

Examine: One of the great helps in reading the Psalms is to read them “Christologically,” that is, seek out how each may refer to Christ. David longs for the salvation that will come “out of Zion.” Zion here refers to Jerusalem, the place where God has chosen to dwell with his people, where he hears their prayers, where he is praised, where the sacrifices are made, and where the Ark of the Covenant resides, the external pledge and symbol of God’s presence. Oh that God himself would come and bring salvation for his people. David is calling on the Messiah of Israel to come. David is calling to Christ!

Apply: Salvation has come out of Zion, in the person of Christ who hears our prayers, who is God present with us, and was the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Meditate this week on David’s faith, and how much more confidence you can have as you understand the reality of our salvation which *has already* come out of Zion.

Pray: and give thanks to God for the salvation that has come “out of Zion” and now dwells with us and Christ’s Church.

Saturday, 7/14

Read: Psalm 14:7b “when the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!”

Examine: This Psalm 3nds in praise and thanksgiving, for the LORD is not merely a refuge, but restorer of his people. He not only delivers us from the evils of the world, but brings us to paradise (Psalm 76:5). So as Christ not only defeats the guilt and penalty of sin, he provides for us a righteousness that brings us into the very presence of God as adopted sons and heirs.

Apply: Christians should not fear the world, but look in faith toward our deliverer who will one day give the world to his Church as an inheritance. Dwell on the following verses: Col 1:12-13; Rom 8:17; Heb 9:15. Read I Peter 1:6-9 where Peter is talking to a persecuted people, a people who were distressed about the world around them. How do Peter’s words reflect David’s in Psalm 14 and your own life experience?

Pray: Praise God that amidst life’s suffering and turmoil that we are “more than conquerors” through Christ, and heirs to eternal promises. Like David, we can praise God and trust in his salvation even among our enemies and the trials of this age.



Taking Gathered Worship Home

Family and Individual Devotions

Meditations in the Psalms

Week of July 8, 2007

The Psalms are a treasure house of Christian learning. These inspired poems and songs illuminate great doctrinal truths, teach us how to pray, how to cry out to our Savior God in lament, repentance, hope, and praise, striking at both our intellect and emotions, and train us how to view the world through the spectacles of faith. In this Psalm (14) and its parallel Psalm 53, David cries out to YHWH in the midst of persecution and suffering and shows us where our hope should lie. Our hope and refuge comes from Zion, sings David, from God himself. And not just refuge and safety from our enemies, but restoration to eternal glory as adopted sons of the King of the Universe. This Psalm illustrates the faith of the Christian, and echoes St. Paul’s word in Romans 8:37, That we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

Sunday, 7/8

Read: Psalm 14:1a “The fool says in his heart, “There is no God. They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.”

Examine: The fool says in his heart, “No God!” Note the parallel sentences of verse 1: our actions reveal what we say in our hearts. For the Psalmist, atheism is more practical than theoretical. It is not so much as denying with our lips God’s existence as it is living as if God doesn’t exist or is irrelevant in our day-to-day lives. St. Paul tells us in Romans one that all men have a natural knowledge of God, yet suppress this truth in sin. Their corrupt hearts “foolishly” bury this truth and they live lives based on their own lusts, desires, and “foolish” wisdom rather than on God’s word.

Apply: In Scripture, knowledge is linked to obedience—to “know” is “to do” Meditate on the following verses and examine how we reflect what we know of God’s truths by what we “do” in our daily lives. Matt 25:31-46; I John 1:16; 2:9; 4:20; Titus 1:16.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us in “true knowledge” that leads to godliness (Titus 1:1) and reflects Christ’s image (Col 3:10) in our lives this week.

Monday, 7/9

Read: Psalm 14:2-3 “The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Examine: In all the Psalms from the 3rd to this (except 8) David is lamenting about those that hate and persecute him, insult and abuse him. He now traces all those bitter streams to the fountain, the general corruption of human nature, and sees that not only his enemies, but all “sons” (children) of men, “are so corrupted. No one is left out. St Paul quotes extensively from this Psalm in Romans 3 to underscore what we have come to know as the doctrine of “total depravity,” the pervasive rule of sin within the world, and throughout human nature.

