



DEEPENING LIFE TOGETHER

PSALMS

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GROWING to be like Christ (Discipleship)

PSALMS - SESSION 1

PSALMS OF PRAISE

Read Psalm 8 aloud.

1. Psalm 8 praises God for his grace in placing humanity in a position of authority over God's great creation. What words or phrases does the psalmist use that indicate this is a psalm of praise?
 - o In what specific ways does this psalm celebrate God?
2. Psalm 8:1 says: "You have set your glory above the heavens." Considering this, why can we offer praise to God over and over again and never exhaust ourselves?
3. The psalmist was brought to praise as he considered the lowliness of humanity. Why do you think that is?
 - o Why is awe before God such an important attitude for us to cultivate?
4. Psalm 8:6 tells us that the works of God's hands have been placed under humanity's authority. What does this mean?
 - o What responsibilities go along with this authority?
5. Psalm 8:3 provides imagery that gives us insight into the psalmist's activities when he wrote it. What was the author doing?
 - o What activities will foster your own spirit of praise to God for your position of authority over the many wonders of God's creation?

Read Psalm 46 aloud.

6. Psalm 46 is a confession of fearless trust in a mighty God during a time of upheaval. Two specific types of help are mentioned in verse 1. What are they? Describe them in your own words.
7. Psalm 46:4 says: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." This river is probably a metaphor of the continuous outpouring of God's blessings over the holy city, Jerusalem, during a time when the city was in uproar. How does this verse apply to us today?
8. What does Psalm 46:8-10 say results from God's mighty acts on behalf of his people?
9. Three times in Psalm 46 we find the word "Selah," which is thought to be an intentional pause for the purpose of reflection. How can intentionally placed pauses in our lives help us to remember God as our fortress in times of trouble and our source of strength to endure them?
10. Praise psalms can be called psalms of orientation, because they orient us to what is really true and important. How do Psalms 18 and 46 do this?

"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD." – Psalm 150:6



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PSALM - SESSION 1 - SCRIPTURE

Psalm 8 - New Living Translation

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument.^[a]

¹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Your glory is higher than the heavens.

² You have taught children and infants

to tell of your strength,^[a]

silencing your enemies

and all who oppose you.

³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—

the moon and the stars you set in place—

⁴ what are mere mortals that you should think about them,

human beings that you should care for them?^[a]

⁵ Yet you made them only a little lower than God^[a]

and crowned them^[a] with glory and honor.

⁶ You gave them charge of everything you made,

putting all things under their authority—

⁷ the flocks and the herds

and all the wild animals,

⁸ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,

and everything that swims the ocean currents.

⁹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Psalm 46 - New Living Translation

For the choir director: A song of the descendants of Korah, to be sung by soprano voices.^[a]

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
- ² So we will not fear when earthquakes come
and the mountains crumble into the sea.
- ³ Let the oceans roar and foam.
Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! *Interlude*
- ⁴ A river brings joy to the city of our God,
the sacred home of the Most High.
- ⁵ God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed.
From the very break of day, God will protect it.
- ⁶ The nations are in chaos,
and their kingdoms crumble!
God's voice thunders,
and the earth melts!
- ⁷ The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel^[b] is our fortress. *Interlude*
- ⁸ Come, see the glorious works of the LORD:
See how he brings destruction upon the world.
- ⁹ He causes wars to end throughout the earth.
He breaks the bow and snaps the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God!
I will be honored by every nation.
I will be honored throughout the world."
- ¹¹ The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel is our fortress. *Interlude*



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PSALMS - SESSION 2

PSALMS OF LAMENT

Read Psalm 3 aloud.

