

Psalms



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 4: August 20–26, 2016

Day 1

August 22



Pray / Ask God to reveal areas where unconfessed sin lingers.

WE ALL NEED God's mercy every moment of every day.

King David wrote Psalm 51 after being called to account for perhaps the greatest sin of his life. The psalm vividly describes the hopelessness of man's sinful condition, the magnificence of God's mercy and grace, the simplicity of God's plan to deal with sin, and the great potential of humans living in dependence on God's mercy and grace.

David's story is our story. Our sinful human nature constantly wants to push us away from God. As you read Psalm 51 today, don't think of this as

David's song of confession and praise; think of it as your own. Start by thinking of a sin that you struggle with, and then read the psalm with that in mind. This cycle of confession, throwing yourself on God's mercy and then responding to God in praise, worship, and service, is a cycle that will not end until Jesus returns and conquers sin and death forever.



Read / Psalm 51



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

As sinful humans we are all tempted to cover up our sins. How does covering up sin affect your life and your relationship with God?

In Psalm 51:10 David asks God to create “a clean heart” and to renew a “right spirit” in him. Then in verse 17 David says that “a broken spirit” and “a contrite heart” are sacrifices that God values. Describe the kind of “heart” and “spirit” that, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you should possess.

Reflect on the time you spend in prayer with God. Is confession of sin a regular and significant part of your regular communication with God? Why is it important?

Day 2

August 23



Pray / Thank God for His perfect love and justice.

GOD'S LOVE WILL endure forever—your things will not.

Psalm 52 paints a clear picture of the differences between those who do evil in the eyes of God and those who trust in God. Evil is characterized by a focus on using skills and material possessions to build itself up, regardless of the impact to others. As in the case of Psalm 52, there are times when evil is directly attacking the things and people of God, but that is not always the case. At times evil is characterized by simply ignoring the things and people of God.

Psalm 52 assures us that God's love for His people endures and that God will ultimately deal with evil. As followers of Jesus Christ we must recognize evil in all its forms, deal with it prayerfully, then act in the strength and confidence that comes from our relationship with God—not repaying evil with more evil but building up God and bringing glory to him in all situations.



Read / Psalm 52



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

The primary message of Psalm 52 is the reliability of God’s love. How have you experienced this in your life?

Psalm 52:8–9 uses the image of an olive tree to paint a picture of a godly person flourishing in “the house of God.” This is an image of living in dependence on God, in contrast to the evil person who is living in dependence on their physical strength and worldly possessions. Reflect on your life: Are you flourishing in godly dependence, or are you battling to find your sense of security in material things?

There is so much violence going on around us and around our world today. What do the truths of Psalm 52 say about how we as godly people should respond to these situations?

Day 3

August 24



Pray / Ask God to make your life proof of his existence.

The world won't know there's a God unless we show them.

Psalm 53 laments the perception that all humans are denying the existence of God. Sadly, David could've written those words today, and they'd be just as true. Man's sinful nature and the desire to rely on self and not God, is just as strong today. That's the reality of the world we live in. There's no denying it.

We need to move beyond lamenting to action. For those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ, the duty of revealing God to the world is clearly on our shoulders. We must start with establishing that we believe, to our very core, there truly is a God. This will produce an authentic lifestyle that is distinct from those who do not believe there is a God—a life driven by God's love and compassion for all humans and a desire for every person to truly know God, put their trust in God, and bring glory to him.



Read / Psalm 53



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

We are all called to move beyond lamenting that the world does not believe there is a God to changing that reality. How are you changing this reality in your sphere of influence?

Do you have lingering doubts about the reality of God? Take some time to write down your thoughts on this. Make it a point to discuss these thoughts with a trusted Christian friend, your small group leader, or pastor. Also, bring these thoughts before God in prayer as well, and ask him to reveal the truth you need to hear to resolve your doubts.

We all struggle with sin and living a life truly aligned with God's purposes. What behaviors most commonly show up in your life when you are struggling to live in alignment and dependence on God? Make a list and then ask God to help you quickly recognize these behaviors when they show up.

Day 4
August 25



Pray / Ask God for courage to freely sacrifice for his glory.

GOD IS FAITHFUL. You can trust him with everything.

Jesus' death and resurrection is the sacrifice that was required to pay the debt for your sin and mine. His death eliminated the need for the sacrifices

required of the Israelites prior to Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. However, this does not mean that no sacrifice is required to follow Jesus Christ.

In our reading today, David pledges to sacrifice a "freewill offering" to God in gratitude for his faithfulness and goodness. In the same way, we are called to freely and courageously offer everything we possess to God. As with Moses, God may be calling you to actions that you've never considered possible in your own strength. Your sacrifice of a "freewill offering" may be to step out in courage and faith that can only come from your connection to the God of the universe, whose love and faithfulness is boundless.



Read / Psalm 54



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

God would never ask you to do anything that was not for His greater glory. What's the hardest thing that God could ask you to do for His glory? Consider whether you're prepared to do it—and the reasons you would hold back.

Psalm 54:5 expresses confidence that God will return the evil to those who do evil things. What's your reaction to that idea? Does it encourage you? Concern you? Make you uncomfortable? Why?

Followers of Jesus Christ bear the ultimate responsibility for making the name of Jesus Christ known to the entire world. The church cannot deliver on that responsibility without great sacrifice in the name of Jesus Christ. In what ways do you see the church, as a whole, needing to sacrifice in order to be faithful to this command?

Day 5

August 26



Pray / Praise God for his unchanging nature.

GOD IS THE ONLY reliable and unchanging force in the universe. Psalm 55 is a song about the painful conflict resulting from betrayal by someone previously trusted. Our society is filled with so many real and relevant examples: from adultery to sexual abuse to the violence we see in many communities today. The emotion, pain, implications, and complexity of these situations is truly more than an individual or a community can deal with without external help.

In Psalm 55 David calls on God for that help—the only unchangeable and reliable source of help he knows. David’s words are not passive; they are active. He casts (throws) his burdens on God, confident that God can sustain the burden. What about the burden of betrayal occurring in our society today? Is God’s presence real enough to make a difference? Who will lead the way in casting these burdens on the unshakable shoulders of our God?



Read / Psalm 55



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

How does the unchanging nature of God encourage you?

Are you carrying a heavy burden because of a recent betrayal, or do you know someone who is? Prayerfully consider how God can relieve that burden. Then act, following God's direction!

Psalm 55 is an earnest prayer, a prayer of desperation. Remember that God loves us as his children. He hurts when we hurt and responds to prayers of desperation. Are you in a desperate situation? Don't let pride or fear get in the way. Call out to God in desperation.

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