

TWO MINUTES
IN THE BIBLE™

THROUGH

Psalms



BOYD BAILEY



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*To our four daughters,
Rebekah, Rachel, Bethany, and Anna,
whose King is enthralled by their beauty.*

Psalm 45:11

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Introduction



The psalms are my default to experience God in all His glory. They describe the Lord as a secure refuge, a cool place to rest under the shadow of His wing. Righteous refreshment is found in God's green grass beside still waters—care from our loving Great Shepherd for His sheep. Sound security accompanies a trusting soul.

The psalms invite peace and reveal pain. The 150 chapters of truth and transparency communicate trust in the Lord and struggle with sin and distrust. Some seeking souls are tortured by fear and doubt, while others are quieted under the calming hand of Christ. Fortunately, faith eventually wins out for most—though getting there isn't always easy!

Most of the psalms flow from the lives of people who are seeking the Lord. David, Moses, and the other psalmists describe their unique experiences with God. They are so intensely personal that you feel their emotion gradually bubble up from hurt and anger or immediately explode into praise and adoration. These writings are raw and real—at times I bow my head and pray a psalm because it helps me bare my heart.

The psalms can be described as songs, hymns, canticles, poems, and prayers. Out of these diverse writing styles, tantalizing truths wait to capture a willing heart. We often live to meet our felt needs, but when we meditate on a psalm with a humble heart, we experience something better—a deeper level of intimacy with the Lord.

Do you question the existence of God? Do you sometimes wonder why good people suffer and bad people prosper? Have crushing circumstances made you mad at yourself, at God, and at others? Or

are you at the pinnacle of pleasure and success—and tempted to take the credit? Are you in need of fresh soul-care in rest, reflection, praise, and worship?

Regardless of where you find yourself on the continuum of following Christ, you can engage with eternity in the psalms. Perhaps you once burned with passion for God, but life has gradually lessened your enthusiasm for godly living. The psalms are a reliable remedy to reignite your fiery faith. Has adversity beat up your emotions and left you feeling alone? Your heavenly Father will meet you through these love letters.

At times my doubts drive me to my knees with the book of Psalms open before me. I read and pray over each word and phrase, searching for a divine antidote for my fears. And then, just as the Rosetta Stone interprets ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, the Holy Spirit reads God's purpose for my life into my willing heart. He uses His Word to comfort and convict my heart and to instruct my head. I forget, but He lovingly reminds.

These simple writings will help you focus your attention on the Lord and open your heart to His love. They're not ends in themselves, but rather starting points of where God wants to take you in your faith walk. Confess your need for Him, and He will not disappoint you.

“Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name” (Psalm 86:11).

A fellow servant and friend of Jesus,

Boyd Bailey
Roswell, GA

Refuge in Him



Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

PSALM 2:12

Outside of Christ, we are refugees in need of a refuge. Our soul seeks asylum in Almighty God. Our spirit is on a search for security and peace. Deep within our innermost desires, we want refuge in God. Otherwise we wander around earth untethered to truth. Away from heaven we're refugees. We need a secure place, and Jesus is our sanctuary.

Even if your faith is as slender as a spider's thread, you can still trust in Jesus. The object of your faith matters more than the amount of your faith. His refuge isn't just for the robust of faith—it's especially available to those of us flailing away in doubt and fear. We've lost our way, and we need wisdom to map out our faith. When we take refuge in Him, we're blessed with clarity and conviction. The Spirit is our shelter.



"I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" (Psalm 91:2).

He's our refuge when hope seems extinct. He's our refuge when financial obligations are ravishing our resources. He's our refuge when people we depend on are nowhere to be found. He's our refuge when health issues weigh us down. He's our refuge when fear tests our courage. He's our refuge when our marriage hangs in the balance. He's our refuge when work pressures pulsate in our mind and awaken us at night. He's our

refuge when all seems to be going wrong. He's our refuge when all seems to be going right. God is our refuge.

We're blessed when we find refuge with our Creator. The Almighty supplies us with wisdom and understanding when we take time to listen to His instruction. Our prayers over His Word open our hearts to illuminating insights. The place of refuge holds up truth and casts out lies. Stability is another blessing from resting in His refuge. Our world rocks around us, but we have a rock in our Lord. He's not a suspension bridge that sways with the winds of the world's unpredictability. Nothing about our Savior is shaky.



"The LORD is good,
a refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).

How can I take refuge in God and His loving-kindness?
What results from resting in Him?