1. What is the psalmist's obvious need in verses 1-2?
 - a. The psalmist likely faced his enemies in an imminent military battle. What enemies do we face in our lives today?
2. What statement of confident hope does the psalmist make in verses 3-4?
 - a. How does this confidence encourage you as you face the enemies that surround you?
3. Verse 5 is another statement that communicates confident hope in God. How does this example of confidence apply to you?
 - a. How do you think a person develops this depth of confidence in God amid dangers?
4. Note that the psalmist does not ask God for immunity from danger. What is his petition in verses 7-8?
5. In Psalm 3 the psalmist directs us to pause for reflection several times. Why do you think it is important that we take intentional breaks to reflect during our times of distress or suffering?

Read Psalm 88 aloud.

6. Psalm 88 is the saddest of the Psalms. It expresses the darkest anguish of a believer who feels abandoned by God. What emotional is the psalmist feeling, and how does he convey them?
7. What can we learn about God from the fact that he welcomes this kind of candid expression of pain and questioning?
8. Despite the pain in this candid psalm, the slightest glimmer of hope can be found if we pay close attention. What does the psalmist say that gives us insight into the seeds of hope in the deepest recesses of his heart?
9. Who is responsible for the psalmist's troubled life, according to verses 6-9a? Why do you think he believes this?
10. Most psalmists resolve their complaints by moving toward a maturity of faith or confident hope, but this one does not. It is the only psalm in which the psalmist remains in a state of despair from the first line to the last. What special lesson can we learn from the inclusion of this psalm in Scripture?

*"Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning." – Lamentations 3:22-23*



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PSALM - SESSION 2 - SCRIPTURE

Psalm 3 - New Living Translation

A psalm of David, regarding the time David fled from his son Absalom.

- ¹ O LORD, I have so many enemies;
so many are against me.
- ² So many are saying,
"God will never rescue him!" *Interlude*^[a]
- ³ But you, O LORD, are a shield around me;
you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.
- ⁴ I cried out to the LORD,
and he answered me from his holy mountain. *Interlude*
- ⁵ I lay down and slept,
yet I woke up in safety,
for the LORD was watching over me.
- ⁶ I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies
who surround me on every side.
- ⁷ Arise, O LORD!
Rescue me, my God!
Slap all my enemies in the face!
Shatter the teeth of the wicked!
- ⁸ Victory comes from you, O LORD.
May you bless your people. *Interlude*

Psalm 88 - New Living Translation

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah. A song to be sung to the tune "The Suffering of Affliction." A psalm*^[a] *of Heman the Ezrahite.

- ¹ O LORD, God of my salvation,
I cry out to you by day.

I come to you at night.
2 Now hear my prayer;
listen to my cry.
3 For my life is full of troubles,
and death[□] draws near.
4 I am as good as dead,
like a strong man with no strength left.
5 They have left me among the dead,
and I lie like a corpse in a grave.
I am forgotten,
cut off from your care.
6 You have thrown me into the lowest pit,
into the darkest depths.
7 Your anger weighs me down;
with wave after wave you have engulfed me. *Interlude*
8 You have driven my friends away
by making me repulsive to them.
I am in a trap with no way of escape.
9 My eyes are blinded by my tears.
Each day I beg for your help, O LORD;
I lift my hands to you for mercy.
10 Are your wonderful deeds of any use to the dead?
Do the dead rise up and praise you? *Interlude*
11 Can those in the grave declare your unfailing love?
Can they proclaim your faithfulness in the place of destruction?[□]
12 Can the darkness speak of your wonderful deeds?
Can anyone in the land of forgetfulness talk about your righteousness?
13 O LORD, I cry out to you.
I will keep on pleading day by day.
14 O LORD, why do you reject me?
Why do you turn your face from me?
15 I have been sick and close to death since my youth.
I stand helpless and desperate before your terrors.
16 Your fierce anger has overwhelmed me.
Your terrors have paralyzed me.
17 They swirl around me like floodwaters all day long.
They have engulfed me completely.
18 You have taken away my companions and loved ones.
Darkness is my closest friend.



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PSALMS - SESSION 3

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING

Read Psalm 18 aloud.

