



summer of psalms

Exchange Church

Summer of Psalms
Psalms 42–49

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Introduction

Why This Guide?

For several years, Exchange Church has journeyed through the Psalms in the summer months. During the next several weeks, we hope you will participate in that psalm pilgrimage. This guide is intended to help you to engage the weekly psalm in meaningful ways by spending time each day in practices of spiritual reflection, prayer, and personal meditation. It aims to lead you to seek God personally and with others, to learn what it means to pray with our Lord and to meditate on these ancient songs. The psalm studied throughout the week anticipates the text preached on Sunday.

The Psalms Teach Us To Pray

Prayer is difficult. It takes practice and can feel awkward or forced. Prayer requires **daily habits** of stopping and doing something that doesn't come naturally.

In addition, many misconceptions accompany our thinking about what it means to pray. Should I use a lot of words? Or none at all? Is special prayer lingo required? Or just my usual talking voice? Can I really say anything to God? Or are some of my concerns off limits?

Like a small child, we need examples and models. The Psalms have guided Christians for two thousand years in how to pray. They even served as Jesus's prayer book throughout his life and ministry. He prays Psalm 118 with tears (Luke 13:35), he echoes Psalm 31 and Psalm 22 on the cross (Luke 23:46), and he even sang them (Mark 14:26). He also teaches from the Psalms throughout his ministry

(Matthew 5:5; Luke 24:27) and answers questions quoting psalms (Matthew 22:44).

The Book of Psalms is not just a heady theological textbook or an escapist distraction from the world. These prayers are for real people living real lives with real troubles. The Psalms lead us to call out to God in **every season of life**, whether in good or bad times, as the *Book of Common Prayer* says, “for all sorts and conditions of men.” Further, these ancient poems engage our hearts and our heads—the intellectual and the emotional aspects of our embodied humanity and shared with our incarnate Lord. They bring God near, by immersing us in the spiritual vitality of Israelite worship and shaping us into Christlikeness. In our participation, they reorient us toward God. And He reveals himself to us!

“The Psalms were the church’s first prayer book. For the earliest Christian fathers and mothers, prayer was the recitation of the Psalms, in the same way that today’s evangelical might assume that prayer is talking to God in our own words... By praying the Psalms year after year for millennia, in nearly every language and place on earth, the church learns to remain alive to every uncomfortable and complex human emotion. We learn to celebrate, and we learn to lament.

Psalms of lament—both communal and individual—are the most common type of psalm in the Psalter. They voice disappointment, anger, sadness, pain, deep confusion, and loss. As the first prayer book, the Psalms provide the pattern of prayer for all prayer books since, and its prayers are as varied and multidimensional as our human experience.”

Tish Harrison Warren, *Prayer in the Night*

The Psalms Teach Us To Meditate

Christian meditation is not the absence of thought or the clearing of your mind to achieve a Zen-like state. The discipline of Christian meditation rather activates your memory. This practice joins the **act of reading** and the **life of prayer** with the purpose of **meeting God**. Eugene Peterson suggests, “Meditation is the

prayerful employ of imagination in order to become friends with the text.” The ultimate goal of that acquaintance is fellowship with God through careful consideration of his Word.

To accomplish this, we must consider and remember.

Consider. Have you ever been reading a paragraph, page, or chapter and realized that you have no recollection of what you just read? Or maybe you arrived home and couldn’t remember what podcast or radio program you were listening to? Meditation is the inverse of this experience. It carefully considers a small phrase or sentence. It imbibes the words **slowly and methodically**. Like relishing a single bite of a savory meal or the first sip of a fine wine, meditation savors every aspect. It chews on each flavorful word. It explores all of the tasting notes. The practice of meditation guards against gulping down too much information and gorging ourselves with self-gratifying activities. In place of the frantic rush, we linger over the satisfying communion with God.

Meditating on Scripture requires the desire to foster a right relationship with the one who speaks Scripture. Our habits of meditation will grow deeper with every passing day as we get to know God through considering his words more and more. The Psalms help us to know more of his fullness, recognizing who he is, what he has done, and in what ways he has promised to act. By learning to love and pay careful attention to the words of God, we seek the heart of God. Our first impulse should not be to ask what I can get from his words. But what is God offering of himself in this verbal expression? We should approach his words with the goal of knowing the person talking, listening rather than speaking, seeking understanding rather than explanation, and locating our identity in his truth rather than our whimsy.

Remember. Memory is often considered a function of the mind. Yet some memories penetrate deeper than our heads. They become part of our very person. They cannot be forgotten, and they form our behaviors even when we are not actively thinking of them. Habits, reactions, intuition are all ways we express these types of memories. But how are these deep remembrances formed? What

would it mean to have Scripture become not just words on a page but intuitive habit? Able to form our reactions?

Meditation produces deep and far-reaching memory. Like the lyrics to a song, you haven't heard in years, certain music can bring not just the words to mind but your memories of a roller rink or dancing in a junior high school gym. In Psalm 143:5, three parallel ideas are linked:

I *remember* the days of old;
I *meditate* on all you have done;
I *reflect* on the work of your hands.

Memory, meditation, and reflection are activated when we consider God's creation, actions, and works. Remembrance is cultivated as we dwell with his Word and in his world. The practice of meditation embodies Scripture into every arena of our word and world. Christian meditation, according to Eugene Peterson, "trains us to read Scripture as a connected, coherent whole ... guarding against the fragmentation of our Scripture reading into isolated oracles." Scripture is not meant to be unconnected bits of information or banal cliches, but meditation enlivens God's words into all of life.

Finally, meditation embeds Scripture into our heart fueling our lives. Maybe you can remember the smell of the kitchen where your great aunt made her famous cookies, or your grandmother kneaded biscuit dough. She didn't refer to a recipe, but each batch turned out perfect. She knew the correct amounts—we say—**by heart**. It was a matter of feel. Her action of remembering was not rote memorization. It was not just information to be rattled off. It was a part of who she was, of her heart, and it drove even her mundane movements. How much more should we make Scripture part of who we are and enable a life animated by God's Word.

How to Use This Guide

Each week, you will be invited to encounter one specific psalm in a variety of ways. These exercises use a wide range of ancient and modern practices of spiritual reflection to captivate different

aspects of our hearts and minds. We strongly encourage you to **read the words of the Psalm aloud**. While silent reading may be necessary at times, we suggest that you use your voice to speak the words of each reading and hear yourself speak its truths. The habit of reading audibly harkens to age-old rhythms of hearing and speaking the Scriptures in daily communal worship (Luke 4:16). *Please speak out loud!*

Another suggested practice is to write, underline, and highlight in this guide. These active and physical encounters require only a short amount of time each day but will greatly enhance the experience and your memory.

Look for instructions in bold and italics to help direct you in what to do in each section.

The following pages suggest ways of learning how to understand and interact with the Word of God. We have included the psalms in varying translations to give a fresh perspective on familiar expressions. We have also included poems, hymns, and songs to help you see how others have interpreted these psalms throughout the centuries. Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer of well-known songs such as “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” and “Joy to the World,” has written a hymn for each psalm. Some of those renditions are included giving a beautifully poetic representation of the psalms.

Other reflections focus on devotional, instructional aspects of the psalms as well as important historical information. Each of these is different and hopefully will inform and encourage better understanding and use of the Psalms. It is our goal that this combination of literature, history, and devotional content will guide you in seeing the Psalms in a new light and refresh your love of God. May your mouth echo David’s refrain in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”

A Special Note For Weekend Readings

We have curated the weekend devotional to be done in a communal setting. There are directions about how to divide the readings among several different people, or you can simply alternate reading each section. We hope that you will partner with your family or another person in your small group or a friend to participate together in the weekend devotions. Through this, you are encouraged to reflect on the prior week with others and discuss in what ways God is using the Psalms to shape your heart. How we are challenged to live what we are reading. How to embody the words of God together.

Final Note

You will see a QR Code next to each song on the weekend readings. To listen: Open your phone's camera app and hold it over the top of the code. A link will appear on your screen. It will open the song on YouTube.

The QR Code below links to a Spotify playlist of all the songs in this guide (plus a few additional ones).



Psalm 42 “I will still praise him.”

*Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God,
for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.*

Introduction

The book of Psalms is made up of five collections or books. The second book (42–72) begins with eight compositions attributed to the Sons of Korah, who were temple musicians (Psalms 42–49).

Psalm 42 and 43 may be considered **a single work**. While each of this pair of psalms can be sung by itself, they are in fact two parts of a single, close-knit poem, one of the most sadly beautiful in the Psalter. Not only does one title serve for the two psalms, but the soliloquy ‘Why go I mourning ...’ is heard in both (42:9; 43:2), and the **refrain** which closes the two parts of Psalm 42 at verses 5 and 11 comes a third time at 43:5 to round off the whole. It is the lament of a temple singer exiled in the north near the rising of the Jordan, who longs to be back at God’s house, and turns his longing into resolute faith and hope in God himself.

Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*

Psalm 42 incorporates **an argument** with other people and with God. Other people’s “Where?” is accompanied by the psalmist’s “Why?” Yet further, it incorporates an argument within the psalmist that recurs in a slightly different form in the psalm’s refrain. It’s an odd notion, in a way, the notion of arguing with

oneself. It implies that human beings are designed to be people who are divided within themselves. They are not simply to give in to their (proper) sadness, fears, or temptations. They are to do battle with themselves. If they can come to the temple and pray when they are under attack, then their friends or a priest or a prophet may be able to minister God's word to them and encourage them. When you are cut off in the way this psalm presupposes, you have to do your encouraging for yourself.

John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone*

Who were the sons of Korah?

Twelve psalms (42–49, 84–85, 87–88) are ascribed to this Levitical family, descendants of the rebel leader of that name, whose children were spared—to our great gain—when he died for his rebellion (Num. 26:10f.). One part of this family became the temple doorkeepers and guardians (1 Chr. 9:17ff.; cf. Ps. 84:10?), another part the singers and musicians of the temple choir founded under David by Heman, whose fellow-Levites Asaph and Jeduthun (or Ethan) directed the choirs drawn from the other two clans of that tribe (1 Chr. 6:31, 33, 39, 44).

Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*

Monday (May 31)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

***Use this time to confess your sins
against God and our neighbor.***

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, grow our love of our neighbor, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

Amen

Read

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.
I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before
God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long people say to me, “Where is your God?”

I remember this as I pour out my heart: how I walked with many, leading the festive procession to the house of God, with joyful and thankful shouts.

Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

I am deeply depressed; therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your billows have swept over me.

The Lord will send his faithful love by day; his song will be with me in the night—a prayer to the God of my life.

I will say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of the enemy’s oppression?”

My adversaries taunt me, as if crushing my bones, while all day long they say to me, “Where is your God?”

Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 42

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (June 1)

Meditate

As a deer thirsts for streams of water,
so, I thirst for you, God.

I thirst for the living God.

When can I go to meet with him?

Day and night, my tears have been my food.

People are always saying,

“Where is your God?”

When I remember these things,

I speak with a broken heart.

I used to walk with the crowd

and lead them to God’s Temple with songs of praise.

Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset?

I should put my hope in God

and keep praising him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 42:1–5 NCV

Reflect

Learning to Pray the Psalms

When we hear someone speak desperately about a situation, our initial reaction is to rush in and reassure that **it is not all that bad**. And in hearing these Psalms, our natural, fearful yearning is to tone down the hyperbole, to deny it for ourselves and protect others from it because it is too harsh and, in any case, is an overstatement. And likely we wish to hold on a bit to the old orientation now in such disarray. Our tendency to such protectiveness is evident in the way churches ignore or “edit” these “unacceptable” Psalms.

Our retreat from the poignant language of such a Psalm is in fact a denial of the disorientation and a yearning to hold on to the old orientation that is in reality dead. Thus, an evangelical

understanding of reality affirms that **the old is passing away, that God is bringing in a newness** (2 Corinthians 5:17). But we know also that there is no newness unless and until there is a serious death of the old (see John 12:25 and 1 Corinthians 15:36). Thus, the complaint psalms of disorientation can be understood, not in a theoretical but in a quite concrete way as an act of putting off the old humanity that the new may come (see Ephesians 4:22–24).

So how shall we pray these psalms?

I suggest that praying them requires the location of experiences in our own lives and in the lives of others, when such inclinations and realities of disorientations were singing among us. The events of a bed full of tears, of a body full of disconnectedness, of a plate full of salty tears, of a day full of trampling—these are events not remote from us. In our disciplined, restrained ways of managing, we may be too uptight to cry so. We may be too dulled to feel the trampling or to acknowledge it. But we do know what it feels like to be kicked when we are down.

How wondrous that these Psalms make it clear that precisely **such dimensions of our life are the stuff of prayer**. The Psalms thus become a voice for the dying in which we are all engaged, partly because the world is a place of death and is passing away, partly because God gives new life, but only in the pain of death. It is because God is at work even in the pain of such death that the Psalmist dares enter God's presence with these realities. They have to do with God.

Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit*

Respond

Here is an example of praying Psalm 42 back to God. Use this as a guide as you meditate on this Psalm today.

“I long for you, O God. I thirst for God.”

Father, I want to want you. I hunger to hunger for you, Christ. I thirst to thirst for you, Spirit. Your living waters are all I need to quench my thirst for worldly blessings.

Yet as I hunger and thirst more after you, I faint and fail all the more in finding you.

Do not let us tire or grow weary of searching for the nourishment of our soul. Satisfy our longings with the bread of our Savior's brokenness and the wine of your renewed fellowship.

"My tears have been my only food day and night. Where is God?"

Too often my longing is halted by deep pains and fearful tears. I find myself feeding on my fears and panting after my pains. I am unsatisfied and ashamed of my brokenness. My tears overwhelm me with questions: Are you even there? God, can you hear me? Do you care about my hurts and my failures and my wariness?

"I remember lamentation and thanksgiving before God."

With a heavy heart and questioning mind, You invite me into your presence. You do not require me to ignore my reality or feelings. Your worship includes acknowledging my tears, admitting my waywardness, longing for a different world, and requesting your presence. Together with your people, I shout thanks for your promised deliverance—Our God brings new life! He is bringing new life!

"Even in turmoil, I will praise My Savior and my God."

Lord in every situation meet my needs and miseries:

Help me today by the strength of heaven to put to death the old, and renew me again with your living water as a new creation.

Keep me walking steadfastly towards the country of everlasting delights, that Heavenly Paradise is my only true inheritance. Support me that I may never turn back.

May I live by you, live for you, live with you. Praise be the One who was and is and will be forevermore.

Wednesday (June 2)

Meditate

I will put my **hope** in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!

Psalm 42:5

Reflect

A Message of Hope

Hoping does not mean doing nothing. It is not fatalistic resignation. It means going about our assigned tasks, confident that **God will provide the meaning and the conclusions**. It is not compelled to work away at keeping up appearances with a bogus spirituality. It is the opposite of desperate and panicky manipulations, of scurrying and worrying.

And hoping is not dreaming. It is not spinning an illusion or fantasy to protect us from our boredom or our pain. It means a confident, alert expectation that God will do what he said he will do. It is imagination put in the harness of faith. It is a willingness to let God do it his way and in his time. It is the opposite of making plans that we demand that God put into effect, telling him both how and when to do it. That is not hoping in God but bullying God. “I pray to GOD—my life a prayer—and wait for what he’ll say and do. My life’s on the line before God, my Lord, waiting and watching till morning, waiting and watching till morning, waiting and watching till morning.”

Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 42 aloud.

With earnest longings of the mind,
My God, to thee I look;

So pants the hunted hart to find
And taste the cooling brook.

When shall I see thy courts of grace,
And meet my God again?
So long an absence from thy face
My heart endures with pain.

Temptations vex my weary soul,
And tears are my repast;
The foe insults without control,
“And where’s your God at last?”

’Tis with a mournful pleasure now
I think on ancient days;
Then to thy house did numbers go,
And all our work was praise.

But why, my soul, sunk down so far
Beneath this heavy load?
Why do my thoughts indulge despair,
And sin against my God?

Hope in the Lord, whose mighty hand
Can all thy woes remove,
For I shall yet before him stand,
And sing restoring love.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

Israel, put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever.

Psalm 131:3

Thursday (June 3)

Meditate

“O God my rock,” I cry, “Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I wander around in grief,
oppressed by my enemies?”
Their taunts break my bones.
They scoff, “Where is this God of yours?”

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!

Psalm 42:6–11 NLT

Reflect

“Why must I wander around in grief?” (Psalm 42:9) Can you answer this, believer? Can you find any reason why you are so often in grief and sorrow instead of rejoicing? Why yield to gloomy anticipations? Who told you that the night would never end in day? Who told you that the sea of circumstances would ebb out till there should be nothing left but long leagues of the mud of horrible poverty? Who told you that the winter of your discontent would proceed from frost to frost, from snow, and ice, and hail, to deeper snow, and colder ice, and yet more heavy tempest of despair? Do you not know that day follows night, that flood comes after ebb, that spring and summer succeed winter? Hope again! Hope always! For **God fails not**.

Do you not know that your God loves you in the midst of all this? Mountains, when in darkness hidden, are as real as in day, and God’s love is as true to you now as it was in your brightest moments. No father chastens always: your Lord hates the rod as much as you do; he only cares to use it for that reason which should make you willing to receive it, namely, that it works your lasting good. You shall yet climb Jacob’s ladder with the angels, and behold him who

sits at the top of it—your covenant God. You shall yet, among the splendors of eternity, forget the trials of time, or only remember them to bless the God who led you through them, and wrought your lasting good by them. Come, sing in the midst of tribulation. Rejoice even while passing through the furnace. Make the wilderness to blossom like the rose! Cause the desert to ring with exulting joys, for these light afflictions will soon be over, and then “forever with the Lord,” your bliss shall never end.

“Faint not nor fear, his arms are near,
He changeth not, and thou art dear;
Only believe and thou shalt see,
That Christ is all in all to thee.”

C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*

Respond

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,

We your unworthy servants do give you most humble and heartfelt thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all humanity.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your abundant love in the redemption

of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, and for the hope of glory.

And we ask you to give us awareness of all your mercies, that our hearts may be truly thankful; and that we may praise you, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, world without end.

Amen

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Romans 15:13

Friday (June 4)

Meditate

Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul?

Why are you crying the blues?

Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again.

He puts a smile on my face.

He's my God.

Psalm 42:6–11 MSG

Reflect

Notice the psalmist addresses himself—"he talks to himself," and herein he discovers the cure. The main problem in the whole matter of "spiritual depression" in a sense is this—we allow our "self" to talk to us instead of "talking to ourself." Most **unhappiness** in life is due to the fact that we "listen to ourselves" instead of "talking to ourselves." David, in effect, says, "Self, listen for a moment to what I have to say—why are you so cast down?"

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself, question yourself, and preach to yourself—you must remind yourself **who God is, and what God has done, and what God has promised to do**. We must understand that this "self" of ours—this other man within us has got to be handled; do not listen to him! speak to him! remind him of what you know! So rather than listening to him and allowing him to drag you down and depress you—you take control!

It is only when we truly trust Christ that **true happiness and joy are possible** for us. Deliverance is not found in making resolutions to live a better life, fasting, grieving or praying. No "action" on your part. Repeatedly tell yourself, "I rest my faith on Christ alone, who died for my transgressions to atone." Remember, a man is justified by "faith"—not by the "deeds" of the Law—your works and behavior have nothing to do with your being saved.

Furthermore, since we are “eternally saved by faith,” our salvation is not maintained by “good works.”

Faith agrees with everything God says about reality—and that includes the need for you to be utterly dependent upon Him. Here is an example of what to say—God, all things seem to be against me to “drive me to despair.” I don’t understand what is happening, but this I know—I know that You so loved me that You sent Your only begotten Son into this world for me. You did that for me while I was an enemy, a rebellious alien. I know that Jesus loves me and gave Himself for me. I know that at the cost of His life’s blood I have salvation and that **I am now Your child** and an heir to everlasting joy and peace. I know that.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression*

Respond

What are some of the ways that you are listening to yourself today?

Stop and spend two minutes praying for the Spirit of God to help you to fix your eyes on God even in these difficulties.

What is something true about God that you need to hear yourself say today? *God has done... God is... God has promised...*

Pray

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.

Amen

Ephesians 3:20–21

Weekend (June 5–6)

We encourage reading the following prayers and scriptures aloud with your family or a friend.

Prepare

Prayer

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties and fears, may be prepared for the service of your sanctuary and our hearts for the ministry of your Word.

May our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.
I thirst for God, the living God.

When can I go and stand before him?

Day and night I have only tears for food, while my enemies
continually taunt me, saying, “Where is this God of yours?”
My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be:
I walked among the crowds of worshipers,
leading a great procession to the house of God,
singing for joy and giving thanks
amid the sound of a great celebration!

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and
my God!

Now I am deeply discouraged, but I will remember you—even
from distant Mount Hermon, the source of the Jordan,
from the land of Mount Mizar.
I hear the tumult of the raging seas as your waves
and surging tides sweep over me.
But each day the Lord pours his unfailing love upon me,
and through each night I sing his songs,
praying to God who gives me life.

“O God my rock,” I cry, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I
wander around in grief, oppressed by my enemies?”
Their taunts break my bones.
They scoff, “Where is this God of yours?”

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—
my Savior and my God!

Sing

My Help, My God (Psalm 42)

Why are you so full of heaviness?
Why are you disquieted within?
O my soul, O my soul

As the deer longs for the water brooks
So, my soul it longs, it thirsts for you
O my God, O my God

Chorus:

Put your trust in God, I will yet give thanks to him
Put your trust in God, I will yet give thanks to him
Put your trust in God, I will yet give thanks to him
My help, my God

Deep calls unto deep like ocean waves,
All your floods and rapids on me break
Oh, my soul, O my soul

I will say unto my God, my strength,
“How is it you have forgotten me?
O how long? O how long?”

Yahweh grants his kindness in the day
Through the night his song, it is with me.
Oh my God, O my God...

–Sandra McCracken

Reflect

Read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 42 aloud:

My spirit sinks within me, Lord,
But I will call thy name to mind,



And times of past distress record,
When I have found my God was kind.

Huge troubles with tumultuous noise
Swell like a sea, and round me spread;
Thy water-spouts drown all my joys,
And rising waves roll o'er my head.

Yet will the Lord command his love,
When I address his throne by day,
Nor in the night his grace remove;
The night shall hear me sing and pray.

I'll cast myself before his feet,
And say, "My God, my heav'nly rock,
Why doth thy love so long forget
The soul that groans beneath thy stroke?"

I'll chide my heart that sinks so low,
Why should my soul indulge her grief?
Hope in the Lord, and praise him too;
He is my rest, my sure relief.

Thy light and truth shall guide me still,
Thy word shall my best thoughts employ,
And lead me to thine heav'nly hill,
My God, my most exceeding joy.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

Most merciful Father,
Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.
Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.
Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,
and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds
we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 42?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 43 “I will still praise him.”

*Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God,
for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.*

Introduction

This psalm voices a plea for God to take up the sufferer’s cause in relation to the community and/or the individual who is causing the suffering and expresses dreams of the freedom to come to the temple. Psalm 43 goes beyond Psalm 42 in actually pleading for that freedom.

As well as the plea for God to take the suppliant’s side, there is the neat plea for God to send out his light and his truthfulness to bring the suppliant to the temple. It’s as if God is the king who is to send some aides to make sure the suppliant can get to the palace, offering the protection that will be needed for the journey that people are keen to oppose. It’s a terrible deprivation to be unable to join the community in its worship; rejoicing on one’s own is not the same, because proper rejoicing is a matter of celebration and needs to be done with others. Getting to Jerusalem will be like coming in from the cold.

The psalm has a comprehensive vision of the worship it will be possible to offer there. It will take place in the real presence of God because the temple is the place where God dwells and the place where the community gathers. It is not like a church, empty and quiet except for an hour or two each week; it is instead a vibrant and bustling place where people gather every day to worship, pray, and

give thanks for what God has done for them. The worship will involve the freedom to make a sacrificial offering at the altar as an expression of commitment and thanksgiving and to give testimony to other people to God's deliverance. It will involve joy and music.

John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 1: Psalms 1–72*

Why do some Psalms have titles and others don't?

The refrain at the end of Psalm 43 is the same as the one that recurs in Psalm 42, so evidently the two psalms belong closely together. The same point is suggested by the fact that Psalm 43 has no introduction, unlike most of the psalms that precede and follow. The line about going about dark and gloomy also recurs from Psalm 42. Maybe one psalm with three stanzas was separated into two so that they could more easily be used separately, or maybe Psalm 43 was written separately to take further the point in Psalm 42.

John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 1: Psalms 1–72*

Monday (June 7)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

Vindicate me, God, and champion my cause
against an unfaithful nation;
Rescue me from the deceitful and unjust person.

For you are the God of my refuge.

Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about in sorrow
because of the enemy's oppression?

Send your light and your truth; let them lead me.
Let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling place.

Then I will come to the altar of God, to God, my greatest joy.
I will praise you with the lyre, God, my God.

Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him,
my Savior and my God.

Psalm 43 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (June 8)

Meditate

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalm 43:5 NIV

Reflect

The confession, “My soul is downcast” is important. It’s as if the psalmist is telling us: “You know what? I tried to encourage myself. But to be honest about it, I’m still down.”

We again encounter the same courageous and **honest confession** in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus tells his disciples, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Matt 26:38). The translation “overwhelmed with sorrow” comes from the same word used in Psalm 42:5. The resemblance of our Lord’s words in Gethsemane suggests this Psalm may have been in his mind at the time. It is also interesting that Jesus repeats his prayer **three times** in Gethsemane, in the same way that the psalmist repeats the refrain three times in Psalm 42–43 (42:5, 11; 43:5). Both the prayer and the refrain express **struggle and trust** in God.

