

# My Favorite Thing About PSALMS

Psalm 118:8-9

June 05, 2021

We could literally spend months going through the book of Psalms because there are many worthy topics to be explored within its pages:

- **Wisdom Psalms** (1, 37, 119)
- **Royal Psalms** (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 47)
- **Lament Psalms** (3-7, 12-13, 22, 25, 35)
- **Imprecatory Psalms** (7, 35, 40, 137)
- **Thanksgiving Psalms** (8, 18, 19, 111, 150)
- **Pilgrim Psalms** (43, 46, 48, 76, 84)
- **Enthronement Psalms** (48, 93, 96-99)

However, this series is about My Favorite Thing and **My Favorite Thing about the Psalms is AUTHENTICITY in prayer and worship.**

It is important to understand that when we are reading the Psalms, we are reading poetry. A history book includes facts and events, but poetry speaks to emotions and thoughts and reactions to those events.

In the books of Samuel, we **read** of David's many exploits and victories, but it is in the Psalms that we **hear** David's heart crying out to God in weakness and fear and failure.

In the Psalms, we find that there is nothing in this life – the Good, the Bad or the Ugly – that is off limits:

- **Victory** (47, 66, 92)
- **Deliverance** (3, 20:6-9, 27, 32, 34, 54)
- **Joy** (5:11, 16:11, 20:5, 32:11, 98)
- **Praise and thanksgiving** (27:6, 33, 100, 103, 105, 150)
- **Overwhelming crises** (56, 57, 59, 60, 63)
- **Affliction** (102)
- **Shame** (25:2-3)
- **Guilt** (32:3-4; 38; 51)
- **Depression** (42, 43)
- **Feelings of abandonment** (13, 22, 43)
- **Utter helplessness** (18:4-6)
- **Tragedy** (88 & 91)
- **Confusion and anger** (73 & 58)
- **Disobedience** (32 & 51)
- **Loneliness** (71 & 62)
- **Betrayal** (55; 57:3-4)

One commentator puts it this way, **"The psalms are often wet with the tears and the blood of the writer"** (Leupold, p. 28).

We are taught to pray with proper etiquette, in a respectful and solemn way – monotone almost. No tears. No anger. No confusion. No feelings of betrayal. No raised voice or clenched fist. No questions.

Why? Because He's **GOD**? Because He can't take it? Because He might get offended? Because reverence is more important than honesty?

God's response to Job was not because God couldn't take Job's questions or his anger and confusion, but because Job was stating as fact things about God that He didn't fully understand.

It is the same with joy and praise and thanksgiving. Don't be **TOO** happy. Don't be **TOO** joyful. No bursting into song. No raising of hands. And, for heaven's sake **PUT THE DRUMS AWAY!!**

But in the Psalms, we see that there is no experience in life that is too low:

- **Psalm 6** – (For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre. A Psalm of David.) O Lord, do not rebuke me in Thine anger, nor chasten me in Thy wrath. **2 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. 3 And my soul is greatly dismayed; but Thou, O LORD-- how long? 4 Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; save me because of Thy lovingkindness.** 5 For there is no mention of Thee in death; In Sheol who will give Thee thanks? 6 I am weary with my sighing; every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. 7 My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries. 8 Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, for the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping. 9 The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD receives my prayer. 10 All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back; they shall suddenly be ashamed.
- **Psalm 13** – (For the choir director. A Psalm of David.) **How long, O LORD? Wilt Thou forget me forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?** 3 Consider and answer me, O LORD, my God; enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of death*, 4 Lest my enemy say, "I have overcome him," lest my adversaries rejoice when I am shaken. 5 But I have trusted in Thy lovingkindness; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. 6 I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me.
- **Psalm 22** – (For the choir director; upon Ajeleth Hashshahar. A Psalm of David.) **My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?** Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. 2 O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; and by night, but I have no rest. 3 Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. 4 In Thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. 5 To Thee they cried out, and were delivered; In Thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. 6 **But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All who see me sneer at me;** they separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*, 8 "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him." 9 Yet Thou art He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust *when* upon my mother's breasts. 10 Upon Thee I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my God from my mother's womb. 11 **Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.** 12 Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me. 13 They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 **I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;** and Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. 19 But Thou, O LORD, be not far off; O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance. 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my only *life* from the power of the dog. 21 Save me from the lion's mouth; and from the horns of the wild oxen Thou dost answer me. 22 I will tell of Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee. 23 **You who fear the LORD, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard.** 25 From Thee *comes* my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before Thee. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD's, and He rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive. 30 Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of the Lord to the *coming* generation. 31 They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed *it*.
- **Psalm 142:1-7** – (A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.) **I cry aloud to the LORD;** I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. 2 **I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble.** 3 When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk man have hidden a snare for me. 4 Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. 5 **I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."** 6 **Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.** 7 Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Or too high:

- **Psalm 8** – (For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David.) O Lord, our Lord, **how majestic** is Thy name in all the earth, who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens! 2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast established strength, because of Thine adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. 3 When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? 5 Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty! 6 Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, **how majestic** is Thy name in all the earth!
- **Psalm 19** – (For the choir director. A Psalm of David.) **The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.** 2 Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; in keeping them

there is great reward. <sup>12</sup> Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. <sup>13</sup> Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous *sins*; let them not rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. <sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

- **Psalm 98** – O Sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him. <sup>2</sup> The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. <sup>3</sup> He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. <sup>4</sup> **Shout joyfully to the LORD**, all the earth; **break forth and sing for joy and sing praises**. <sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD with the **lyre**; with the lyre and the sound of melody. <sup>6</sup> With **trumpets** and the sound of the **horn** shout joyfully before the King, the LORD. <sup>7</sup> Let the sea roar and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it. <sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains sing together for joy <sup>9</sup> before the LORD; for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.
- **Psalm 150 - Praise the LORD!** Praise God in His sanctuary; **Praise Him** in His mighty expanse. <sup>2</sup> **Praise Him** for His mighty deeds; **Praise Him** according to His excellent greatness. <sup>3</sup> **Praise Him** with trumpet sound; **Praise Him** with harp and lyre. <sup>4</sup> **Praise Him** with timbrel and dancing; **Praise Him** with stringed instruments and pipe. <sup>5</sup> **Praise Him** with loud cymbals; **Praise Him** with resounding cymbals. <sup>6</sup> **Let everything that has breath praise the LORD**. Praise the LORD!

To exclude God.

See, I think God can take it and I believe with all my heart that He much prefers honest prayer, even when there is anger and confusion attached, and praises and thanksgiving, even when there is dancing and lifted hands, then watered down, milk toast, polite prayers and lukewarm praises.

God is not an abstract Idea to the writers of the Psalms. They speak freely from their hearts; in pain, in sorrow, in confusion and in raucous joy.

**And that's why Authenticity is My Favorite Thing About Psalms.**