1. The psalmist uses eight images in verses 1 and 2 to describe who God is for him. What ideas about God do you think these images are meant to give us?
 - a. Strength
 - b. Rock
 - c. Fortress
 - d. Deliverer
 - e. Rock of refuge
 - f. Shield
 - g. Horn (a Hebrew symbol of strength)
 - h. Stronghold

Why is it important to look to God as our source of strength?

2. What are some things other than God that people sometimes look to for strength or safety?
3. The psalmist uses provocative poetry in verses 3-19 to describe God's response to his cry for help. What images do you find most striking?
 - a. Why do you think the author uses such vivid imagery to communicate God's deliverance?
4. What reasons do verses 20-24 give for why God delivers his people?
 - a. Why do you think David is intent on telling the reader these things?
5. Verses 25-31 offer insight into why David explains his deliverance as he does. Do you believe this explanation holds true in every circumstance? Explain your answer.
6. Charles H. Spurgeon once said, "Second thoughts upon God's mercy should be and often are the best." Psalm 18:32-46 appears to be a retelling of the events of God's deliverance. What do you notice about this as it compares to the same events depicted in verses 4-19?
 - a. How can this type of second look at what God has done in your life offer fresh perspective to your own prayers or psalms of thanksgiving?
7. The psalmist reviews all that God did to enable him to claim victory over his enemies in verses 32-42. Does God enable you in this way to deal with the battles you face?
 - a. If so, how? If not, why do you think he doesn't?
8. Psalm 18:46 says, "The LORD lives!" When have you experienced God in such a way that you were assured that he is alive and active in your life?
 - a. How did it affect your prayers?

If we have time for more study, read Psalm 30 aloud.

9. Psalm 30 is an offering of thankfulness for deliverance from sickness. What evidence do you see in verses 1-3 that indicates the severity of the psalmist's illness?
 - a. Why do you think it is significant that the psalmist uses such severe imagery to depict his plight in a psalm of thanksgiving?
10. What contrasts do you see in this psalm?
11. How does the psalmist portray God's character?
12. According to verses 6-7, the psalmist's time of security made him forget where his security was ultimately found – in the Lord. Then he fell ill and realized the truth. Why do you think God uses difficult circumstances to bring us back into right relationship with him?
13. Verse 12 concludes this psalm with the statement, "my heart may sing to you and *not be silent*" (emphasis added). It's easy to publicly offer prayers of lament, but once our situation has passed, we often forget the hand of God upon our lives and move on without second thought. What has the psalmist's example taught you about the importance of publicly thanking God for your delivery, even if from something minor?

"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving." – Psalm 69:30



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PSALM - SESSION 2 - SCRIPTURE

Psalm 18 - New Living Translation

For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. He sang:

- ¹ I love you, LORD;
you are my strength.
- ² The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.
- ³ I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.
- ⁴ The ropes of death entangled me;
floods of destruction swept over me.
- ⁵ The grave^a wrapped its ropes around me;
death laid a trap in my path.
- ⁶ But in my distress I cried out to the LORD;
yes, I prayed to my God for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry to him reached his ears.
- ⁷ Then the earth quaked and trembled.
The foundations of the mountains shook;
they quaked because of his anger.
- ⁸ Smoke poured from his nostrils;
fierce flames leaped from his mouth.
Glowing coals blazed forth from him.
- ⁹ He opened the heavens and came down;
dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.
- ¹⁰ Mounted on a mighty angelic being,^b he flew,
soaring on the wings of the wind.
- ¹¹ He shrouded himself in darkness,