Federico Villanueva, *Psalms 1–72*

Respond

Here is an example of praying Psalm 43 back to God. Use the following space to write your prayers.

“Why, my soul, are you so dejected?”

Mighty, Gracious, and Good God, I have failed again. Who will rescue me from these poisonous roots and thorny vines? My soul is painfully entangled and desperately intertwined. Do not be distant, O Lord, in my burdens, sorrows, and hurts.

“Why have you, my God, rejected me?”

Father be present in this moment of rejection and distress. I am frail, confused, and fearful. Help me once again. Shepherd me in ways that I can sense and know. I am poor and needy (Psa 86:1–4). Bring me near to you.

Pray

Though I scarce have words to pray, O Spirit of the Holy God, still let my tears, my groans, and my wounded silences rise as an incense of perpetual prayer, reminding you of my need.

Make place for my anguish in the temple of your compassions, O Father, that my sorrows might abide there as a living psalm, and that my movement through these hours might be as an embodied liturgy, my deep needs received as petition, your ears ever hearing what I will not have words even to ask.

Hold me now, O Christ. I am undone—and I have nowhere I might run but to you. If your Spirit is not present, or your promises not true, there is nothing we can do but crumble in despair and disbelief, defeated by this enemy.

Every Moment Holy, vol. 2

Wednesday (June 9)

Meditate

Vindicate me, God, and champion my cause
against an unfaithful nation;
Rescue me from the deceitful and unjust person.
For you are the God of my refuge.
Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about in sorrow
because of the enemy's oppression?

Psalm 43:1–2

Reflect

What does it mean to say: “Vindicate me”? We might think of a legal verdict for someone in a courtroom. The Psalmist calls for God to rescue him. For the Christian, how do we deal with injustice in our lives or in the lives of others around us? Romans 12:19 describes the need of the believer to respond in an unnatural and countercultural way.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”

Christians are never to take vengeance into their own hands (v. 19; cf. Lev 19:18). Rather, we must allow the wrath of God to follow its own course. After all, it is written: “It is for me to avenge. I am the one who will repay.” Christians are not called upon to help God carry out divine retribution. God has promised to “pay back trouble to those who trouble you” (2 Thess 1:6). He has no need of our help or advice. Genuine trust will leave everything in his hands. Rather

than to take revenge we are to feed our enemies if they are hungry and give them something to drink if they are thirsty.

Believers are called upon to live victoriously in a hostile world by continuing to live as Jesus lived. Right will inevitably prevail against wrong. God is on his throne, and though all is not right in this world, he is the one who will avenge the wicked and reward the righteous.

Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*

Respond

Here is an example of praying Psalm 43 back to God. Use the following space to write your prayers.

“Why must I go about in sorrow because of the enemy’s oppression?”

Oppressors stand on every side. Abusers grieve our ruined souls. Exploiters plunder with unending greed. Manipulators destroy the vulnerable and weak. Enslavers seize your heavenly image bearers. Tyrants torture for fleeting profit. Creation is aflame with suffering and sorrow. I don’t know what to do or say.

“Rescue me from the deceitful and unjust person.”

Lord Jesus my Savior, be my true hope and the object of my affections. Intervene in my uncertainty, agony, and abandonment. Be near in my every anxiety, nearer still to those suffering harm.

Pray

Lord, *you* are my vindication and reputation—it doesn't matter what anyone else says. *You* are my stronghold—nothing else can protect me from every danger, even death. *You* are my joy and delight—all others will desert me. If *you* are my God, why should I be downcast?

Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Thursday (June 10)

Meditate

Give me your lantern and compass,
give me a map,
So, I can find my way to the sacred mountain,
to the place of your presence.

Psalm 43:3 MSG

Reflect

Only restoration to the **presence of God** will vindicate [the Psalmist], for restoration to the divine presence will silence the question of his enemy [“where is your God?” 42:10] and that of his own heart. So, he pleads for light and truth to lead him to the holy mountain where God lives, to Jerusalem and the Temple. There in the Temple he will come to the altar, where sacrifice is made and restoration to intimate fellowship with God is possible.

He is still discouraged and sad, for he has not yet experienced that which his soul longs for. But his hope is more sure, as he says twice, “I will praise” (43:4–5). His hope is sure, because the one to whom he prays is his Savior and God. He believes that God will save him from **the worst of all possible fates: the absence of God**. He believes that God will deliver him into God’s very own presence.

People in the old covenant entered God’s presence when they entered the Temple. But the Temple was only a shadow, not the reality itself (Heb 10:1). We can enter the reality of God’s presence “because of the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10:19). “And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him” (Heb 10:21–22). We cannot enter unaided. God must send out his light and truth. Then we will enter his presence. Jesus is that **light and truth** that brings us to the Father.

Mark Futato, “The Book of Psalms”

Respond

Here is an example of praying Psalm 43 back to God. Use the following space to write a response or prayer.

“Why, my soul, are you in such turmoil?”

I am confused and upset. No good can come from this! I don't have any hope left. Give me strength to trust you, O God, with my confusion in these trying circumstances. Let me neither ignore my turmoil through diversions nor magnify my pain by keeping it near to my heart. Give your hope again.

“Send your light and your truth; let them lead me to your holy mountain.”

Apart from your light, I am lost in the shadows. Do not let my sorrow and dejection end with disbelief.

Apart from your truth, I am lost in a sea of uncertainty. Do not let my sorrow and dejection end with disillusionment.

Pray

Thy presence is to me a treasure of unending peace;
No provocation can part me from thy sympathy,
 for thou hast drawn me with cords of love,
 and dost forgive me daily, hourly.
O help me then to walk worthy of thy love,
 of my hopes, and my vocation.
Keep me, for I cannot keep myself;
Protect me that no evil befall me;
Let me lay aside every sin admired of many;
Help me to walk by thy side, lean on thy arm,
 hold converse with thee,
That henceforth I may be salt of the earth
 and a blessing to all.

Valley of Vision, "Regeneration"

Friday (June 11)

Meditate

I will put my **hope** in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!

Psalm 43:5

Reflect

The psalmist says, “Hope in God! I shall again praise him.” He’s redirecting what he puts his hope in and of course we have as Christians another way.

When I think about my **justification**, then I won’t dwell on the past and guilt. When I think about my **sanctification**, then I realize I can change, and I won’t feel that ‘I’ll never change.’ When I think of my **adoption**, then I’ll remember: ‘Oh, my God *does* hear me, and he *does* love me the way a father does a child.’ When I think of my future **resurrection**, I’m not afraid of aging or dying. When I think about how much he loves me in Jesus Christ, then I have confidence.

Reorder your hope!

Tim Keller, “Talking to Yourself, Not Listening to Yourself”

Respond

Here is an example of praying Psalm 43 back to God. Use the following space to respond.

“Put your hope in God”

O Spirit who is now with me. Be at work in us. Fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle the fire of your love.

O Christ who came to set your people free. Be my deliverer. Bring quickly your kingdom into my heart and this faltering world.

O Father who reigns supreme. Be my eternal rock, my impenetrable fortress, my fierce defender. Steady the storm of my world and my heart.

How does the Gospel help you to apply this Psalm to your life?

Pray

Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.

Romans 12:12 NLT

Weekend (June 12–13)

Prepare

Prayer of Supplication

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Prayer of Confession

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me a spirit of despondency, sloth, love of money, and idle talk. But give to me, your servant, a spirit of sober-mindedness, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, since you are blessed to the ages.

Amen

Prayer of St. Ephrem

Read

Declare me innocent, O God!

Defend me against these ungodly people.

Rescue me from these unjust liars.

For you are God, my only safe haven.

Why have you tossed me aside?

Why must I wander around in grief,
oppressed by my enemies?

Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me.

Let them lead me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you live.

There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy.
I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God!

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?

I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—
my Savior and my God!

Psalm 43 NLT

Sing

[Send Out Your Light \(Psalm 43\)](#)

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
Against the deceitful man, O deliver us
For you are the God in whom I take refuge.
Why have you rejected me? I walk around
confused.

Chorus:

Send out your light and truth;
Let them lead me.
Bring me to your holy hill



To your dwelling.
Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God, my exceeding joy.
Then I will praise him with my guitar,
Oh, my joy, my joy.

Why are you cast down low, O my soul?
Why are you cast down low, and in turmoil?
Hope in God, for I shall again praise him;
Hope in God, for he is my salvation.

—Sandra McCracken

Reflect

Shucked of the husk of all my wasted years
I long to step forth, free of all encumbrance
To set aside the heaviness, the tears,

The sin that clings so close, the doleful hindrance
Of resentment and regret, to let them go
Roll them below the cross, as Christian once

Did in his pilgrim's progress. Then I'd know
A lighter step once more, the joy and gladness
The psalmist longs for here. Oh Jesus, show

Me once again the path out of my sadness
And set my steps back on your holy hill,
Send out your light and truth to be my witness

And since I cannot climb by my own will
Abide with me and be my will, my strength,
The living fountain whence I drink my fill.

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Equip your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring in the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,

and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds

we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 43?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 44 “Wake up, Lord! Help us!”

*Wake up, Lord! Why are you sleeping?
Get up! Don't reject us forever!
Why do you hide and forget
our affliction and oppression?
Rise up! Help us!
Redeem us because of your faithful love.*

Introduction

Psalm 44 is closely linked to Psalm 42–43. One of the key words in the latter is the word “downcast”. This word occurs only five times in the whole Psalter: four times in Psalm 42–43. The only other occurrence of the word is in Psalm 44 (v. 25). Both psalms are attributed to the “Sons of Korah.” In Psalm 42–43 the psalmist evinces an intimacy with God, as reflected in his deep longing for him. And he still feels so down. Similarly, the people in Psalm 44 claim they have been faithful to God and yet they are suffering. They feel God has rejected (44:9; cf. 43:2) and forgotten (44:17, 24; cf. 42:9) them. The remembrance of times past only makes the present more painful (42:4, 6). The recollection of God’s previous acts of deliverance only creates a contradiction with their present experience (44:1–8 and vv. 9–16).

The remarkable thing about these psalms is that the people did not keep within them what they were feeling or thinking, but expressed these things to God. They poured out their hearts to the Lord.

Federico Villanueva, *Psalms 1–72*

How Did Jesus Sing the Psalms?

Christ could explain his sufferings and glory from the Psalms because He experienced the agony and the ecstasy the Psalms predicted. His cry, “Why has thou forsaken me?” came from the pit of His anguish. Abandoned by His friends, ringed about by His enemies— seen in the Psalm as wild bulls, roaring lions, baying hounds—Jesus knew the ultimate horror, the hell of forsakenness by His Father. The God who promised never to fail or forsake His own did for- sake His beloved Son, in order not to break His word but to keep it. In the dark moment of that abandonment both the Father and the Son paid the price of our redemption forever.

What songs of agony Christ sings—the psalms of His suffering that sealed salvation! Listen, and learn of Him hymns that know the fellowship of His sufferings, hymns that can come from a cross, or rise from a prison cell at mid- night. The singing Savior does not lead songs modeled on sugary commercials or the pounding pornography of the disco scene. Sterner, stronger, deeper, His songs carry us through the valley of the shadow of death.

Our Lord became our brother to die in our place. He teaches us honest songs, heart-cries to God: “My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as a hearth” (Ps. 102:3).

Yet Christ’s psalms of suffering rise in faith to God. In abandonment He cries “Why?” but His question leaps from the depths to the heights. “My God!” He cries, even in His forsakenness. “Thou art holy” (Ps. 22:3) ... “save me from the lion’s mouth” (v. 21). Indeed, even be- fore God answers, the anguish of His Anointed turns to a vow of praise: “In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee” (v. 22).

Christ who sang in suffering now sings in triumph. Peter on Pentecost preached Christ’s resurrection from the Psalms. It is Christ who says, “Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption” (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27).

Read all of Peter’s quotations from Psalm 16, and reflect on how the whole applies to Christ. So, too, do such parallel passages as these: “I shall be satisfied when I awake with beholding thy form”

(Ps. 17:15); “Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps. 73:24).

Edmund Clowney, “The Singing Savior,” *Moody Monthly*

Monday (June 14)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

God, we have heard with our ears—our ancestors have told us—
the work you accomplished in their days, in days long ago:
In order to plant them, you displaced the nations by your hand;
in order to settle them, you brought disaster on the peoples.
For they did not take the land by their sword—

their arm did not bring them victory—
but by your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face,
because you were favorable toward them.

You are my King, my God, who ordains victories for Jacob.
Through you we drive back our foes;
through your name we trample our enemies.
For I do not trust in my bow,
and my sword does not bring me victory.
But you give us victory over our foes
and let those who hate us be disgraced.

