal relationships on earth.
 - They are shared as a **compassionate gift for you** to not only understand, but to use in **building your own dynamic and intimate relationship with God.**

Psalm 109:9-15

Israel, trust in the Lord;

He is your help and your shield.

¹⁰ House of Aaron, trust in the Lord;

He is your help and your shield.

¹¹ You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord;

He is your help and your shield.

¹² The Lord has been mindful of us; He will bless us.

He will bless the house of Israel;

He will bless the house of Aaron.

¹³ He will bless those who fear the Lord,

The small together with the great.

¹⁴ May the Lord increase you,

You and your children.

¹⁵ May you be blessed of the Lord,

Maker of heaven and earth.

Notes:

Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes arrogant;

Nor do I involve myself in great matters,

Or in things too difficult for me.

² I have certainly soothed and quieted my soul;

Like a weaned child *resting* against his mother,

My soul within me is like a weaned child.

³ **Israel, wait for the Lord**

From this time *on* and forever.