veiling his approach with dark rain clouds.
12 Thick clouds shielded the brightness around him
and rained down hail and burning coals.^[d]
13 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded
amid the hail and burning coals.
14 He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies;
great bolts of lightning flashed, and they were confused.
15 Then at your command, O LORD,
at the blast of your breath,
the bottom of the sea could be seen,
and the foundations of the earth were laid bare.
16 He reached down from heaven and rescued me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
17 He rescued me from my powerful enemies,
from those who hated me and were too strong for me.
18 They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress,
but the LORD supported me.
19 He led me to a place of safety;
he rescued me because he delights in me.
20 The LORD rewarded me for doing right;
he restored me because of my innocence.
21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I have not turned from my God to follow evil.
22 I have followed all his regulations;
I have never abandoned his decrees.
23 I am blameless before God;
I have kept myself from sin.
24 The LORD rewarded me for doing right.
He has seen my innocence.
25 To the faithful you show yourself faithful;
to those with integrity you show integrity.
26 To the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.
27 You rescue the humble,
but you humiliate the proud.
28 You light a lamp for me.
The LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.
29 In your strength I can crush an army;
with my God I can scale any wall.

30 God's way is perfect.
All the LORD's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

31 For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God is a solid rock?

32 God arms me with strength,
and he makes my way perfect.

33 He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain heights.

34 He trains my hands for battle;
he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.

35 You have given me your shield of victory.
Your right hand supports me;
your help[Ⓜ] has made me great.

36 You have made a wide path for my feet
to keep them from slipping.

37 I chased my enemies and caught them;
I did not stop until they were conquered.

38 I struck them down so they could not get up;
they fell beneath my feet.

39 You have armed me with strength for the battle;
you have subdued my enemies under my feet.

40 You placed my foot on their necks.
I have destroyed all who hated me.

41 They called for help, but no one came to their rescue.
They even cried to the LORD, but he refused to answer.

42 I ground them as fine as dust in the wind.
I swept them into the gutter like dirt.

43 You gave me victory over my accusers.
You appointed me ruler over nations;
people I don't even know now serve me.

44 As soon as they hear of me, they submit;
foreign nations cringe before me.

45 They all lose their courage
and come trembling from their strongholds.

46 The LORD lives! Praise to my Rock!
May the God of my salvation be exalted!

47 He is the God who pays back those who harm me;
he subdues the nations under me

48 and rescues me from my enemies.

You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies;
you save me from violent opponents.

⁴⁹ For this, O LORD, I will praise you among the nations;
I will sing praises to your name.

⁵⁰ You give great victories to your king;
you show unfailing love to your anointed,
to David and all his descendants forever.

Psalm 30 - New Living Translation

A psalm of David. A song for the dedication of the Temple.

¹ I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me.
You refused to let my enemies triumph over me.

² O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
and you restored my health.

³ You brought me up from the grave,^[a] O LORD.
You kept me from falling into the pit of death.

⁴ Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones!
Praise his holy name.

⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime!

Weeping may last through the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

⁶ When I was prosperous, I said,
"Nothing can stop me now!"

⁷ Your favor, O LORD, made me as secure as a mountain.
Then you turned away from me, and I was shattered.

⁸ I cried out to you, O LORD.
I begged the Lord for mercy, saying,

⁹ "What will you gain if I die,
if I sink into the grave?

Can my dust praise you?
Can it tell of your faithfulness?

¹⁰ Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me.
Help me, O LORD."

¹¹ You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing.

You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,

¹² that I might sing praises to you and not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever!



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PSALMS - SESSION 4

ROYAL PSALMS

Read Psalm 2 aloud.

1. Psalm 2 opens with a rhetorical question: "Why do the nations conspire in vain?" Against whom are the nations rebelling?
 - a. Why is the rebellion in vain?
2. What is God's reaction to the haughty rebellious rulers in verses 4-6?
 - a. What does this tell you about God?
3. In verses 7-9, the Lord's Anointed One speaks. What will be the boundaries of the Anointed One's kingdom?
 - a. How might these verses have applied to the human king alive when the psalm was written?
 - b. How do they seem to speak of things beyond what was true of that king but would someday be true of the Messiah?
4. What warning is issued to the nations' rulers in verses 10-12?
5. To what extent do you think verse 12 could apply to a mortal king, and to what extent does it only make sense about the Messiah?