We boast in God all day long; we will praise your name forever.
Selah

But you have rejected and humiliated us;
you do not march out with our armies.
You make us retreat from the foe, and those who hate us
have taken plunder for themselves.
You hand us over to be eaten like sheep
and scatter us among the nations.
You sell your people for nothing;
you make no profit from selling them.
You make us an object of reproach to our neighbors,
a source of mockery and ridicule to those around us.
You make us a joke among the nations,
a laughing stock among the peoples.

My disgrace is before me all day long,
and shame has covered my face,
because of the taunts of the scorner and reviler,
because of the enemy and avenger.

All this has happened to us, but we have not forgotten you
or betrayed your covenant.
Our hearts have not turned back;

our steps have not strayed from your path.
But you have crushed us in a haunt of jackals
and have covered us with deepest darkness.
If we had forgotten the name of our God
and spread out our hands to a foreign god,
wouldn't God have found this out,
since he knows the secrets of the heart?
Because of you we are being put to death all day long;
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

Wake up, Lord! Why are you sleeping?
Get up! Don't reject us forever!
Why do you hide and forget our affliction and oppression?
For we have sunk down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.
Rise up! Help us!
Redeem us because of your faithful love.

Psalm 44 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (June 15)

Meditate

We boast in God all day long;
We will praise your name forever.

Psalm 44:8

Reflect

I recently saw some photos taken of the cosmos by the Hubble Telescope, and the fact impressed upon my heart was how glorious is the God who made such glory. But the heavens pale compared to the glory of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ. When the cross of Christ, where the Son of God who became man in a wondrous display of glorious humility and voluntarily suffered the wrath of God for shameful sinners like us, when that cross is lifted before our eyes, even the glory of the heavens grows dim. Paul said, in Galatians 6:14, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So, understand that you were created to be a boaster in the glory of creation's God. Sin, however, has not only covered us in shame but has turned our boasting pathetically towards ourselves, as perhaps the grossest expression of our depraved hearts and minds. But God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, that we should boast once more, that we should boast in his cross, in the love of God. We should boast in the fact that once more, despite our shame, we are brought to the knowledge of God. We now are called to boast in pride of a God like ours. According to the Scripture, the best way for us to glorify God is through our own humility, in which God delight, boasting only in him. As Jeremiah 9:23-24 tells us, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the LORD."

Respond

Meditate on these lines and write a prayer of response.

“You give us victory over our foes and let those who hate us be disgraced.” (v. 7)

“We boast in God all day long; we will praise your name forever.” (v. 8)

How are you praising God today? If praise is difficult today, what victory are you hoping God will bring?

How does the victory of Christ give you confidence in greater things even when you feel hated and disgraced?

Pray

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Amen

Galatians 6:14 NIV

Wednesday (June 16)

Meditate

Yet You have rejected us and brought us to dishonor,
And do not go out with our armies.
You cause us to turn back from the adversary;
And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves.
You give us as sheep to be eaten
And have scattered us among the nations.
You sell Your people cheaply,
And have not profited by their sale.
You make us a reproach to our neighbors,
A scoffing and a derision to those around us.
You make us a byword among the nations,
A laughingstock among the peoples.
All day long my dishonor is before me
And my humiliation has overwhelmed me,
Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles,
Because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger.
Psalm 44:9–16 NASB

Reflect

“Pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”
Psalm 62:8

Here the psalmist nearly shouts his pain, frustration, and even anger to God, but the significant thing is that he does so before God, processing his grief in sustained prayer. God understands us so well that he permits, even encourages, us to speak to him with uncensored hearts.

Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

It is better to come to God with sharp words than to remain distant from him, never voicing our doubts and disappointments.

Pray

Lord, I praise you for being a God who invites us to give you a long list of complaints! How patient, loving and caring you are to all your children. Thank you for the invitation to unburden myself fully, without the need to say everything in the “right way.”

Amen

Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Thursday (June 17)

Meditate

Because of you we are being put to death all day long;
We are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

Psalm 44:22

Reflect

Paul quotes this verse in Romans 8 in illustration of the fact that the church of God has in all ages been a persecuted church. But there is this remarkable difference between the tone of the psalmist and the tone of the apostle: the psalmist cannot understand the chastening and complains that God's heavy hand has been laid without cause upon his people; Paul can rejoice in persecutions also, and exclaim, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 37–39).

C.H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*

We all went astray like sheep;
we all have turned to our own way;
and the Lord has punished him
for the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:6–7 CSB

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 44 aloud:

Lord, we have heard thy works of old,
Thy works of power and grace,
When to our ears our fathers told
The wonders of their days.

How thou didst build thy churches here,
And make thy gospel known;
Amongst them did thine arm appear,
Thy light and glory shone.

In God they boasted all the day,
And in a cheerful throng
Did thousands meet to praise and pray,
And grace was all their song.

But now our souls are seized with shame,
Confusion fills our face,
To hear the enemy blaspheme,
And fools reproach thy grace.

Yet have we not forgot our God,
Nor falsely dealt with heav'n,
Nor have our steps declined the road
Of duty thou hast giv'n;

Though dragons all around us roar
With their destructive breath,
And thine own hand has bruised us sore
Hard by the gates of death.

—Isaac Watts

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

Thank you, Father, for sending your Son to be slaughtered on our behalf. Because of him, nothing in this life can take our joy away. We know that we are more than conquerors because we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection.

Help us to live in this truth each day.

Amen

Friday (June 18)

Meditate

Wake up, LORD! Why are you sleeping?

Get up! Don't reject us forever!

Why do you hide and forget our affliction and oppression?

For we have sunk down to the dust;

our bodies cling to the ground.

Rise up! Help us!

Redeem us because of your faithful love.

Psalm 44:23–26 NASB

Reflect

When God gives us the *no* answer, it can be a difficult testing of our faith, but when we study the Bible, we understand more and more that God never makes a mistake. Once we are in heaven, we will understand it all.

My life is like a weaving between my God and me,
I do not choose the colors, He worketh steadily.
Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper, and I the underside.

Corrie ten Boom, *Jesus is Victor*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 44 aloud:

We are exposed all day to die
As martyrs for thy cause,
As sheep for slaughter bound we lie
By sharp and bloody laws.

Awake, arise, Almighty Lord,

Why sleeps thy wonted grace?
Why should we look like men abhorred
Or banished from thy face?

Wilt thou forever cast us off,
And still neglect our cries?
For ever hide thine heav'nly love
From our afflicted eyes?

Down to the dust our soul is bowed,
And dies upon the ground;
Rise for our help, rebuke the proud,
And all their powers confound.

Redeem us from perpetual shame,
Our Savior and our God;
We plead the honors of thy name,
The merits of thy blood.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

The deep of misery calls to the deep of mercy;
the deep of transgression calls to the deep of grace.
Greater is the deep of mercy than the deep of misery.
Therefore, let deep swallow deep.
Let the deep of mercy swallow the deep of misery.

—Ghirolamo Savonarola

The Lord will send his faithful love by day;
his song will be with me in the night—
a prayer to the God of my life.

Psalms 42:8 CSB

Weekend (June 19–20)

Prepare

Prayer

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties and fears, may be prepared for the service of your sanctuary and our hearts for the ministry of your Word.

May our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

O God, we have heard it with our own ears—
our ancestors have told us
of all you did in their day, in days long ago:

You drove out the pagan nations by your power

and gave all the land to our ancestors.
You crushed their enemies and set our ancestors free.

They did not conquer the land with their swords;
it was not their own strong arm that gave them victory.
It was your right hand and strong arm
and the blinding light from your face that helped them,
for you loved them.

You are my King and my God.
You command victories for Israel.
Only by your power can we push back our enemies;
only in your name can we trample our foes.
I do not trust in my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me.

You are the one who gives us victory over our enemies;
you disgrace those who hate us.
O God, we give glory to you all day long
and constantly praise your name.

Selah

But now you have tossed us aside in dishonor.
You no longer lead our armies to battle.
You make us retreat from our enemies
and allow those who hate us to plunder our land.
You have butchered us like sheep
and scattered us among the nations.
You sold your precious people for a pittance,
making nothing on the sale.
You let our neighbors mock us.
We are an object of scorn and derision to those around us.
You have made us the butt of their jokes;
they shake their heads at us in scorn.
We can't escape the constant humiliation;
shame is written across our faces.
All we hear are the taunts of our mockers.
All we see are our vengeful enemies.

All this has happened though we have not forgotten you.

We have not violated your covenant.

Our hearts have not deserted you.

We have not strayed from your path.

Yet you have crushed us in the jackal's desert home.

You have covered us with darkness and death.

If we had forgotten the name of our God

or spread our hands in prayer to foreign gods,

God would surely have known it,

for he knows the secrets of every heart.

But for your sake we are killed every day;

we are being slaughtered like sheep.

Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep?

Get up! Do not reject us forever.

Why do you look the other way?

Why do you ignore our suffering and oppression?

We collapse in the dust, lying face down in the dirt.

Rise up! Help us! Ransom us because of your unfailing love.

Psalm 44 NLT

Sing

The following song was written by Exchange church members:

Psalms 44: Come to Our Help

Oh God, we've heard it said

We know you can raise the dead

Our father's fathers wept and prayed

They were broken and led astray

But you set them free

Oh God, you set them free

My shame has covered my face

All day long, I see my disgrace

The enemy he taunts and reviles

Is it true you still call us child?
Do you call me child?

Chorus

We boast in God
We will praise his name forever
Even if we can't see
How it ends or if it will
We will sing even though our hearts are weary
In you, our King, comes all our strength
Through you, our King, comes victory

Our hearts have not turned back
And we've not strayed from your path
If we'd forgotten your name
The secrets of our heart would've given us away
Given us away

Bridge

Your love, redeems us
While our souls are in the dust
Rise up, O Lord and save us

Your love, redeems us
While our souls are in the dust
Rise up, O Lord, our help
Rise up, O Lord, our help

Reflect

We encourage you to read this poem aloud.

The living fountain whence I drink my fill,
Must rise in me before I sing this psalm
How could it ever be God's Holy will?

To raise an army, to inflict the harm

The special horror of a holy war
How could we ever conquer in his name?

Oh Jesus, did you sing this psalm before
You girded strength to brave your agony,
To fight the only holy battle for

The world you loved, and heal the misery
Of all mankind? As for us you were smitten
Into the place of dragons, victory

Was won for all of us, as it is written
And so, in Christ shall all be made alive
And still we live as if we have forgotten.

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,

and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds

we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 44?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 45 A Royal Marriage

*Your throne, God, is forever and ever;
the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy
more than your companions.*

Introduction

Uniquely within the Psalter, this “psalm” addresses and focuses on human beings rather than God. Its content eventually makes clear that it is a marriage song, though this does not emerge until near the end. It seems plausible to reckon that the psalm was composed for a particular royal wedding, perhaps Solomon’s or Ahab’s.

As usual, it is important to reflect on the theological significance of the psalm’s original meaning and not merely its messianic or Christian reinterpretation, which is appropriate in a commentary on Hebrews. “After prophesying grievous things in the psalm before this, the inspired word now forecasts cheerful things, encouraging the downcast and teaching that they will both conquer and persevere.” Like Ps. 2, the poem affirms the position of the king, affirms his role as warrior, and reaffirms his position as someone marked out and blessed by God. But it insists that the king fights battles that embody truthfulness and faithfulness and combat faithlessness, battles such as Saul’s against Ammon. The king is not to fight (for instance) simply to create an empire or work out a grudge. Royal power must be exercised to the right ends.

In turn, the queen is reminded that she must forget her past. Israel was only too familiar with queens who did not do so. The queen’s example must be Ruth (see Ruth 1:16–17), not Jezebel.

Perhaps her submission to the king works within this framework. The psalm would then not be making a point about submission in general but urging the opposite marital-religious dynamic to the one that obtained at Ahab's court. And likewise, her attractiveness to the king will encourage a process whereby together they generate sons to rule throughout the land or throughout the earth. To many brides and grooms in the cultural setting of the West in the third millennium AD, this might not seem much of a prospect, but for a couple who must work within that traditional cultural context, it might have its satisfactions and its rewards. Perhaps more to the point, it sets constraints around groom and bride that their people might be grateful for.

John Goldingay, *Psalms, vol. 2: Psalms 42–89*

What are the Lilies?

“Lilies” translates the Hebrew word *šûšan* or *Shoshannim*. These words in the headings to Pss 45; 60; 69; 80 may denote a tune. Lilies are mentioned in two chief connections in the OT. They recur in the Song of Songs (2:1, 2, 16; 4:5; 5:13; 6:2, 3; 7:2 [3]), which may suggest they have romantic associations (as might the occurrence in Hosea 14:5 [6]). This would fit Ps. 45. Then they were a decorative motif in the temple (1 Kings 7:19, 22, 26).

Goldingay, *Psalms, vol. 2: Psalms 42–89*

Monday (June 21)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

My heart is moved by a noble theme
as I recite my verses to the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.
You are the most handsome of men;
grace flows from your lips.

