

Psalms

Week 1

Monday: Psalms 1-5

Tuesday: Psalms 6-10

Wednesday: Psalms 11-15

Thursday: Psalms 16-21

Friday: Psalms 22-27

Introduction to the Psalms

Music plays an incredibly important part in all of our lives. Have you ever noticed how the sound of a certain type of music can illicit an emotional response inside of you? When circus music plays you can start to feel light on your feet. When intense organ music starts you may conjure up images of the Phantom of the Opera. When the Rocky theme song, or the Star Wars theme song starts you may be suddenly filled with a sense of victory and power. Take a moment to think about what your music is? What pumps you up? What mellows you out? What makes you feel romantic, nostalgic, or courageous?

Why is this? Music reaches deep into our soul. It moves past the logic center of our mind - that part that keeps our emotions in check and desires to rationally explain the universe - into the place of deep emotion. In this place words cannot describe the experience of life. I believe God designed us to be effected by music in this way because He knew that it is absolutely impossible for us to fully understand God with our rational mind. We can't fit the infinite into the finite space between our ears. Yet, we can reach beyond ourselves into the realm of the infinite through the vehicle of music, poetry, and the arts.

That is why the book of Psalms is in the Bible. The Psalms takes all the Law and history that we have been reading for the past several months and says, "so what?" Where do I go with this information?

Where we go is directly into the heart of God. What makes the songs in this book so powerful is that they are written in direct address to God, much like a love song is written from one lover to another.

The Psalms are wonderful because they plunge the depths of human emotion and they are not afraid to be completely honest with God. If the writer is elated, he waxes eloquently about the glory and majesty and beauty of God. If the writer is angry with God, he tells Him so. If the writer is in deep depression, he wallows in his self-pity for God and the world to see.

Here is the key for you and the Psalms. Let your hair down with them. Read the Psalms out loud until you find one that matches your emotional state that day. When you find one you can relate to, read it again and read it as if it were coming from your own heart. Then, start writing your own. Pour your heart out to God. Let Him know how you feel and don't be afraid of what He or anyone else will think. You'll be surprised how cathartic an honest "Psalm encounter" with God can be to your soul. Don't feel limited to words when expressing yourself to God. You may feel like writing music, drawing a picture, making a collage, cooking a dinner, whatever is an authentic expression of how you feel towards God, do that thing. Remember, God invites you to enter His presence and love Him with your whole self, pain and all. He has promised that He will meet you where you are and help you carry your burdens.

Monday - Psalm 1

What are the three “do nots” in vv. 1-3?

What is the “do?”

How does the analogy of the tree planted by water relate to a person who meditates on the Word?

If you could picture yourself as this tree: How close are you to the water? How fruitful are your branches? What can you do to grow your roots deeper?

Tuesday -- Psalm 6

How would you describe the emotion of the writer?

What may be going on in his life to make him feel this way?

What is his request of God?

Have you ever felt like the writer does in vv. 1-3? Did you bring these kinds of requests to God, or did you try to handle it on your own?

When you are in pain, try being honest with God and putting your hope in His unfailing love for you.

Wednesday -- Psalm 8

What is the attitude of the writer in this Psalm?

One incredible way to connect to the glory and majesty of God is to be out in nature. What is it about nature that connects some people so closely to God?

When was the last time you spent time in nature, meditating on God's majesty? What was it like? When will you do that again?

Spend some time writing your own version of this Psalm, praising God for His creation.