Read Psalm 45 aloud.

6. The psalm offers words of praise over the bride and groom at a royal wedding. What aspects of the groom's character are praised in verses 2-9?
7. Why do you think it's important that the king's battles were supposed to be won on behalf of truth, humility, and righteousness, and were not supposed to be simply military conquests?
 - a. How does Jesus fulfill this picture of kingship?
8. Verse 6 says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever." Why do you think the psalmist equated the king's throne with God's throne?
9. What exhortations are given to the bride in verses 10-15?
10. A bride might be hesitant or excited (or both) to "forget her people and her father's house" (v. 10). How do these verses apply to the church today? (See Luke 9:23 and 14:26.)
11. What promises are made through the benediction offered in verses 16-17?
 - a. What is your role in perpetuating the memory of the King through all generations?

*"May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun.
All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed." – Psalm 72:17*



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PSALM - SESSION 2 - SCRIPTURE

Psalm 2 - New Living Translation

- ¹ Why are the nations so angry?
Why do they waste their time with futile plans?
- ² The kings of the earth prepare for battle;
the rulers plot together
against the LORD
and against his anointed one.
- ³ "Let us break their chains," they cry,
"and free ourselves from slavery to God."
- ⁴ But the one who rules in heaven laughs.
The Lord scoffs at them.
- ⁵ Then in anger he rebukes them,
terrifying them with his fierce fury.
- ⁶ For the Lord declares, "I have placed my chosen king on the throne
in Jerusalem,^[a] on my holy mountain."
- ⁷ The king proclaims the LORD's decree:
"The LORD said to me, 'You are my son.'^[b]
Today I have become your Father.^[c]
- ⁸ Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance,
the whole earth as your possession.
- ⁹ You will break^[d] them with an iron rod
and smash them like clay pots."
- ¹⁰ Now then, you kings, act wisely!
Be warned, you rulers of the earth!
- ¹¹ Serve the LORD with reverent fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
- ¹² Submit to God's royal son,^[e] or he will become angry,
and you will be destroyed in the midst of all your activities—
for his anger flares up in an instant.
But what joy for all who take refuge in him!

Psalm 45 - New Living Translation

For the choir director: A love song to be sung to the tune "Lilies." A psalm^[a] of the descendants of Korah.

¹ Beautiful words stir my heart.

I will recite a lovely poem about the king,
for my tongue is like the pen of a skillful poet.

² You are the most handsome of all.

Gracious words stream from your lips.
God himself has blessed you forever.

³ Put on your sword, O mighty warrior!

You are so glorious, so majestic!

⁴ In your majesty, ride out to victory,
defending truth, humility, and justice.

Go forth to perform awe-inspiring deeds!

⁵ Your arrows are sharp, piercing your enemies' hearts.

The nations fall beneath your feet.

⁶ Your throne, O God,^[b] endures forever and ever.

You rule with a scepter of justice.

⁷ You love justice and hate evil.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you,
pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.

⁸ Myrrh, aloes, and cassia perfume your robes.

In ivory palaces the music of strings entertains you.

⁹ Kings' daughters are among your noble women.

At your right side stands the queen,
wearing jewelry of finest gold from Ophir!

¹⁰ Listen to me, O royal daughter; take to heart what I say.

Forget your people and your family far away.

¹¹ For your royal husband delights in your beauty;

honor him, for he is your lord.

¹² The princess of Tyre^[c] will shower you with gifts.

The wealthy will beg your favor.

¹³ The bride, a princess, looks glorious

in her golden gown.

¹⁴ In her beautiful robes, she is led to the king,

accompanied by her bridesmaids.

¹⁵ What a joyful and enthusiastic procession

as they enter the king's palace!

¹⁶ Your sons will become kings like their father.

You will make them rulers over many lands.

¹⁷ I will bring honor to your name in every generation.

Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.