Therefore, God has blessed you forever.
Mighty warrior, strap your sword at your side.
In your majesty and splendor—
 in your splendor ride triumphantly
 in the cause of truth, humility, and justice.
May your right hand show your awe-inspiring acts.
Your sharpened arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies;
 the peoples fall under you.

Your throne, God, is forever and ever;
 the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
 therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy
 more than your companions.
Myrrh, aloes, and cassia perfume all your garments;
 from ivory palaces harps bring you joy.
Kings' daughters are among your honored women;
 the queen, adorned with gold from Ophir,
 stands at your right hand.

Listen, daughter, pay attention and consider:
Forget your people and your father's house,
 and the king will desire your beauty.
Bow down to him, for he is your lord.
The daughter of Tyre, the wealthy people,
 will seek your favor with gifts.
In her chamber, the royal daughter is all glorious,
 her clothing embroidered with gold.
In colorful garments she is led to the king;
 after her, the virgins, her companions, are brought to you.
They are led in with gladness and rejoicing;
 they enter the king's palace.

May your sons succeed your ancestors;
 may you establish them as princes throughout the land.
I will cause your name to be remembered for all generations;

therefore the peoples shall praise you forever and ever.

Psalm 45 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (June 22)

Meditate

Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:

Forget your people and your father's house.

Let the king be enthralled by your beauty;

honor him, for he is your lord.

Psalm 45:10–11

Reflect

Verses 10–12 suggest that the bride was foreign, as many brides would be. The object of many royal weddings was to cement relationships with other states. But the psalm does not actually tell us which wedding, and the inclusion of the psalm in the Psalter implies that it was used for many. In the post-monarchic period, it came to be interpreted allegorically of the Messiah and his bride, the people of God, and it may also have been used for ordinary couples who on the occasion of their wedding become king and queen for a day. The prominent emphasis on the groom's warring activity contrasts with the Song of Songs, on the assumption that this language is literally meant and is not figurative, as it is in the Song.

John Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*

Take a look at the 18th century painting entitled (QR code link), *Wedding Supper* by Martin van Meytens. Consider the coming Wedding of the Messiah and his Bride the Church, of which you are a part. Imagine attending such an elaborate royal wedding. All the invited guests would fill the room and dote over the couple. They would enjoy the finest food, clothing, fellowship, and entertainment.



Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 45 aloud:

The King of saints, how fair his face,
Adorned with majesty and grace!
He comes with blessings from above,
And wins the nations to his love.

At his right hand our eyes behold
The queen arrayed in purest gold;
The world admires her heav'nly dress,
Her robe of joy and righteousness.

He forms her beauties like his own;
He calls and seats her near his throne:
Fair stranger, let thine heart forget
The idols of thy native state.

So shall the King the more rejoice
In thee, the favorite of his choice;
Let him be loved, and yet adored,
For he's thy Maker and thy Lord.

O happy hour, when thou shalt rise
To his fair palace in the skies,
And all thy sons (a numerous train)
Each like a prince in glory reign!

Let endless honors crown his head;
Let every age his praises spread;
While we with cheerful songs approve
The condescensions of his love.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God.

Amen

1 Timothy 1:17 NLT

Wednesday (June 23)

Meditate

Now listen, daughter, don't miss a word:

Forget your country, put your home behind you.

Be here—the king is wild for you.

Since he's your lord, adore him.

Wedding gifts pour in from Tyre;
rich guests shower you with presents.

Her wedding dress is dazzling,

lined with gold by the weavers;

All her dresses and robes

are woven with gold.

She is led to the king,

followed by her virgin companions.

A procession of joy and laughter!

a grand entrance to the king's palace!

Psalm 45:10–15 MSG

Reflect

The bride is led to the king (vv. 10–15). If the king is Jesus, we are his spouse. He is enthralled with us (v. 11), but Ephesians 5:25–27 teaches that he doesn't love us because we are lovely but in order to make us so, by grace. On the last day we will be united with him, as will all others, in love forever. Christian marriages can display a small bit of the joy that awaits us in heaven. But idolatry is a temptation. We must let our marriages reveal Christ, not replace Christ. And if we are not married but wish to be, we should remember that we already have the only spousal love that will truly fulfill our heart.

Timothy and Kathy Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Respond

Here is an example of praying Psalm 45 back to God. Use the following space to write a response or prayer.

“For your royal husband delights in your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.”

Pray

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time!

Amen

Jude 24–25 NLT

Thursday (June 24)

Meditate

Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Psalm 45:6–7 NIV

Reflect

This describes a royal wedding. The king is humble yet majestic, gracious yet terrible, but the language runs to shocking extremes. In verses 6–7 the king is called God. The book of Hebrews (1:8–9) says this is Christ himself, the ultimate King, infinitely high yet humble (v. 4). And in verse 7 we have a glimpse of the ascension, when Jesus, after accomplishing our salvation, is given the throne of the world by the Father, to rule and direct all things until evil and suffering are destroyed (Eph 1:20–23; 1 Cor 15:25). We should be as smitten with his beauty as a new spouse—for that is what we are (Eph 5:25–32).

Timothy and Kathy Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Respond

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen

Galatians 1:3–5 NIV

Friday (June 25)

Meditate

I will bring honor to your name in every generation.

Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.

Psalm 45:17

Reflect

Lord Jesus, Isaiah 33:17 says, “Your eyes will see the king in his beauty”—and in this psalm, with the eyes of faith, I can indeed see your Son humble and weak yet powerful and majestic. Only because he was both divine and human could your Son save me, and for that I am grateful forever.

Timothy and Kathy Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Respond

Meditate on this line from Psalm 45. Use the following space to write a prayer response back to God.

“O Jesus, the Messiah, I will bring honor and praise your name among the nations forever.”

Pray

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to

him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations,
forever and ever.

Amen

Eph 3:20–21 NRSV

Weekend (June 26–27)

Prepare

Prayer

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties and fears, may be prepared for the service of your sanctuary and our hearts for the ministry of your Word.

May our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Prayer of Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

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.

You are the most handsome of all.

Gracious words stream from your lips.

God himself has blessed you forever.

Put on your sword, O mighty warrior!

You are so glorious, so majestic!

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

Go forth to perform awe-inspiring deeds!

Your arrows are sharp, piercing your enemies' hearts.

The nations fall beneath your feet.

Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever.

You rule with a scepter of justice.

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.

Myrrh, aloes, and cassia perfume your robes.

In ivory palaces the music of strings entertains you.

Kings' daughters are among your noble women.

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

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

Forget your people and your family far away.

For your royal husband delights in your beauty;
honor him, for he is your lord.

The princess of Tyre will shower you with gifts.

The wealthy will beg your favor.

The bride, a princess, looks glorious in her golden gown.

In her beautiful robes, she is led to the king,
accompanied by her bridesmaids.

What a joyful and enthusiastic procession
as they enter the king's palace!

Your sons will become kings like their father.

You will make them rulers over many lands.

I will bring honor to your name in every generation.

Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.

Psalm 45 NLT

Reply

Reader Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will forever be, world without end.

Answer Amen.

Sing

Psalm 45 Fairest of All

My heart burst at its banks
Spilling with beauty and goodness
I pour it out as a song to my King
Shaping the rivers into words



What grace pours from Your lips
The sound calls the midnight to morning
The melody turns my winter to spring
I echo it now in my worship
I echo it now in my worship

Chorus:

Ten thousand strong
You're the fairest of all
Fairest in heaven and earth
Of the children of men
You're the fairest of them
Fairest in heaven and earth

Your heart burst at the seams
Flowing with blood and with water
A song of love pouring out from the tree, singing

For the joy set before me
For the joy set before me

You ransomed Your bride
On the day that You died
Ascended to heaven in glory
She stands clothed in white
With her head lifted high, singing
"Come and return in Your glory"
You ransomed Your bride
On the day that You died
Ascended to heaven in glory
We stand clothed in white
With our voice lifted high, singing
"Come and return in Your glory"

—Shane & Shane

Reflect

And still we live as if we have forgotten
But someone keeps all these things in her heart.
Who bore for us the only one begotten,

The Son of God. And now she takes our part
And calls us to remember all his mercy
Calls us with all our skill, and all our art

To magnify his name, for it is holy
For now, she dwells with him, in joy and gladness,
The Mystic Rose of heaven, once so lowly

Whose heart was also pierced, who feels our sadness
And shows us how to pray. Each generation
Has known her help and presence, heard her witness

The great things done through her. In every nation
She nurtures those who bear Christ to the world,

Through her our saviour came, Love's revelation.

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,

and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds

we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 45?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 46 “We will not be afraid though the earth trembles.”

*God is our refuge and strength,
a helper who is always found
in times of trouble.*

Introduction

Psalm 46 is a familiar and well-loved psalm. It’s beautiful poetic language that roars out the glory of God leaves its reader silent and in awe by the end of the psalm. We can identify with the well-founded fear of psalmist and the need to look up at the majesty of God in order to revive our hearts.

Martin Luther, the great reformer of the church, would often sing this song to encourage his weary heart. He wrote the hymn “A Mighty Fortress is our God” based on this psalm (see Saturday devotional). He said, “We sing this Psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us, and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends his church and his word, against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin.”

Psalm 46 is a hymn of triumph in the midst of fear. Until recently, people have had few thoughts to spare for the possibility of a world catastrophe. But this psalm can face it unafraid, because its opening phrase means exactly what it says. God is a refuge. God is our strength. God is our helper. Our true security is in God, not in God plus anything else. He is enough.

—Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*

Martin Luther's Psalm?

Almost everyone associates Martin Luther with the Book of Romans, particularly Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith." We tend to forget that Luther was converted not only by his study of Romans, but also by his study of the Psalms. Luther taught the Psalms for years and loved them very much, even late in life. His favorite was Psalm 46.

It is said of Luther that there were times during the dark and dangerous periods of the Reformation when he was terribly discouraged and depressed. But at such times he would turn to his friend and coworker Philipp Melanchthon and say, "Come, Philipp, let's sing the forty-sixth Psalm." Then they would sing it in Luther's own strong version:

A sure stronghold our God is He,
A timely shield and weapon;
Our help he'll be and set us free
From every ill can happen.

We know it as "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Luther said, "We sing this psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends his church and his word against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin."

A great Lutheran scholar, H. C. Leupold, wrote, "Few psalms breathe the spirit of sturdy confidence in the Lord in the midst of very real dangers as strongly as does this one."

No part of Luther's hymn is as close to Psalm 46 as the first stanza, which calls God "a mighty fortress" and "a bulwark" in trouble. The emphasis is on God himself, the point being that God alone is our refuge, he and no other. Nothing in the universe can be a comparable refuge.

James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106*

Monday (June 28)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

God is our refuge and strength,
a helper who is always found in times of trouble.
Therefore we will not be afraid
though the earth trembles and the mountains topple
into the depths of the seas,

though its water roars and foams
and the mountains quake with its turmoil.

Selah

There is a river—its streams delight the city of God,
the holy dwelling place of the Most High.
God is within her; she will not be toppled.
God will help her when the morning dawns.
Nations rage, kingdoms topple;
the earth melts when he lifts his voice.
The Lord of Armies is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Selah

Come, see the works of the Lord,
who brings devastation on the earth.
He makes wars cease throughout the earth.
He shatters bows and cuts spears to pieces;
he sets wagons ablaze.
“Stop fighting, and know that I am God,
exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth.”
The Lord of Armies is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Selah

Psalm 46 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!

For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (June 29)

Meditate

Be still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

Reflect

The Discipline of Spiritual Tenacity

Tenacity is more than endurance; it is endurance combined with the absolute certainty that what we are looking for is going to transpire. Tenacity is more than hanging on, which may be but the weakness of being too afraid to fall off. Tenacity is the supreme effort of a man refusing to believe that his hero is going to be conquered. The greatest fear a disciple has is not that he will be damned, but that Jesus Christ will be worsted, that the things He stood for—love and justice and forgiveness and kindness among men—will not win out in the end; the things He stands for look like will-o'-the-wisps. Then comes the call to spiritual tenacity, not to hang on and do nothing, but to work deliberately on the certainty that God is not going to be worsted.

If our hopes are being disappointed just now, it means that they are being purified. There is nothing noble the human mind has ever hoped for or dreamed of that will not be fulfilled. One of the greatest strains in life is the strain of waiting for God. “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience.”

Remain spiritually tenacious.

Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

Respond

Meditate on these lines from Psalm 46. Use the following space to write a response to God.

“Step out of the traffic!

Take a long, loving look at me, your High God,

above politics, above everything.”

—*The Message*

Pray

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters.

Amen

Galatians 6:18 NRSV

Wednesday (June 30)

Meditate

There is a river—
its streams delight the city of God,
the holy dwelling place of the Most High.