Related Readings

Exodus 33:22; Psalm 46:1-3; Isaiah 25:4; Jeremiah 16:19

Peace of Mind



*I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.*

PSALM 3:5-6

Peace of mind comes from our Master Jesus. He masterfully puts our mind at ease with His eternal perspective. Trust in Him gives us tranquil thoughts. Without His peace, we worry and fret. A mind without peace is paralyzed by the thought of everything going awry. What *can* go wrong *will* go wrong because the odds are stacked against us. Without the peace of Christ, we find ourselves with an overwhelming sense of dread, even despair. In Christ we have peace.

Jesus isn't stingy with His peace. He gives it liberally and lovingly.

Beware of the fleeting peace the world offers. It's a cheap substitute. The world's peace is circumstantial. God's peace transcends circumstances. The world's peace is temporal. His peace is eternal. The world's peace leads you away from God and reality. His peace leads you to engage with both. The world's peace produces a limited perspective. His peace results in a view of life that's robust and real. The world's peace cannot remove fear. His peace overcomes fear with faith.



*"Peace I leave with you; my peace
I give you" (John 14:27).*

Once you apply the peace of Christ, you have peace of mind. Peace

of mind gives you a platform for living purposefully. Because you live with purpose and peace, you garner influence with others. People are attracted to the peaceful. They want to learn how to find peace and apply it to their life circumstances.

Your friends or family may not acknowledge it, but your peace is proof of God's existence. Peace is a powerful apologetic for the Almighty. Your calmness during crisis can only be explained by Christ. Because you lean on Him, others want to lean on you.

Use your peace of mind as a gauge for God's will. If you have peace, proceed; if you lack peace, be cautious. God's peace is a green light to go forward. The absence of His peace is a red light to refrain. Therefore be sensitive to the Spirit's peaceful prodding to go or stay. Either way you're okay as long as the Lord's peace is preeminent. Peace calms your mind and enables you to think clearly. Peace positions you for wise thinking.



“The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

Why does Jesus want me to access His peace? How does His peace guard my heart and mind?

Related Readings

Isaiah 26:3; John 16:33; Romans 16:20; Ephesians 3:19

Chosen by God

*Know that the LORD has set apart his
faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.*

PSALM 4:3

God chooses His children for Himself. Our relationship with our Lord is all about Him. It's all about His desires, His pleasures, His vision, His goals, His will. When we came to God, we came empty-handed, clinging only to the cross of Christ. In our surrender to our Savior we emptied ourselves and received Jesus. We went from self-sufficient to God-dependent. We went from ungodly to godly. We went from an impersonal relationship with a distant God to an intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. God chose us for Himself.

The Lord wants you to know and follow His heart. He owns your life. You may be struggling with traveling overseas for the sake of His cause, although Jesus clearly commands us to go into all the world and make disciples. Or you may be too busy to build a relationship with your neighbors. But your sensitive Savior implores you to love those around you. You're at His disposal to carry out His desires.

"Love the LORD, all his faithful people!

*The LORD preserves those who are true to him,
but the proud he pays back in full" (Psalm 31:23).*

God offers a clear channel of communication for His children. He

hears when we call to Him. Prayer isn't passive for our heavenly Father. He's interested in our intense circumstances and our heartfelt fears. He listens to and answers our prayers. It's not always the answer we think we need. Whether He answers yes or no, He defines His will for us. We have no need to fear, for our heavenly Father is near.

The more we constantly converse with Christ, the more boldly we'll speak to people. Prayer is a purging and a preparation. It's God's platform to launch us into fields that are ripe for harvest. It's a preparation for engagement in the lives of people. Prayer fills us with love so we can be emptied of love. We're chosen by God. What He chooses He makes holy. Without holiness we cannot see our Savior. Because He was poured out, we are sold out!

What does it mean to be set apart for the Lord? How does God preserve His people?

Related Readings

Psalm 18:25; Micah 7:7; 1 Timothy 4:7; Revelation 2:10

Troublemakers



*The trouble they cause recoils on them;
their violence comes down on their own heads.*

PSALM 7:16

Troublemakers tend to self-destruct. There's no need to get worked up over their acts of deception. They're dishonest. They lie when the truth will suffice. The harm they intend to inflict on others comes back to hurt them. Troublemakers attempt to discredit those they're jealous of and in the process discredit themselves. Troublemakers conceive elaborate plans with evil intent. It's all about them and their agenda. They can easily tell you one thing and do another. In their mind the desired outcome justifies the polluted process.

Beware of troublemakers, but don't urge them on with too much attention. Keep an eye on them, but don't be consumed by them. Stand up to them in the right spirit without crushing their spirit. They're totally insecure and fearful but afraid to admit their insecurities. Because their acceptance is based on performance, they're always looking for ways to impress others.

It's not what we do that keeps us secure; it's who we are and whose we are. In Christ we have all we need.