Apply: This is one of the hardest truths of Scripture, one that is especially repulsive to modern sentiments. Christians embrace this truth, not with a “holier than thou” attitude, but from an understanding of the depths of God’s grace and mercy that saved us from such ruin. Reflect on this truth in Eph 2:1-10 and Romans 5:6-10.

Pray Luther said that the entire life of a Christian must be one of repentance. Pray for repentance in our daily lives as we strive, and often fail, in our struggles against our flesh, the world and Satan. Rejoice in the once-for-all victory of Christ over all these enemies on the Cross, and seek the Holy Spirit’s power in your own life to apply this victory in your daily walk (Phil 2:12-13).

Tuesday, 7/10

Read: Psalm 14:4a “will evildoers never learn—those who devour my people as men eat bread...?”

Examine: Verse 4 is a description of the persecuted Church in a fallen world. The King of Heaven tells us that it is as natural for the non-Christian to persecute the Church as it is for him to eat a normal meal. One of the great truths of Scripture is that the bride of Christ has and will always have an enemy with the world. Never expect the world to embrace Christ’s Church, to raise the banner of Christ without salvation. Yet all is working out according to God’s glorious plan from the beginning (Gen 3:15, note where this enmity of the world comes from).

Apply: How often in the media, the academy, in the corridors of power, and amongst our friends and coworkers, and regrettably even in the visible Church itself (2 Cor 11:15), do we feel the oppression of Satan’s kingdom relentlessly attacking the wall of Christ’s Church, his body. Meditate on our Lord’s words in John 15:29-39 and his words of encouragement and ultimate victory in Matt 16:18.

Pray that God would grant us encouragement and strength as we strive to live out in love His kingdom truths and share the good news of the Cross in a fallen, depraved world. Pray for the ultimate triumph of His kingdom, even as he has promised.

Wednesday, 7/11

Read: Psalm 14:4b “...who do not call on the name of the LORD?”

Examine: A mark of the Christian, as opposed to the “fool,” is calling on the name of the LORD (cf. Ps 79:6). To “call” on the LORD’s name is to reply upon, have faith in, trust in, acknowledge before others, study his word, proclaim, worship, and glorify (e.g., 2 Sam 22:4; 1 Chron 16:8). More intimate and wonder is the privilege that is ours to come before the Maker and Savior of the Universe and call upon Him in personal prayer (Jer 29:12).

Apply: One of the greatest gifts to the Church is the gift of prayer. Yet it is also one of the most neglected. Yet God longs to have us in intimate conversation (1 Thes 5:15-18), cries out to us to come to him in prayer, and promises to hear us and bless us (Psa 86:5). It is to prayer that God’s people go for refuge, strength, forgiveness, and comfort.

Pray for a better prayer life, a more intimate knowledge of God. As you study the Psalms, let them guide you and train your thoughts and emotions in how you are to approach your Savior and King. Let prayer be the lens through which you see and interpret your life in this world.

Thursday, 7/12

Read: Psalm 14:5-6 “There they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous. You evil doers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.”

Examine: “Where is God?” we cry when tragedy strikes our nation, our home, or our lives. The striking truth is that God is there, has always been there, right in the midst of his people and in the midst of their suffering and turmoil. He is our refuge and deliverer, and never far off. Scripture is filled with allusions to God as our refuge, salvation (e.g., 2 Sam 22:3; Psalm 46:1), and Hope (Ps 71:5, “hope” is another way to translate the Hebrew word for “refuge”). Psalm 53 is an almost exact repetition of Psalm 14, with one exception. Psalm 53 emphasizes in verse 5 the complete destruction of God’s enemies.

Apply: The greatest enemy that the Christian faces is sin and death. Given the depravity of the world and our own nature, to where shall we flee? Where is our hope and refuge? Ironically, we flee to the one who condemns our sin (Psa 16:1) because He has provided a rock of salvation, a refuge from the consequences of sin, the Messiah “cleft of ages” who hides us and covers us in His righteousness from the wrath of God.

Pray for eyes that see God always in your midst, as your refuge and fortress. In a world that sometimes appears “hopeless,” you can run to the Lord of hope in faith and prayer. Discuss and pray this week how your life can practically reflect the reality of God’s presence, of our faith in Immanuel, “God with us.”

Friday, 7/13

Read: Psalm 14:7a “Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!”