Psalm 46:4

Reflect

Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 40–48) is God and humanity dwelling together within a city that has a temple. In Ezekiel 47, we are introduced to something wonderfully new—a **river**. It begins as a trickle in the Holy of Holies but eventually becomes a raging river flowing east through the desert toward the Dead Sea. The river transforms the deserts of Judah into a garden, and even turns the Dead Sea (which can support no marine life) fresh.

The supernatural nature of this vision becomes fully apparent when we read verse 9. This river is a river of life: “everything will live where the river goes” (also, Isaiah 66:12).

Originating in the throne room of God (i.e. the Holy of Holies), the cosmic river brings life back to a fallen earth.

Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing (Ezekiel 47:12 NIV).

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. (Revelation 22:1–3 NIV)

Sandra Richter, *The Epic of Eden*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of a portion of Psalm 46 aloud:

There is a stream, whose gentle flow
Supplies the city of our God;
Life, love, and joy still gliding through,
And wat'ring our divine abode.

That sacred stream, thine holy word,
That all our raging fear controls:
Sweet peace thy promises afford,
And give new strength to fainting souls.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

To our God and Father be glory forever and ever.

Amen

Philippians 4:19–20 NRSV

Thursday (July 1)

Meditate

God is our refuge and strength,
a helper who is always found
in times of trouble.

Psalm 46:1

Reflect

There is a great deal of difference between worry and concern, and we must realize this. Concern makes us do something to ease the situation. It moves us to take constructive action. But worry burdens our minds and bodies without helping us to find a solution to the problem. Worry is like racing the engine of an automobile without letting in the clutch. You burn energy, but you don't go anywhere.

The next time you find yourself depressed or worried about some big problem, remember the power of God. Remember His great miracle of bringing you into being, and you will know He is more than able to care for you.

I remember reading a story about Bishop Quayle, who must have had a keen sense of humor. He told of a time when he sat up late in his study, worrying over many things. Finally, the Lord came to him and said, "Quayle, you go to bed. I'll sit up the rest of the night."

A friend of mine told me, "When I worry, I go to the mirror and say to myself, 'This tremendous thing that worries me is beyond solution. It is even too hard for God to handle.' And then I smile."

Corrie ten Boom, *Jesus is Victor*

Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely And long for Heav'n and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:
His eye is on the sparrow. And I know He watches me.

“Let not your heart be troubled,” His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fear;
Tho’ by the path He leadeth But one step I may see:
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Whenever I am tempted, Whenever clouds arise,
When songs give place to sighing, When hope within me dies,
I draw the closer to Him, From care He sets me free;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He cares for me.

—Civilla D. Martin

Respond

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may rest upon your eternal changelessness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Friday (July 2)

Meditate

God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed.

From the very break of day, God will protect it.

The nations are in chaos,
and their kingdoms crumble!

God's voice thunders,
and the earth melts!

The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel is our fortress.

Psalm 46:5–7 NLT

Reflect

Nothing is truly solid, trustworthy, and lasting but God. Nor can anything thwart him. Even the rage and assaults of others against God and his people and his cause will only be ultimately used by him for **redemptive purposes** (Acts 4:24–28). No matter how bleak the prospects seem or how overwhelming the opposition, the **city of God**—the heavenly community and reality (Psalm 48:2; Galatians 4:25–29; Hebrews 12:18–24)—cannot be harmed but can only triumph. Why? Because that reality and community are in God himself (verse 7). There is no more proper response to really seeing God as he is—transcendent beyond all imagination—than to be still and adore.

Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Respond

Meditate on these lines from Psalm 46. Use the following space to write a response or prayer to God.

“The city of God cannot be destroyed”

“The God of Israel is our fortress”

Pray

Lord, to “be still” means not to be anxious or fretting or complaining or boasting. So, show me who you are—your absolute power and infinite love for me—until I am still.

Amen

Weekend (July 3–4)

Prepare

Prayer of Supplication

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will forever be, world without end.

Answer Amen.

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not fear when earthquakes come
and the mountains crumble into the sea.
Let the oceans roar and foam.
Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

Selah

A river brings joy to the city of our God,
the sacred home of the Most High.
God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed.
From the very break of day, God will protect it.

The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble!
God's voice thunders, and the earth melts!
The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel is our fortress.

Selah

Come, see the glorious works of the Lord:
See how he brings destruction upon the world.
He causes wars to end throughout the earth.
He breaks the bow and snaps the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
"Be still, and know that I am God!
I will be honored by every nation.
I will be honored throughout the world."
The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;
the God of Israel is our fortress.

Selah

Psalm 46 NLT

Sing

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

A mighty fortress is our God
A bulwark never failing
Our Helper He amidst the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe
His craft and pow'r are great
And armed with cruel hate
On earth is not his equal

Did we in our own strength confide
Our striving would be losing
Were not the right Man on our side
The Man of God's own choosing
Dost ask who that may be
Christ Jesus it is He
The Lord of hosts His name
From age to age the same
And He must win the battle

And though this world with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us
We will not fear for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us
The prince of darkness grim
We tremble not for him
His rage we can endure
For lo his doom is sure
One little word shall fell Him

Chorus:

*A mighty fortress, a rock unfailing
The King of Glory forever amen*



*For endless ages, enthroned in praises
The King of Glory forever amen*

That word above all earthly pow'rs
No thanks to them abideth
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him Who with us sideth
Let goods and kindred go
This mortal life also
The body they may kill God's
Truth abideth still
His Kingdom is forever

—Martin Luther (Matt Boswell)

Reflect

Through her our saviour came, Love's revelation,
For God was in the midst of her, and now
We too are called, in every generation

To find in him our hope and strength, though
Everything around us falls apart,
And all our towering schemes have been laid low

Now is the time to take his truth to heart
And to be glad within the holy place
That he himself has made in us. To start

Each day with him, abiding in his grace
As he abides with us. To know his peace
To turn towards his light and seek his face

And let his flowing spirit find release
And flow through us into his weary world
That wrongs may be redressed, and wars may cease.

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,

and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds

we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 46?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 47 “Sing praise!”

*Sing praise to God, sing praise;
sing praise to our King, sing praise!
Sing a song of wisdom,
for God is King of the whole earth.*

Introduction

The scope of Psalm 47 matches that of Psalm 46. The universal peace of Psalm 46 is the setting for the universal worship of Psalm 47. While rooted in history, the language of Psalm 47 has not yet been fully realized in history. Psalm 47 drives us into the future in anticipation of the day when such universal celebration of the Lord’s kingship will be reality. Zechariah (see Zech 14:9) envisioned the day when God will become king over all the earth in a way that he has not been and is not currently.

While the kingship of God has already been established through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, this kingship is not yet fully realized. Thus Revelation 11:17 anticipates the future inauguration of the Lord’s kingship in fullness with these words: “We give thanks to you, Lord God, the Almighty, the one who is and always was, for now you have assumed your great power and have begun to reign.” And in another scene (Rev 15:3–4) we hear a song reminiscent of Psalm 47:

Great and marvelous are your works,
O Lord God, the Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations.

Who will not fear you, Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship before you,
for your righteous deeds have been revealed.

As the church anticipates that glorious day when God arrives at the acme of his royal splendor, we labor with God's own heart, that "everyone" might join the people of God in worshipping the king of all the earth, who is to be highly honored everywhere.

Mark D. Futato, "The Book of Psalms"

Where did the Psalms come from?

What Christians appropriate from the Psalms for worship and piety surely arose in a variety of Jewish settings, or, before Judaism, in the environment of ancient Israel. We do not know a great deal about such initial venues for the Psalms, but we do know some things. There is no doubt that the Jerusalem temple in the monarchal period was a generator of Psalms. In the Second Temple period, moreover, the guilds of "temple singers," attested in 1 and 2 Chronicles, produced more Psalms. And outside of Jerusalem, other prominent sanctuaries (such as Gilgal, Bethel, and Shiloh) produced Psalms. It is for that reason that the Book of Psalms is a "collection of collections." The end product—altogether Jewish—is an ecumenical achievement that drew together a rich variety of local traditions.

Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms:
Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit*

Monday (July 5)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

Clap your hands, all you peoples;

shout to God with a jubilant cry.

For the Lord, the Most High, is awe-inspiring,

a great King over the whole earth.

He subdues peoples under us and nations under our feet.

He chooses for us our inheritance—
the pride of Jacob, whom he loves.

Selah

God ascends among shouts of joy,
the Lord, with the sound of a ram's horn.

Sing praise to God, sing praise;

sing praise to our King, sing praise!

Sing a song of wisdom, for God is King of the whole earth.

God reigns over the nations;

God is seated on his holy throne.

The nobles of the peoples have assembled

with the people of the God of Abraham.

For the leaders of the earth belong to God;

he is greatly exalted.

Psalm 47 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (July 6)

Meditate

He will subdue the peoples under us,
And the nations under our feet.
He will choose our inheritance for us,
The excellence of Jacob whom He loves.

Psalm 47:3–4 NKJV

Reflect

From the very beginning God had said that he purposed to bless all nations and all peoples through Abraham and his descendants, particularly through his one great descendant, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And that is what he has done and is doing. He is building Christ's spiritual kingdom with people from all nations and races.

James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106*

Respond

Meditate on this line from Psalm 47. Use the following space to write a prayer response back to God.

“God will choose the excellent inheritance for us whom He loves.”

Pray

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever!

Amen

Philippians 4:19–20 NLT

Wednesday (July 7)

Meditate

Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
Psalm 47:1

Reflect

From the first word to the last, this Psalm communicates the excitement and jubilation of an enthronement; and the king is God himself. A strong school of thought holds that this psalm and others, notably 93, 95–99, arose out of an annual festival which dramatized God's power over his foes and his kingship over creation. But given the notion of God as King, it is a short step to creating the poetry that exploits the analogies it suggests, festival or no festival.

And more than poetry: this is prophecy, whose climax is exceptionally far-reaching. The opening summons to all peoples sets the scene truly: the vision is **world-wide**. 'Peoples', 'nations' and 'all the earth' are words that dominate the psalm. **Joy** will be dominant too, for this king is no tyrant; but he is awesome and makes no bones about his judgments and his right of choice.

Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 47 aloud:

O for a shout of sacred joy
To God the sovereign King!
Let every land their tongues employ,
And hymns of triumph sing.

Jesus our God ascends on high,
His heav'nly guards around

Attend him rising through the sky,
With trumpets' joyful sound.

While angels shout and praise their King,
Let mortals learn their strains;
Let all the earth his honors sing;
O'er all the earth he reigns.

Rehearse his praise with awe profound,
Let knowledge lead the song,
Nor mock him with a solemn sound
Upon a thoughtless tongue.

In Isr'el stood his ancient throne,
He loved that chosen race;
But now he calls the world his own,
And heathens taste his grace.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

My love to all of you in Christ Jesus.

Amen

1 Corinthians 16:23–24 NIV

Thursday (July 8)

Meditate

He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.
God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.
God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.
The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings of the earth belong to God;
He is greatly exalted.

Psalm 47:4–9

Reflect

The song of the nations someday will be about how God saved the world through his grace. He chose and loved Israel (“Jacob,” verse 4) not because its people were wiser or better but simply because he loved them (Deut 7:8). So, as we speak to others about God, there is no place for condescension or superiority. Every last one of us has been saved by grace alone, and so shall all his people be.

The final verse reveals an astonishing vision. Eventually God’s people, the children of Abraham, will include people from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation (verse 9). This was promised to Abraham (Gen 12:3), but only in Jesus Christ, in the ultimate ascension to the greatest throne (Eph 1:20–23), will it be realized (Rev 7:9).

Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Respond

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ!

Amen

Romans 16:25–27 NIV

Friday (July 9)

Meditate

For the Lord Most High is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.

Psalm 47:2 NIV

Reflect

If there was a struggle in the midst of trials, that issued in the hard-won hope of Psalm 46, then that hope and confidence flowers into a great hymn of praise and joy in Psalm 47, a hymn that rings with greater assurance precisely because it follows on from the struggles of the preceding psalm. Psalm 47 is often set by Christians as a psalm for Ascension Day, especially with its ringing line, so often set to music: *“God is gone up with a merry noise: and the Lord with the sound of the trump.”* (v.5)

But to my mind the real joy of psalm 47 is not so much that he has gone up as that **he has also come down**. The great revelation here is that, though heaven is, in one sense, still to come, we can nevertheless begin rejoicing now because God has not abandoned us here on earth but has already come down to be our king and kindle our hope. So, the key line for me is the second verse, which acknowledges that though the Lord is high and transcendent, the glorious king of heaven, he is also, ultimately, the king here on earth:

“For the Lord is high, and to be feared: he is the great King upon all the earth.” (v.2)

Indeed Psalm 47 begins a little sequence of psalms that anticipate the way that, in Christ, who is both fully God and fully human, **heaven and earth can finally be brought together**, and his will done on earth as it is in heaven.

