

Psalms

Oct 2023



Introduction to our Study of Psalms - Our Particular Focus

First: Take a moment to look forward to the Christ— in the Psalms concealed; in the New Testament revealed!

Listen to [WE CROWN YOU - Jeremy Riddle](#)

The Psalms address a growing hunger (of Christians particularly but also searching non-Christians) to get to the root of what is real, what is important in life, what is useless to continue chasing after and what can leave a great legacy.

They address the great dissatisfaction, futility, and meaninglessness of merely giving lip-service to Christianity, whilst still being immersed in all the glamour and cheap attractions of a world that is sold out to self, wealth, and pleasure.

Rather than studying these Psalms just to gain knowledge, we will be specifically mining them to be further released in:

**Prayer, Worship, and Transformation of
hearts through Holy Spirit grace.**

Why this study of the Psalms, now, with this focus, as a church?

- It is the only book in the bible whose contents are all intentionally directed toward God Himself!
- The Psalms are the most often quoted by Jesus, of all the Old Testament scriptures.
- They are very 'gritty' and real - disturbing and confronting at times. Packed with tenderness, comfort, and intimacy of relationship at other times. Recording people's prayers in all circumstances of life. From the depths of pain, abandonment, desperation, grief, unworthiness, loss, anger, resentment – to the heights of ecstatic praise, assurance, love, hope, and faith in a Sovereign, loving, forgiving, saving God – it's all there!
- They are also often prophetic, which we shall highlight as appropriate.

PRAYER:

Dave recently quoted Matthew Bolte, who is the Field Director of the Australian Prayer Network, "We believe the spiritual winter in Australia is over; that the early signs of spring are here". We also see hints of this happening in Church By the Bay, and across the Bellarine.

- Many have been faithful over a long period in prayer-walking our towns and streets.
- 'Pray Bellarine' has of recent times begun an intercessory prayer ministry covering the Bellarine, and Geelong (Contact: Kiri Raines).

- A CBTB prayer meet occurs every Monday morning, and it is growing and dynamic. (Contact: Jan Westworth).
- Every Sunday from 8:15am there is prayer in the church foyer, and it is becoming a beautiful and powerful prelude to meeting as family in the 9:30am service. We would love to see you there.

WORSHIP:

Every Sunday we are blessed by a worship team leading us into what seems like the very throne room of God – and it only gets better and better! God is being exalted more and more.

Our twice-a-month Sunday evening times of worship, from 6:30pm, led by the young adults, are a precious time of drawing near to the heart of God.

A few Sundays ago, there was an interpretation of a message given in tongues that simply said, “The harps are being taken off the trees.”

This was a reference to Psalm 137, particularly verses 1-4, where it speaks of the captive Israelites being in mourning, so songs of joy and freedom were abandoned in bitterness and regret. A simple explanation of the message: “Worship is being restored.” So, it’s time to enter a new season of celebration, joyous worship, earnest prayer in song. We have so many gifted singers, musicians, worship leaders, even recording artists, in our church families. Many from our past need to be called back to ‘take up their harps again’, ministering right across the Bellarine; to be drawn back from dry places in the desert to lead in worship of the God who saves and restores, who is mighty in our midst, to the worthy praise of His Name and Sovereignty.

It is with desire and confidence that we invite you to embark on this “Feasting on the Psalms”, eagerly and diligently. It will reward you abundantly! It can be a conduit for the Holy Spirit to transform you; to cause you to overflow to the praise and glory of God, and to cause you to overflow from the prayer closet to the transformation of individuals and families on the Bellarine and beyond.

The Technical Stuff (for those who want to dig deeper):

As you proceed through the Cluster Booklets, you will occasionally encounter the following ‘time era codes’:

OC=Old Covenant of Law – 10 Commandments + Moses’ rules

NC=New Covenant – See Hebrews 9:15

CDR= Since **C**hrist’s **D**eath & **R**esurrection

HSP=Since the **H**oly **S**pirit was given to the Believer at **P**entecost

ETR=**E**nd-**T**imes **R**evelation

Separate to these, **DBS=Discovery Bible Study Method**.

Without getting heavily into theology, it makes all the difference to understand how the Psalms relate to us in our times – this side of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and further, since Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and indwells every believer. And further still, as we see the end-times rapidly approaching.

The truths contained in the Psalms are eternal (for ever), and unchanging – but the time frameworks and contexts that carry them from the era of the Psalms until now have altered considerably.

In short, the OT Psalms were written when Believers were under God's Old Covenant (**OC**), requiring obedience to the Law. Impossible for man to keep, but they could be atoned for by the repeated sacrificial shedding of animal blood by the Priest.

Since Jesus' death and resurrection (**CDR**), Believers are under God's New Covenant (**NC**) of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He was the only man able to fulfil the Law perfectly, to become the Believers' one-time-only sacrifice, thus **completely** and **once-for-all-time** freeing the Believer from the death penalty of the Law.

Since Pentecost (**HSP**), the Holy Spirit indwells/lives in every Believer, enabling them to live in a close heart-and-mind relationship with Christ and the Father.

