

Overview of Psalms

How to be a growing disciple of Jesus 24/7 no matter how crazy your world is

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How do discipleship and the Psalms fit together?

- First, we need an expanded definition of discipleship
- Though keeping his commands is a good start....
- For many that means
 - Decide to trust Jesus as Savior (mostly so you won't go to hell)
 - Go to church once a week
 - Bible reading of short passages in devotionals or limited to what you hear at church
 - Tithe and don't do anything illegal
- Those are the expected foundation for any believer in Jesus
- But a disciple is more

What is a disciple?

- Insights from Dallas Willard:
- We need to clear in our heads about what discipleship is. My definition: A disciple is a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do. A disciple is not a person who has things under control or knows a lot of things. Disciples simply are constantly revising their affairs to carry through on their decision to follow Jesus. <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/individual/rethinki ng-evangelism>
- My comment: constantly revising their affairs to carry through on their decision to follow Jesus. _ –that is discipleship 24/7—Psalms will help us see what that means
- Another related comment from Willard:
- The final and complete blessing and ultimate good, the *summum bonum* of humankind, comes to those with lives absorbed in the Way of Christ—life in the presence of God. From: *Hearing God* by Dallas Willard

This all-pervasive definition of discipleship, of life constantly revised to serve Jesus and consciously living in the presence of God

- Is what both OT and NT summarize in
- Deut. 6:4-5
 - Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (NIV)
 - Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! (MSG)

- Matthew 22:35-40
 - Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' (NIV)
 - "Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.'" (MSG)
 - No matter how it's worded—we are to love God with every part of us

One of the best ways to do that is the book of Psalms—so enough of the intro, let's get to them

- Because there is so much to be gained from them, I wanted to do a lesson to talk about them overall you'll be reading them interspersed with Sam, Kings, Chron and though they are in many ways helpful and enjoyable on their own, some can be confusing
- To make sure we don't read, interpret, or attempt to apply them incorrectly
- Just like we've talked about how to correctly read and understand narrative in the podcast: It's not always about you— How to Correctly Read and Apply Bible Stories <https://wp.me/pazrJD-5R> (at www.bible805.com)
- **First overview facts**
- Then—types of Psalms, examples, how they can help you walk before God

Psalms structure and overview

- Poems
- Specifically, poems set to music
- Poetry and music can be a hurdle in understanding
- Language a barrier—Ps 119 is not an acrostic in any language other than Hebrew
- Much American poetry uses rhyme, but that does not define something as a poem—Hebrew poetry uses parallels
- Music very different for different ages and cultures
- But because the poet is God—we still can benefit greatly from these poems because we see the heart, the emotions expressed in them

Time span and authors

- David wrote the most (73), Moses 1, 1 or 2 by Solomon, 1 by Heman, 1 by Ethan, 12 by Asaph, 10 by descendants of Korah
- Time span
- Earliest from Moses (Ps.90)
- ¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.
- ² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
-ends with
- ¹⁷ May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—

- yes, establish the work of our hands.
- Most likely one of the last
- Ps. 137 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. NIV
- Though most in the time of the Israelite Kingdom, specifically when united under David, continuing with Temple worship in Judah after Israel split in 2
- All the way to return to the land after Babylonian Captivity

How did they come together?

- Most likely an early collection was put together by David
- We see in Chronicles especially that the later part of David's life was spent in making detailed preparations for the temple and a large part of that were assignments and detailed instructions on the music, the singers and instruments.
- Compiling Psalms would have been part of that
- Note: his sin with Bathsheba happened when he was late 40's early 50s; He died at age 70. Confessed sin; forgiven and suffered
- But then did some of the most important work of his life in the remaining 20+ years

Later and close to form we have today

- Some compilations may have been made in the intervening years by Hezekiah or Josiah during their times of revival (several writers wrote after David—those he appointed the families)
- Most likely the complete collection and order we have today compiled by Ezra and associates after the return from the exile in Babylon
- It was the same time when Chronicles was written, and Jewish scriptures solidified

Overall--what they are and how divided

- Overall they are Prayers and hymns addressed to God
- Used as corporate worship in Israel and today
- Many however written *by an individual retelling their experience* their walk, their living with God
- This part of scripture is what helps us love God with everything that's in us—because they help us see ALL parts of human life—are before God and of importance to him—he enters in, helps, protects, encourages, we'll see all that
- Many ways to divide them—we will focus on
- Ps of Praise, Lament, Salvation History and Imprecatory Psalms
- Give an example and THEN application suggestions--what we can learn from that Psalm for our walk with God

SUPER IMPOTANT when READING & APPLYING Psalms

- YOU MUST READ THE WHOLE THING

- Many of the Psalms are a progression either of praise or of an emotion from abject pain or questioning or fear to a confident or quiet trust in God
- Like the book of Job if you don't read the whole thing, you can easily misinterpret the verse either in disappointment or unrealistic expectations.