Malcolm Guite

Respond

Meditate on this line from Psalm 47. Use the following space to write a prayer response back to God.

“The Lord Most High is the great King over all the earth.”

Pray

All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God.

Amen

1 Timothy 1:17 NLT

Weekend (July 10–11)

Prepare

Prayer

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties and fears, may be prepared for the service of your sanctuary and our hearts for the ministry of your Word.

May our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

Come, everyone! Clap your hands!

Shout to God with joyful praise!

For the Lord Most High is awesome.

He is the great King of all the earth.

He subdues the nations before us,

putting our enemies beneath our feet.
He chose the Promised Land as our inheritance,
the proud possession of Jacob's descendants, whom he loves.

Selah

God has ascended with a mighty shout.

The Lord has ascended with trumpets blaring.

Sing praises to God, sing praises;

sing praises to our King, sing praises!

For God is the King over all the earth.

Praise him with a psalm.

God reigns above the nations,

sitting on his holy throne.

The rulers of the world have gathered together

with the people of the God of Abraham.

For all the kings of the earth belong to God.

He is highly honored everywhere.

Psalm 47 NLT

Reply

Reader Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will forever be, world without end.

Answer Amen.

Sing

[Shout to God \(Psalm 47\)](#)

God has gone up with a shout

The Lord with the sound of a trumpet

We will sing praises

We will sing praises

God is the King of the earth

Pour out your heart before Him



We will sing praises
We will sing praises

Shout to God with songs of joy
Lay your burdens down before
Our risen King; He has overcome the grave

God is the King of the earth
Pour out your heart before Him
We will sing praises
We will sing praises

The Earth will sing, Holy Holy
The heavens sing, Holy Holy
Creation sings, Holy Holy
We will sing, Holy Holy!

–Mercy Worship

Reflect

That wrongs may be redressed, and wars may cease
He must be king of earth as well as heaven
We must invite him here, to make his peace

Within us and between us, that forgiven,
We may release forgiveness here on earth,
Working and spreading like a holy leaven,

A secret of the kingdom, heaven's breath,
A kindling from the place where Christ is king
For he has triumphed and defeated death

And even now he calls our hearts to sing
Sing praises in the kingdom still to come
And in the one already here, to bring,

Ourselves, our arts and music, trumpet, drum

And tabor, all to make a merry noise,
For heaven's king has made the earth his home!

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,

and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds

we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 47?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 48 “This God, our God forever and ever—he will always lead us.”

*The Lord is great and highly praised
in the city of our God.
God is known as a stronghold
in its citadels.*

Introduction

Psalm 48 continues the theme of God’s universal reign found in Psalms 46 and 47. The “earth” is referred to 10 times in these three psalms. Psalm 46:9 and 48:10 envision God’s sovereignty and praise reaching the ends of the earth, while 47:2, 7 and 48:2 see them reaching the whole earth. Like Psalm 46 in particular, but also like Psalm 47, the point of origination for God’s sovereign rule is the city of God, Jerusalem.

Psalm 48 praises God by praising the city from which he rules over the whole earth.

Mark Futato, “The Book of Psalms”

How Do I Pray David’s Prayers?

You have noticed that there are “we” Psalms, written in the first-person plural: “We are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture” (Ps. 100:3). Jesus sings those Psalms with us. He is the singing Shepherd; we are the lost sheep He has brought home rejoicing. He sings over us (Zeph. 3:17), and with us, and for us.

Jesus can sing the “we” Psalms with us because he sings the “I” Psalms for us as our Savior. “Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book, it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God” (Ps. 40:7, 8).

Many of the “I” Psalms were written by King David. He wrote, not as a private individual, but as the Lord’s Anointed, called to suffer as God’s servant. David’s cry, uttered in the Spirit, anticipates the voice of Christ. His shout of victory is made ready for his greater Song and Lord (Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:43– 45). Jesus, after His resurrection, explained the Psalms to show His disciples that He must suffer these things and enter into His glory (Luke 24:26, 44).

Monday (July 12)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

The Lord is great and highly praised in the city of our God.
His holy mountain, rising splendidly,
is the joy of the whole earth.
Mount Zion—the summit of Zaphon—
is the city of the great King.

God is known as a stronghold in its citadels.

Look! The kings assembled; they advanced together.
They looked and froze with fear; they fled in terror.
Trembling seized them there,
 agony like that of a woman in labor,
 as you wrecked the ships of Tarshish
 with the east wind.

Just as we heard, so we have seen
 in the city of the Lord of Armies,
 in the city of our God;
God will establish it forever.

Selah

God, within your temple,
 we contemplate your faithful love.
Like your name, God,
 so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth;
 your right hand is filled with justice.
Mount Zion is glad.
Judah's villages rejoice because of your judgments.
Go around Zion, encircle it; count its towers,
 note its ramparts;
 tour its citadels
 so that you can tell a future generation:

“This God, our God forever and ever—
 he will always lead us.”

Psalm 48 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (July 13)

Meditate

Yahweh is great and highly praised
in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

Psalm 48:1

Reflect

In 587 BC Jerusalem was destroyed, demonstrating that the city and God were not one and the same. The city was a **symbol**, a shadow of another reality. That reality is God himself, dwelling with his people. Jesus Christ came as the great king, as the embodiment of the presence of God, to bring us into the presence of God.

We experience that presence now through the Holy Spirit who lives within us. And we will experience that presence in fullness in the new heavens and new earth, when the glorious shout goes up, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them” (Rev 21:3).

Mark D. Futato, “The Book of Psalms”

Respond

Meditate on this line from Psalm 48. Use the following space to write a response or prayer to God.

“Yahweh is highly praised in the city of our God.”

Pray

May God our Father and our Lord Jesus bring us to you very soon. And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people.

Amen

1 Thessalonians 3:11–13 NLT

Wednesday (July 14)

Meditate

Walk about Zion,
go around her,
count her towers,
consider well her ramparts,
view her citadels,
that you may tell of them to the next generation.

Psalm 48:12–13 NIV

Reflect

Psalm 48 compares Zion, the mountain on which the temple was built, with Zaphon. We know from other ancient Near Eastern texts that Zaphon is the mountain where the god Baal was thought to dwell. It was an imposing mountain, fit to be the dwelling place of such a powerful god. The purpose of this comparison was to claim for Zion what was claimed for Zaphon by Baal worshipers (and there were plenty of these in Israel during the Old Testament period). God dwelt on Zion, not on Zaphon. Yahweh, the God of Israel, was the true and only God. Baal was nothing.

These mythological allusions serve to show that Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, is vastly superior to the manmade deities of Israel's neighbors.

Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 48 aloud:

Far as thy name is known,
The world declares thy praise;
Thy saints, O Lord, before thy throne,
Their songs of honor raise.

With joy let Judah stand
On Zion's chosen hill,
Proclaim the wonders of thy hand,
And counsels of thy will.

Let strangers walk around
The city where we dwell,
Compass and view thine holy ground,
And mark the building well;

The orders of thy house,
The worship of thy court,
The cheerful songs, the solemn vows,
And make a fair report.

How decent and how wise!
How glorious to behold!
Beyond the pomp that charms the eyes,
And rites adorned with gold.

The God we worship now
Will guide us till we die,
Will be our God while here below,
And ours above the sky.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
All glory to God our Father forever and ever!

Amen

Philippians 4:23, 20 NLT

Thursday (July 15)

Meditate

Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

Psalm 48:9 NIV

Reflect

The ancient devout Jew was conscious of the presence of God in Jerusalem, symbolized by the ark of the covenant that rested within the Most Holy Place. He could say, “God is in her citadels” (48:3). We cannot say that God is in our cities in the same way, or even in our churches. But we have something better: God in us, in the person of his Holy Spirit (John 14:16–17). To have the Holy Spirit within us is a very great bulwark against the world, the flesh, and the devil, against all sin and temptation.

James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106*

“No longer need we travel to some outer destination to meet with God, but need only turn inward to find that ‘in our hearts are the highways to Zion’. The temple is already there within us, and Christ is waiting, deep in the mystery of our own heart and soul, if only we will enter those depths and find him. And there, in the depth of our own being he will meet with us, to cleanse us and renew us.”

—Malcolm Guite

Respond

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

Amen

Eph 3:20–21 NRSV

Friday (July 16)

Meditate

Tell a future generation:

“For this God is our God forever and ever:
he will be our guide even unto death.”

Psalm 48:13–14

Reflect

Thou Our Guide

The Christian’s guided life may often appear as a waste—as with Paul, spending years in prison because he followed God’s guidance to Jerusalem when he might otherwise have been evangelizing Europe the whole time. Nor does God always tell us the why and wherefore of the frustrations and losses which are part and parcel of the guided life.

Guidance, like all God’s acts of blessing under the covenant of grace is a sovereign act. Not merely does God will to guide us in the sense of showing us his way, that we may tread it; he will also to guide us in the more fundamental sense of ensuring that, whatever happens, whatever mistakes we make, **we shall come safely home**. Slippings and strayings there will be, no doubt, but the everlasting arms are beneath us; we shall be caught, rescued, restored.

J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

Respond

“God will be our guide even unto death.”

God, I look back over my life, and I see the many ways you have led me safely through all these years. I have confidence looking forward that you will always guide me and never fail me. Even in my death, you will guide me “safely into your heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18). Because of Christ, wherever you lead me, I am held by you and guided by your hand.

Take a few moments and reflect on the last year(s). Consider how God has been faithful in specific ways. Use the space below to write a prayer of thanksgiving.

Pray

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen

Galatians 1:3–5 NIV

Weekend (July 17–18)

Prepare

Prayer

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures:

Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties and fears, may be prepared for the service of your sanctuary and our hearts for the ministry of your Word.

May our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

How great is the Lord, how deserving of praise,
in the city of our God, which sits on his holy mountain!
It is high and magnificent;

the whole earth rejoices to see it!
Mount Zion, the holy mountain, is the city of the great King!
God himself is in Jerusalem's towers,
revealing himself as its defender.

The kings of the earth joined forces
and advanced against the city.
But when they saw it, they were stunned;
they were terrified and ran away.
They were gripped with terror
and writhed in pain like a woman in labor.
You destroyed them like the mighty ships of Tarshish
shattered by a powerful east wind.

We had heard of the city's glory,
but now we have seen it ourselves—
the city of the Lord of Heaven's Armies.
It is the city of our God; he will make it safe forever.

Selah

O God, we meditate on your unfailing love
as we worship in your Temple.
As your name deserves, O God,
you will be praised to the ends of the earth.
Your strong right hand is filled with victory.
Let the people on Mount Zion rejoice.
Let all the towns of Judah be glad because of your justice.

Go, inspect the city of Jerusalem.
Walk around and count the many towers.
Take note of the fortified walls,
and tour all the citadels,
that you may describe them to future generations.
For that is what God is like.

He is our God forever and ever,

and he will guide us until we die.

Psalm 48 CSB

Sing

[We Will Feast in the House of Zion](#)

Chorus

We will feast in the house of Zion
We will sing with our hearts restored
He has done great things, we will say
together
We will feast and weep no more.

We will not be burned by the fire
He is the Lord, our God
We are not consumed by the flood
Upheld, protected, gathered up.

Chorus

In the dark of night, before the dawn
My soul, be not afraid
For the promised morning, oh, how long?
Oh, God of Jacob, be my strength.

Every vow we've broken and betrayed
You are the Faithful one
And from the garden to the grave
Bind us together, bring shalom.



Sandra McCracken

Reflect

For heaven's king has made the earth his home
Not just the hill of Sion, but the whole

Round world. Call him from anywhere, he'll

Come to you and make his dwelling. Hail
Him in any language, he replies
In your own mother-tongue. For now, your soul

Is his true Sion, and each day you rise
Already in the city of your God.
So, mark the towers and temples, and apprise

Again, the beauty of your new abode.
Your soul is greater than you ever knew:
Walk round its walls, then take the holy road

That winds towards its centre, where the new
Temple of his spirit shines and stands,
Where Christ himself is there to welcome you.

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,
and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds
we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 48?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Psalm 49 “Why should I fear in times of trouble?”

*God will redeem me
from the power of Sheol,
for he will take me.*

Introduction

Psalm 49 is a **wisdom poem** about how to live in the light of an inevitable death. Psalm 49 teaches us where to place our hope for life, given the reality of death. Our hope is not to be in wealth, whether that is the wealth we have or the wealth we wish we had. Our hope is to be in God. Wealth cannot redeem us from the power of death. Only God can.

Psalm 49 falls into three sections: an introductory call to listen to the teaching (49:1–4), a warning that wealth cannot redeem from death (49:5–12), and a promise that God will redeem from death (49:13–20).

Mark D. Futato, “The Book of Psalms”

Monday (July 19)

Prepare

A Prayer of Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

We have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared unto humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for Christ's sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, keeping us from sin, for the glory of your holy Name.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence kept for 2 minutes.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

Read

Hear this, all you peoples; listen, all who inhabit the world,
both low and high, rich and poor together.

