

Lesson 2: Fostering the Use of the Psalms in Prayer

Sunday, January 7, 2024

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Memory Text: “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1, NKJV).

Sabbath Afternoon

A belief that only spontaneous, unlearned prayer is real prayer appears to be prevalent among some Christians. However, Jesus’ disciples were immensely rewarded when they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. God placed a prayer book, the Psalms, at the heart of the Bible, not simply to show us how God’s people of ancient times prayed but also to teach us how we can pray today.

From the earliest ages, the Psalms have shaped the prayers of God’s people, including Jesus’ prayers (*1 Chron. 16:7, 9; Neh. 12:8; Matt. 27:46; Eph. 5:19*). This week we will look at the role the Psalms played in helping God’s people traverse their life journey and grow in their relationship with God. We should remember that the Psalms are prayers and, as such, are invaluable, not only for their theological insight but also for the ways they can enrich and transform our individual and communal prayers.

Praying the Psalms has helped many believers establish and maintain regular and fulfilling prayer lives.

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Sunday

Read Psalm 105:5, Colossians 3:16, and James 5:13. What is the place of the Psalms in the believer’s worship experience?

Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth—***Psalms 105:5***

- The Psalms help remind us of who we're dealing with, and who we are serving.

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
² Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
³ Great *is* the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
And His greatness *is* unsearchable.
⁴ One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
⁵ I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.
⁶ *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
⁷ They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.
⁸ The Lord *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
⁹ The Lord *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.—***Psalms 145:1-9***

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.—***Colossians 3:16***

¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.—***Psalms 119:11***

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him **sing psalms.**—***James 5:13***

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. ¹² Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and renew a right spirit within me.—***Psalms 51:10-12***

Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. ² Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the...workers of iniquity—***Psalms 64:1, 2***

Conclusive Points

1. Read and pray Psalms that correspond to your present situation, whatever it happens to be: there are Psalms of lament, the Psalms of communal lament, the thanksgiving Psalms, hymns, penitential Psalms, the wisdom Psalms (seeking God's wisdom and guidance), historical Psalms, Psalms containing anger and rage, and pilgrimage Psalms.
2. Read the psalm, engaging in simple reflection, and then pray. Ruminating over the psalm involves reflection on the various aspects of the psalm: the way the psalmist addresses God, and the reasons for the prayer.
3. Consider how your situation corresponds to the psalmist's experience and how the psalm might be able to help you articulate your experience.
4. If something in the psalm challenges you, ponder, for example, whether the psalm corrects your present false hopes about something you are facing.
5. Contemplate the psalm's message in the light of Christ's person and salvific work and the long-term hope Christ's work offers us. We should always look at everything in the Bible in light of Christ and the cross.
6. Look for new motives for prayer that the Psalm supplies, and think about their importance for you, your church, and the world.
7. If the psalm corresponds to the situation of someone you know, intercede in prayer for that person.