

# Psalms



Daily Life  
Five Oaks Church

Week 5: September 26–October 2, 2015

# Day 1

September 28



*Pray* | Pray that God would use you to bless others.

WHEN GOD BRINGS us his salvation, he delivers us from our sin and pain with the intent of freeing us and also of spreading his kingdom, freeing others through us.

In the books of the Bible prior to Psalms, God delivers his people from battles and through battles. In the story of Exodus 12:31–42, God brought the Israelites out of Egypt without their help. In the story of the battle of Jericho, Joshua 6:1–20, the “battle” was won by God. The Israelites only had to obey, and God did the rest. News about the Israelites’ God spread, giving others the chance to repent and follow him, as in the story of Rahab in Joshua 2:8–13.

In multiple examples, the Israelites won battles against all odds, such as in 2 Samuel 8:1–14, which says that God gave David victory wherever he went. Psalm 21 focuses on such deliverance.

As author John Goldingay explains, “The point about the word *deliverance* is that it denotes something that happens such as you could not have made happen. It involves God’s delivering you, saving you, rescuing you.”<sup>1</sup>



*Read* | Psalm 21



*Reflect | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.*

God's blessings do not dead end with us as Genesis 12:2 and Psalm 21:6 say. Sometimes that looks like a wounded healer helping someone else heal, a benefactor offering financial support to a homeless family or orphanage, or donating to a church fundraiser. Reflect on some of the ways you've been blessed by God. Now, how can you spread that blessing to someone else near or far?

Sometimes God steps in and pulls us out of conflict. Read Exodus 14:14. When has God stepped into your life and fought for you? When have you, after the fact, realized that God was working behind the scenes for your deliverance? What did you do with that deliverance?

Read Psalm 21:1 and 13, the first and last verses of this chapter. The author has sandwiched this chapter between praises to God. He recognizes that nothing is possible without him. Spend some time reflecting on ways God has delivered you and blessed you, and then thank him and give him praise for being powerful enough and for loving you enough to bring deliverance and blessings.

## Day 2

September 29



*Pray / Ask God to increase your faith and trust in him in troubling times.*

GOD IS GOOD, and life isn't always so. These two facts are separate from each other, yet oftentimes incorrectly intertwined. It is important to accept both facts throughout adversity.

The psalmist paints a graphic picture of intense anguish and suffering and seeming hopelessness. However, declarations of God's greatness and an instruction to honor God, fear him, and proclaim his righteousness are intertwined within today's passage. The psalmist is proclaiming God's sovereignty in the midst of anguish—not in response to sudden deliverance. This author knows that God's goodness is separate from circumstances.

Just like Jesus promised in John 16:33 that we would have trouble, he also promised that we can trust him because he has overcome the world.



*Read / Psalm 22*



*Reflect* | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

When does your hope in God or your confidence in his sovereignty falter or change because of your circumstances? Do you question him when your circumstances look grim like the psalmist's? Spend some time confessing this to God, accept his grace, and praise him for who he is and because of who he is regardless of your circumstances.

Are you in the midst of pain and anguish now? If so, take some time today to reflect on who God is and declare that he is all good and all holy. Reread Psalm 22 and ask God to help you see that life is hard and that he is still good.

In verses 3–5 the psalmist is remembering God's deliverance in years past; praising him for it; and asking for God's continued, future deliverance. The psalmist is relying on what he knows of God to hold true for the present and future. Write down some examples of God's deliverance and healing in your life. Use them now if you are struggling, and keep them handy for the next time you are struggling with faith. Let them be a reminder in the future of who God is and how he has blessed and delivered you, and trust that he will continue to do so.

# Day 3

September 30



*Pray / Thank God for being a glorious, powerful King.*

PSALM 23 IS a very famous one that most of us have heard before. It has great meaning that may have been lost for you in the repetition of recitation. But the idea that God is always close by, protecting us and inviting us into his inner sanctuary, is a powerful one that we shouldn't forget.

John Goldingay writes, "Maybe the swiftly running water would be a bit scary for the sheep, but the shepherd would know where it flows into quieter pools. He would also know where the presence of moisture makes some grass grow and where the presence of shade stops it withering in the blistering heat. He would know where there are some trees or other bushes whose fruit he can knock down with his cane. So the flock is secure and also provided for."<sup>2</sup> The shepherd knows there are dangers and obstacles and he works diligently to protect his flock and lead them. They must follow him and trust him. This is the way it is between us and God. The second half of this chapter denotes us as guests in God's house with our enemies watching, but powerless to invade. They can do nothing to impede his outpouring or our enjoyment of God's blessings.