Psalms of Praise & Worship

- Psalm 100, MSG ¹⁻² On your feet now—applaud God!
Bring a gift of laughter,
sing yourselves into his presence.
- ³ Know this: God is God, and God, God.
He made us; we didn't make him.
We're his people, his well-tended sheep.
- ⁴ Enter with the password: "Thank you!"
Make yourselves at home, talking praise.
Thank him. Worship him.
- ⁵ For God is sheer beauty,
all-generous in love,
loyal always and ever.

Praise application ideas—for your walk with God

- When you don't know how to praise, read a Psalm
- Join in corporate praise
- Remind yourself and be specific about what God HAS done
- Be thankful—a thankfulness journal is a great idea

Psalms of Lament, personal and corporate

- Psalm 43, NLB: O God, defend me from the charges of these merciless, deceitful men. ² For you are God, my only place of refuge. Why have you tossed me aside? Why must I mourn at the oppression of my enemies?
- ³ Oh, send out your light and your truth—let them lead me. Let them lead me to your Temple on your holy mountain, Zion. ⁴ There I will go to the altar of God, my exceeding joy, and praise him with my harp. O God—my God! ⁵ O my soul, why be so gloomy and discouraged? Trust in God! I shall again praise him for his wondrous help; he will make me smile again, *for he is my God!*
- Pattern: honest discouragement, questions, progressing to renewed trust in God
- Application: do the same—lay it all out before God; ask your questions, voice your fears,
- God is not shocked, won't be upset with you, either your actions or bad attitudes—he already knows
- But then get with other Christians, praise, be thankful—remind yourself of the promises of God—focus on them, not your troubles

Psalms of Salvation History

- Retelling all or in part the history of Israel and lessons from it

- Ps. 107—story of how Israel sinned, and God delivered—back and forth—
- Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, ³those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. ^[a]
- ⁴Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. ⁵They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. ⁶Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. . . .
- Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. . . .
- Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow; ⁴⁰he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste. ⁴¹But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks. ⁴²The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.
- ⁴³Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord.
- APPLICATION: look at your history; Some good, some maybe not so; Mine had both—most do
- Take time to evaluate your life, family, etc. God can always help you change if you want, ask, and are obedient

Imprecatory Psalms

- The entire range of human emotions in Psalms
- And so, in addition to sadness and joy we have “Imprecatory Psalms” means to invoke or call down (evil or curses), as upon a person.
- Example:
 - Psalm 137:7 – 9: 7 Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. “Tear it down,” they cried,
 - “tear it down to its foundations!”
 - 8Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who repays you according to what you have done to us. 9Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.

Good commentary from

- Fee, Gordon D.. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: Fourth Edition (pp. 228-229). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.
- Through the imprecatory psalms, God invites us “in

your anger, do not sin” (Ps 4:4, as cited in Eph. 4:26). We must fulfill the New Testament teaching, “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph 4:26 – 27), by expressing our anger directly to and through God rather than by seeking to return evil to those who have done evil to us. Imprecatory psalms harness our anger and help us express it (to God) by using the same sorts of obvious, purposeful exaggeration known to us from other types of psalms.

-We may honestly express our anger to God, no matter how bitterly and hatefully we feel it, and let God take care of justice against those who misuse us. ...The proper function of these psalms, then, is to help us not to be “overcome by evil” but to free us from our anger, that we might “overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).
- Application: *Take your hate and anger to God—ask him to deal with people—you stay out of it.* You won’t be effective in most cases and you may say and do things you regret. Much wisdom needed here—but we can be assured no one gets away with anything.
- Remember “Let God take care of justice against those who misuse us” and He will.
- Sometimes the greatest test of trust.
- But these Psalms show us that nothing is off limits to God.

Overall applications

- Every emotion in life—good, bad, and in between the Psalms teach us are part of our life lived before God, growing as his disciple
- No distinction between the secular and the spiritual
- When we become a Christian, we enter a new kind of life where God wants to touch, influence and be a part of every corner of it
- Psalms help show us how to do that

You see this with the life of David—he constantly wrote Psalms

- In that a great contrast with Saul and other kings, who were consumed often with jealousy and power (didn’t write any Psalms)
- Where David was totally focused on God as shown in the Psalms
- From his youngest experiences as a Shepherd, Ps 23, to
- The times running from Saul, Ps. 34:19 The righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him out of them all
- To dealing with sin, Ps. 51 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion

blot out my transgressions.

²Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

- Many Psalms of thanks, praise, lament, we can't date them, but part of life

Finally, learn from your reading of Psalms

- Don't be afraid of any emotion, question, or fear in your life
- Share freely with your God
- Read and think about Psalms, even after reading schedule is OK to jump in anywhere (but read the WHOLE PSALM)
- Consider journaling
- Write your own Psalm
- With Psalms and all else we study, consciously strive to live your life, all your life before God and in a way that helps you become more and more like Jesus, your Savior.