*"As I have observed, those who plow evil
and those who sow trouble reap it" (Job 4:8).*

Trust God with troublemakers. You're not their judge and jury. He

will handle them in His timing and in His way. We have our own sins to confess and repent of on a regular basis. Our sins may not be as blatant, but they're still present. We may not sin in such a pronounced manner as a troublemaker; nonetheless we still struggle with dishonesty and deception. It may be on a smaller scale, but we still weigh in as one who struggles with being a troublemaker.

So let's contrast the life of a troublemaker by being a blessing maker. Let's be a blessing instead of a curse. Let's extend consolation instead of consternation. Let's focus on giving instead of taking. Let's be a solace instead of a pain. Let's serve instead of being served. Let's encourage instead of discourage. Kill them with kindness, and watch God turn their hearts toward Him. Give them the respect they never had, and they may begin to respect themselves. God's grace can change troublemakers into blessing makers. We are proof!



"He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand" (Psalm 40:2).

How can I become more of a peacemaker? How can I love troublemakers?

Related Readings

Psalms 9:15; 35:7-8; Proverbs 11:18; 26:27; Hosea 8:7;
Galatians 6:7-8

Lips of Children



*Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.*

PSALM 8:2

The lips of children lift up the greatness of God in praise and adoration. Children don't know any better than to believe God and take Him at His word. They are trusting and pure in their devotion. In Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, children embraced His coronation. They shouted "Hosanna in the highest." Humility praises Jesus, but pride is silent. Humility invites Jesus, but pride is threatened by Jesus. Humility wants to sit in His lap, but pride rejects His affection.

Children live in a constant state of dependence. They depend on their parents for food, clothing, and shelter. Children look to their parents to teach them about God and religion. Parents are a plethora of resources for their children. Boys and girls depend on Mom and Dad for understanding what they do well and how they can best excel. Parents are a warehouse of wisdom for their offspring. Wise children learn from and depend on their parents. They're dependent.



"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Our relationship with God is no different. We're His children in

desperate need of His direction. We may spurn His discipline at times, but we come back because we know He's what we need. We need His wisdom. We need His forgiveness. We need His comfort, love, and hope. We need His patience to work effectively with people. We need His security found in Christ. We need His courage in crisis. We need His grace in the middle of criticism. We need His humility to defeat our pride.

Children are the conscience of adults. They remind us of our dependence on Jesus. We're but a grain of sand on the seashore of humanity. Jesus is Lord of all, and we serve and worship Him alone. The lips of children naturally lift up the glory of God. And we do so supernaturally by the Holy Spirit's power. We cannot keep quiet because of His lavish love and abundant grace. It's in our childlike faith that God reveals Himself. We're God's child; therefore we praise Him!



"Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children'" (Luke 10:21).

What is childlike faith? Why is childlike faith required for daily trust in God?

Related Readings

Matthew 17:20; 19:14-15; 21:5; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; 1 Peter 2:2

Naive Expectations



*He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me."
He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."*

PSALM 10:6

There's no such thing as a trouble-free life. To think otherwise is naive, presumptuous, and proud. Pride does this. It instills false confidence and unrealistic expectations. A man thinks himself immutable and omnipotent to conclude he'll always be free from adversity. Jesus said just the opposite. He taught that we're not of this world, therefore the world will hate us. This is not an invitation to a life of ease, but a guarantee of conflict. The naive pronounce an out-of-control optimism not based in reality. There's no way to totally shield ourselves from pain.

An opulent home or outrageous bank account can never keep us from suffering. Wealth sets us up for disappointment. Boasts are not buttresses, and self-confidence is a sorry security. Our confidence is in Christ, not in our ever-changing life of uncertainty. He is immovable and immutable. We vacillate. We change. We struggle, doubt, and fear. When life happens and the bottom falls out, we have a solid foundation in our Savior. He sustains us!

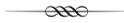


*"Pride goes before destruction,
a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).*

Pride, on the other hand, brews naive expectations. This is the ruin

of fools. When they succeed, their confidence bloats out of control. There needs to be a dose of humility that brings them back into the realities of everyday life. Engagement in the lives of others leads us to a more fulfilling life. Our success sets us up to serve others. To give back is to govern like God. This is what He expects. Godly expectations lead us down the road of service and selflessness.

So instead of insulating our lives from danger and risk, we follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. We ask, what does God think? Will this opportunity contribute to my spiritual growth? How does my spouse weigh in? What's best for my family? What will give me the most leverage for the Lord? We seek to align our expectations with eternity. It's a continual process of dying to ourselves and coming alive for the Lord. We should not expect a life of ease, but a life of obedience.



“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:12-13).

How can I align my expectations with God's? What does persecution look like for the godly?

Related Readings

Isaiah 47:7; Daniel 4:34-37; John 15:19; Revelation 18:7