My mouth speaks wisdom;
my heart's meditation brings understanding.

I turn my ear to a proverb; I explain my riddle with a lyre.

Why should I fear in times of trouble?
The iniquity of my foes surrounds me.
They trust in their wealth
and boast of their abundant riches.
Yet these cannot redeem a person
or pay his ransom to God—
since the price of redeeming him is too costly,
one should forever stop trying—
so that he may live forever and not see the Pit.

For one can see that the wise die;
the foolish and stupid also pass away.
Then they leave their wealth to others.
Their graves are their permanent homes,
their dwellings from generation to generation,
though they have named estates after themselves.
But despite his assets, mankind will not last;
he is like the animals that perish.

This is the way of those who are arrogant,
and of their followers,
who approve of their words.
Selah

Like sheep they are headed for Sheol;
Death will shepherd them.
The upright will rule over them in the morning,
and their form will waste away in Sheol,
far from their lofty abode.
But God will redeem me from the power of Sheol,
for he will take me.
Selah

Do not be afraid when a person gets rich,
when the wealth of his house increases.

For when he dies, he will take nothing at all;
his wealth will not follow him down.
Though he blesses himself during his lifetime—
and you are acclaimed when you do well for yourself—
he will go to the generation of his ancestors;
they will never see the light.
Mankind, with his assets but without understanding,
is like the animals that perish.

Psalm 49 CSB

Respond

What is something that you identify with today in this Psalm?

In what ways has this Psalm led me to worship God in new ways?

How has this Psalm challenged me to live differently with greater faith and obedience?

Pray

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever.

Amen

Romans 11:33–36 CSB

Tuesday (July 20)

Meditate

Wealth? It can't save a single person!

It can't pay a life's ransom-price to God.

The price to save someone's life is too high—

wealth will never be enough—

no one can live forever without experiencing the pit.

Everyone knows that the wise die too,

just like foolish and stupid people do,

all of them leaving their fortunes to others.

Their graves are their eternal homes,

the place they live for all generations,

even if they had counties named after them!

People won't live any longer because of wealth;

they're just like the animals that pass away.

Psalm 49:7–12 CEB

Reflect

No Security

The ordinary way to deal with the fear of the future is to “trust in ... wealth” (verse 6). But that is to put your confidence in something that will fail. Neither wealth nor any kind of human ingenuity can save you from bereavement, ill health, financial reversals, or relational betrayals—and finally, it cannot hold off your mortality. There is no “ransom” that can buy you out of death (verses 7–12). It is coming, and it will strip you of everything dear to you. It is, then, utterly foolish to live your life as if economic prosperity could keep you truly safe, or as if you will never die. Only God can give you things of value that death cannot touch but only enhance.

Timothy & Kathy Keller, *The Song of Jesus*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 49 aloud:

Why do the proud insult the poor,
And boast the large estates they have?
How vain are riches to secure
Their haughty owners from the grave!

They can't redeem one hour from death,
With all the wealth in which they trust;
Nor give a dying brother breath,
When God commands him down to dust.

There the dark earth and dismal shade
Shall clasp their naked bodies round;
That flesh, so delicately fed,
Lies cold and moulders in the ground.

Like thoughtless sheep the sinner dies,
Laid in the grave for worms to eat:
The saints shall in the morning rise,
And find th' oppressor at their feet.

His honors perish in the dust,
And pomp and beauty, birth and blood:
That glorious day exalts the just
To full dominion o'er the proud.

My Savior shall my life restore,
And raise me from my dark abode;
My flesh and soul shall part no more,
But dwell forever near my God.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters.

Amen

Galatians 6:18 NRSV

Wednesday (July 21)

Meditate

Why should I fear when evil days come,
when wicked deceivers surround me—
those who trust in their wealth
and boast of their great riches?

No one can redeem the life of another
or give to God a ransom for them—
the ransom for a life is costly,
no payment is ever enough—
so that they should live on forever and not see decay.

Psalm 49:5–9 NIV

Reflect

The psalmist said, “It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees” (Psalm 119:71). He is speaking of experiential learning. We can learn God’s will for our character intellectually through reading and studying the Scriptures—and we should do that. That is where change begins, as our minds are renewed. But real change—down in the depth of our souls—is produced as the tenets of Scripture are worked out in real life. This usually involves adversity. We may admire and even desire the character trait of patience, but we will never learn patience until we have been treated unjustly and learn experientially to “suffer long” (the meaning of patience) the one who treats us unjustly.

If you stop and think about it, you will realize that most godly character traits can only be developed through adversity. The kind of love that gives freely of itself at great cost to itself can only be learned when we are confronted with situations that call forth a sacrificial love. The Fruit of the Spirit that is called joy cannot be learned in the midst of circumstances that produce mere “natural” happiness.

God in His infinite wisdom knows exactly what adversity we need to grow more and more into the likeness of His Son. He not only knows what we need but when we need it and how best to bring it to pass in our lives. He never over trains us by allowing too much adversity in our lives.

Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*

Respond

Meditate on this line from Psalm 49. Use the following space to write a response or prayer to God.

“Why should I fear when evil days come?”

Pray

May the God of peace be with all of you.

Amen

Romans 15:33 CSB

Thursday (July 22)

Meditate

So don't be impressed with those who get rich
and pile up fame and fortune.

They can't take it with them;
fame and fortune all get left behind.

Just when they think they've arrived
and folks praise them because they've made good,

They enter the family burial plot
where they'll never see sunshine again.

We aren't immortal. We don't last long.

Like our dogs, we age and weaken. And die.

Psalm 49:16–20 MSG

Reflect

When you're young or middle-aged, you probably don't think much about death, and as a result you live as if you think you will live forever, even though in theory you know that is not the case. When the psalm characterizes well-to-do people as thinking that their nice homes will be theirs forever, I don't imagine it implies this is their conscious assumption—it's more the implication of the attitude they take to their homes. The same assumption is implicit in the instinct to other forms of accumulation, like land or money or wealth. It's stupid, the psalm says, and this stupidity is shared by people who would like to emulate those well-to-do people.

But the psalm isn't talking about the general stupidity of behaving as if you think you will live forever. It's talking about people who combine wealth with an instinct to trample on others (of course wealth often issues from an instinct to trample on others rather than hard work or creativity or good luck). The Old Testament's ideal is to combine wealth with generosity to the needy. Combining wealth and trampling on others is real stupidity, the Old Testament assumes. People affected by this attitude are people who

find death shepherding them before their time. In contrast, the upright find God delivering them at morning—as in Psalm 46. Dawn is the moment of greatest danger. Yesterday the foolish, wealthy person rules. Today the wealthy person has passed, and the upright person rules. Threatened by the possibility of death, the people with no resource but God can prove God’s capacity to deliver them from ending up in Sheol before their time. The psalmist knows it doesn’t always work but wants people to trust in the reality of God’s involvement in the world, which means it often works.

John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone*

Respond

Take this time/space to give praise to God for three (3) specific things you are thankful for in the last 24 hours.

Pray

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

My love to all of you in Christ Jesus.

Amen

1 Corinthians 16:23–24 NIV

Friday (July 23)

Meditate

Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd;
The upright shall rule over them in the morning,
and their form shall waste away in Sheol,
far from their dwelling.
But God shall redeem my soul from the power of Sheol,
for He shall receive me.

Psalm 49:14–15 MEV

Reflect

The Ultimate Ransom

In ancient times a king might attack another country but be defeated, captured, and imprisoned. A ransom (verse 7) was owed for his release. Every human being owes God a death. Our sins mean we belong to death (verse 14). But God, instead of demanding a ransom from us, pays it himself (verse 15). The psalmist doesn't know how this can be done, but he is confident. The missing piece is Jesus, who by his death killed death and set us free. Only at the cross do we discover how much it cost God to redeem us "from the realm of the dead." So don't resent, fear, or envy the rich (verse 16). Pity those who have nothing more than their riches. And pray: Lord, steady me with the knowledge of where true riches can be found!

Timothy & Kathy Keller, *The Song of Jesus*

Respond

We encourage you to read this poetic interpretation of Psalm 49 aloud:

Ye sons of pride, that hate the just
And trample on the poor,
When death has brought you down to dust,

Your pomp shall rise no more.

The last great day shall change the scene;
When will that hour appear?
When shall the just revive, and reign
O'er all that scorned them here?

God will my naked soul receive,
When sep'rate from the flesh;
And break the prison of the grave,
To raise my bones afresh.

Heav'n is my everlasting home,
Th' inheritance is sure:
Let men of pride their rage resume,
But I'll repine no more.

—Isaac Watts

Pray

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
 who alone does wonders.
Blessed be his glorious name forever;
 the whole earth is filled with his glory.
 Amen and amen

Psalm 72:18–19 CSB

Weekend (July 24–25)

Prepare

Prayer of Supplication

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will forever be, world without end.

Answer Amen.

Reader O Lord, arise, help us;

Answer And deliver us for thy Name's sake.

Reader Lord, open our lips.

Answer And let our mouth proclaim your praise.

Confession

Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name.

Amen

Read

We encourage you to read the Psalm aloud:

Listen to this, all you people! Pay attention, everyone in the world!

High and low, rich and poor—listen!

For my words are wise, and my thoughts are filled with insight.

I listen carefully to many proverbs

and solve riddles with inspiration from a harp.

Why should I fear when trouble comes,
when enemies surround me?

They trust in their wealth and boast of great riches.

Yet they cannot redeem themselves from death

by paying a ransom to God.

Redemption does not come so easily,

for no one can ever pay enough to live forever

and never see the grave.

Those who are wise must finally die,

just like the foolish and senseless,

leaving all their wealth behind.

The grave is their eternal home, where they will stay forever.

They may name their estates after themselves,

but their fame will not last.

They will die, just like animals.

This is the fate of fools,

though they are remembered as being wise.

Selah

Like sheep, they are led to the grave,
where death will be their shepherd.
In the morning the godly will rule over them.
Their bodies will rot in the grave, far from their grand estates.

But as for me, God will redeem my life.
He will snatch me from the power of the grave.
Selah

So don't be dismayed when the wicked grow rich
and their homes become ever more splendid.
For when they die, they take nothing with them.
Their wealth will not follow them into the grave.
In this life they consider themselves fortunate
and are applauded for their success.
But they will die like all before them
and never again see the light of day.
People who boast of their wealth don't understand;
they will die, just like animals.

Psalm 49 NLT

Sing

[My Worth is Not in What I Own](#)

My worth is not in what I own
Not in the strength of flesh and bone
But in the costly wounds of love
At the cross

My worth is not in skill or name
In win or lose, in pride or shame
But in the blood of Christ that flowed
At the cross

Chorus:



*I rejoice in my redeemer
Greatest treasure
Wellspring of my soul
And I will trust in him, no other
My soul is satisfied in him alone*

As summer flowers we fade and die
Fame, youth and beauty hurry by
But life eternal calls to us
At the cross

I will not boast in wealth or might
Or human wisdom's fleeting light
But I will boast in knowing Christ
At the cross

Two wonders here that I confess
My worth and my unworthiness
My value fixed, my ransom paid
At the cross

—Keith and Kristyn Getty

Reflect

Where Christ himself is there to welcome you
Then you are home, wherever you may fare.
And Christ will keep your inner compass true

Though all the world is rushing everywhere,
This way and that before the winds of fear,
Between false hopes and premature despair.

But you can hear a different tune. You hear
The strong song of his wisdom. Open your ears
To hear his parables, although the foolish veer

Between their fatuous desires and fears,

With fickle fortunes that they fear to share.
Keep your security in Christ, who hears

The slightest murmur of your smallest prayer,
And do not be afraid, but trust in him,
Your heart's in heaven, keep your treasure there.

Malcome Guite, *David's Crown*

Pray

Most merciful Father,

Send your heavenly blessings upon your Church universal,
that all its members may dwell together
in the unity of Christ and the love of the Spirit.

Keep far from us all selfishness and discord.

Endue your pastors with righteousness,
and enable them faithfully to fulfill their ministry,
to bring again the outcasts, and to seek the lost.

And grant to us so to receive their care,
and to use your means of grace,
that in all our words and deeds

we may seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Respond

Share your response with another person this weekend.

What have you learned this week through praying Psalm 49?

How have you been challenged to trust in God in difficult times?

Final Thoughts

We pray that this guide has been helpful and enriching for you this summer. We hope that the practices of praying, meditating, and remembering the Scriptures modeled here will continue into your daily life for years to come.

However, remember that the gospel of Jesus Christ shows us that the Christian life is not about how much you can do for God each day. We are never able to do enough to earn this great salvation. Our sin is too deep, and our hearts are too wicked; yet God chose to save us in spite of our failings for his name's sake. Tim Keller puts it well when he says, "The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." Rest in this God's acceptance of you today.

If you are looking for more information on how to engage with the Psalms, please see the following pages of resources.

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