*Read / Psalm 23*



*Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.*

Compare this psalm to John 10:14–18. What is the choice that Jesus, as our shepherd, makes for us? How would it feel if a person made this choice for you? Consider and reflect on the fact that Jesus makes this choice willingly for you. What does that mean to you and why?

Do you see God as a God who created his world and sits back and watches it spin, or as the gentle, wise, strong shepherd of Psalm 23? What is the difference between the two, and how would your life be different if you saw him as Psalm 23 depicts him?

Compare Psalm 23:5–6 with Zephaniah 3:13. Reflect on what it means to rest without fear, even with enemies looking on or trouble waiting right outside your door. How necessary is it to take time to rest and refresh, trusting God specifically in the middle of life's storms?

## Day 4

October 1



*Pray / Ask God to give you his pure and gracious heart.*

PSALM 24 GIVES God glory and answers the question “Who shall stand in his holy place?” Such shows the graciousness of this king who waits at the door to be let in, never forcing himself into our hearts.

We spend time today recognizing that everything is God’s. He created all of it and has every right to take ownership of all of it, of us, our possessions, our thoughts and feelings, and our choices. Nothing would exist if not for him!

The verses are both convicting and hopeful. We *can* “stand in his holy place.” We *can* receive blessing and righteousness from him. But we must come before him with clean hands and a pure heart, which can be ours if we trust in Jesus.

And at the end of it all, we see this magnificent king and creator standing at the door, waiting to be let in. This king who wins battles and is full of glory and might and goodness is waiting for us to say yes to him and invite him in. He doesn’t have a hidden agenda or hidden expectation. There is no demand, nor are there threats. It is the king asking to be let into your life.



*Read / Psalm 24*





*Reflect* | Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

As verses 1-2 do, spend some time today reflecting on the things that God has created and given to you. Start with those things close to you, like your relationships, home, and job, and move outward toward the rest of the world around you. Look at the beauty of nature, the differing climates and peoples of the world, and the unfathomable reaches of space. All of it is God's, and he alone understands it in all its intricacies. Stand in awe of him and let him be God today.

Verse 4 indicates a need for both inward and outward cleanliness. Compare this with Matthew 23:26-28. What does it mean to have pure actions and pure motives? Do your actions come from pure motives, or from a sense of obligation? According to Matthew, which is more valuable to Jesus, and why?

Compare Revelation 3:20 with Psalm 24:7. Consider stories, books, movies, and presuppositions of the behavior of a powerful ruler. How does this differ from what we see of God in these two passages? How does this differ from what you have heard of God or what you expected from him and why?

## *Day 5*

*October 2*



*Pray / Ask God to give you a teachable spirit.*

IN PSALM 25 we see a psalmist asking for deliverance and forgiveness, and yearning for God’s teaching in order to have a lasting, intimate friendship with God.

The psalmist knows his sins and propensity to rebel and is asking for forgiveness for those sins. However, as we see toward the end of the chapter, in verse 21, he is asking for more than just forgiveness; he is asking for integrity and uprightness for the rest of his life.

Integrity and uprightness are two things we walk in daily rather than as a fleeting choice. As we’ve seen intertwined within this chapter, the psalmist recognizes the importance of living a life of hope, trust, and dependence on God, allowing God to lovingly instruct and lead his people in a safe path. As a result, verse 13 says we will find inheritance. Verse 14 says that we will then have an intimate friendship with God.



*Read / Psalm 25*



*Reflect* / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

Integrity can be described as what we do when no one is watching. We can make good, sound decisions when people are watching yet have a somewhat different persona when we are alone. Despite the good choices that you may make, what are some ways in which your integrity could be improved?

This psalmist is begging for God to lead, instruct, and teach him. This is intertwined with begging for forgiveness, pardon, and graciousness as though the two are intertwined. How do God's instruction and forgiveness go hand in hand? What kind of life do we live as we allow God to lead, instruct, and teach us more and more? What kind of life do you live?

This psalmist has a very teachable spirit as he begs for God's laws and instruction. How teachable is your spirit? How do you allow God to instruct you, and how do you fight him? What is one way that you and God can grow your teachable spirit? What is one thing you can put behind you in order to allow God to change you?

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1. John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 1* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 67.
  2. Goldingay, 75.