

Worship & Praying the Psalms

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

Worship

- The most obvious use of the Psalter: Praise, Adoration, Thanksgiving (e.g. **Psalms 146-150**)

Song of Ascents or Pilgrim Psalms (Psalms 120-134)

- **Possible Backgrounds (David, Solomon, Anonymous)**
 1. **These psalms were sung by worshippers as they walked the Road to Jerusalem to attend the three pilgrim festivals (*Passover, Weeks, and Booths*).**

Deuteronomy 16:16

“Each year every man in Israel must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. On each of these occasions, all men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he chooses, but they must not appear before the Lord without a gift for him.

Psalm 122:1-4

I was glad when they said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

² And now here we are,

standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.

³ Jerusalem is a well-built city;

its seamless walls cannot be breached.

⁴ All the tribes of Israel—the Lord’s people—

make their pilgrimage here.

2. **Levites sang these psalms while walking up the fifteen steps to serve in the Temple of Jerusalem.**
3. **Psalms collected and sung by the Babylonian captives as they return from captivity on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem.**

Characteristics of the Song of Ascents

- God’s Faithfulness
- Gratitude and Joy
- Hope for Jerusalem (Zion)

Psalm 121

I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?
² My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!
³ He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.
⁴ Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.
⁵ The Lord himself watches over you!
The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.
⁶ The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon at night.
⁷ The Lord keeps you from all harm
and watches over your life.
⁸ The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever.

Praying the Psalms

“The only way to understand the Psalms is on your knees, the whole congregation praying the words of the Psalms with all its strength.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christ in the Psalms

Jesus Use of the Psalms in Prayer

Matthew 27:45-46

Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabaktanei?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

- See **Psalm 22**
 - **Why did Jesus choose this psalm to pray?**
 - **What does that suggest to you about praying the psalms in your own life?**

We find Ourselves in Praying the Psalms

*“We apprentice ourselves to these masters, acquiring facility in using the tools, **by which we became more and more ourselves.** If we are willfully ignorant of the Psalms, we are not thereby excluded from praying, but we will have to hack our way through formidable country by trial and error with inferior tools.”*

– Eugene Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer.*

Psalm 25

Notes:

To You, Lord, I lift up my soul.

² My God, in You I trust, Do not let me be ashamed;

Do not let my enemies rejoice over me.

³ Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed;

Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.

⁴ Make me know Your ways, Lord; Teach me Your paths.

⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.

⁶ Remember, Lord, Your compassion and Your faithfulness,

For they have been from of old.

⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my wrongdoings;

Remember me according to Your faithfulness,

For Your goodness' sake, Lord.

⁸ The Lord is good and upright; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.

⁹ He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the Lord are faithfulness and truth

To those who comply with His covenant and His testimonies.

¹¹ For the sake of Your name, Lord, Forgive my wrongdoing, for it is great.

¹² Who is the person who fears the Lord?

He will instruct him in the way he should choose.

¹³ His soul will dwell in prosperity,

And his descendants will inherit the land.

¹⁴ The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him,

And He will make them know His covenant.

¹⁵ My eyes are continually toward the Lord, For He will rescue my feet from the net.

¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me, For I am lonely and afflicted.

¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses.

¹⁸ Look at my misery and my trouble, And forgive all my sins.

¹⁹ Look at my enemies, for they are many,

And they hate me with violent hatred.

²⁰ Guard my soul and save me;

Do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You.

²¹ Let integrity and uprightness protect me, For I wait for You.

²² Redeem Israel, God, From all his distress.