SO, read the Psalms with this understanding and application:

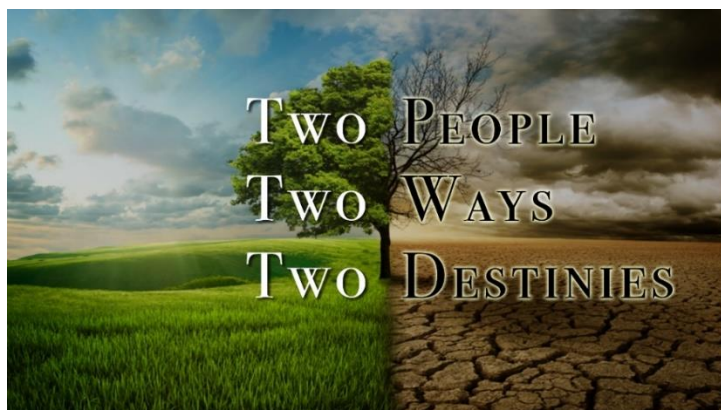
1. The Believer/Christian has, once-for-all-time, been Saved by Believing, by Faith, in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.
2. Every Believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit, to enable them to live as Jesus would have them live.
3. The condemnation and curse of the **OC** Law no longer has rights or hold over you. The **NC** 'Law' of Grace brings freedom, forgiveness, and life. The **OC** Law is right and good, but can only be satisfied in Jesus Christ. – we now pursue obedience to the spirit and intent of the Law (not the demands of the OT Law) through Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit (See Romans 5-8).

EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Books on Prayer are available to borrow from a table in the church foyer.
- Refer to the QR Code on the hand-out Bookmark, and on the Church website, under 'Resources'.

PSALM 1 - Oct 8

* Please read before you come to Cluster Group



¹Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers. ⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

FIRST: Listen to [So Many Roads - Ronnie Kimball](#)

THEME: Life's two roads: The way of the Righteous and the way of the wicked.

AUTHOR: Not Known.

TYPE: A Psalm of Wisdom, possibly used publicly on royal occasions.

PROPHETIC & NT LINKS: Psalm 1:5 → Matthew 13:49 'This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous'.

CONTENTS - Blessings & Warnings:

This is a 'big-picture' Psalm that sets the pace for all the Psalms that follow:

You are **Blessed** if you don't walk or stand in the way sinners take, or sit with mockers. Your delight is in the law of the LORD and you meditate on it day and night. If you do this, you'll be like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in season, without your leaves withering. You'll prosper in whatever you do. At the judgement you'll stand in the assembly of the righteous. The LORD will watch over your way.

- The above is now possible through the empowering gift and fruit of the Holy Spirit, cooperatively working within you; you who has been declared righteous due to saving faith in Jesus (**NC**).

Footnote: All Scriptures used in this booklet are from the NIV translation.

The wicked will not do, and cannot inherit, the above; they will be blown away like chaff in the wind; they will not stand in the judgement; they will not assemble with the righteous; their way leads to destruction.

The Burning Questions (pun intended) for us today under the New Covenant **(NC)**:

- Will Believers who grow lukewarm enter heaven or hell?
- Are they righteous or wicked?
- Once saved, always saved?

The Biblical Answer: Eternal life is **a free grace gift of God** to anyone who simply and genuinely believes in Jesus for salvation (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47, etc.). Christ's righteousness covers them. Good works play absolutely no role whatsoever in earning, keeping, or proving worthy of eternal life (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 4:5; etc.). To deny this is to say that the 'work' of Jesus on the cross was insufficient to save anyone; that He has 'butter fingers' and you may slip through! **John 10:28** reassures us by Jesus saying, *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."*

The legitimate offer held out for Believers is **the promise of reward** for good works, and even that is only made possible by willingly embracing and co-operating with the now indwelling Holy Spirit, one of whose aims is to draw you closer and closer into obedient, reverent, and intimate relationship with the Father's heart, to His praise and glory.

This IS a HUGE introduction to Psalms, but come to grips with it and you should find yourself moving from:

"I must pray, I must worship, I must witness" **(OC)**, to

"Wow! What freedom, what beauty, what intimacy with the Father, what desire I now have to overflow the Good News to everyone around me". **(NC)**

'Let condemnation from the Law lose its grip, and freedom in God's grace me gladly sip' ^R
Duffield

KEY VERSES:

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 5:24 *Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.*

John 6:47 *Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Romans 4:5 *However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.*

QUESTIONS:

How does this Psalm help you in your heart relationship with God?

Have you grasped a new understanding of freedom in Christ?

How will it affect your prayer, worship, and witness?

OVERFLOW: 2 Corin. 13:5, Matthew 7:21-23, John 6:29, Rev: 22:12, Rev. 3:15-16 (Note, Rev. 3 is addressed to the church, the body of Believers in Laodicea – saved but destined for no reward).

PSALM 8 - Oct 15 * Please read before you come to Cluster Group



¹ Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. ² Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. ³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? ⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. ⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, ⁸ the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹ Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

FIRST: Listen to [Anthem Lights - The Doxology](#)

THEME: The Lord reigns in the heavens; he has set humanity to rule the earth.

AUTHOR: David

TYPE: A Hymn of praise

PROPHETIC & NT LINKS: A Messianic Psalm

Psalm 8:2 → Matthew 21:16 – Children praising Jesus in the temple

Psalm 8:4-6 → Hebrews 2:5-8 – In reference to Jesus's incarnation

Psalm 8:6 → 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:22

CONTENTS:

Creation reflects the Lord's majesty, glory, and sovereignty. The Lord has created mankind as the ruler and manager of all earthly creation and gifted them with glory and honour. Through the praise of even children and infants, the Lord has caringly established mankind to be a stronghold against the Lord's enemies, and the avenger (Satan).

STRUCTURE: Similar to a modern era traditional worship service:

- I. Doxology (v.1a) – A short hymn of praise
- II. Worship (vv. 1b-8)
 - a. Praise (vv. 1b-2)
 - b. Message (vv. 3-8)
 - i. Man's Insignificance: "What is man?"
 - ii. God's Grace: "You crown him."
- III. Benediction (v.9) – A spoken blessing

SO HOW DO WE RESPOND TO PSALM 8?

1. We affirm and declare it. We pause and worship, gob-smacked, in awe of our Creator God and His mighty creation, and how He esteems us!
2. We pray for a new personal and corporate **revelation** of who God is, who He has declared we are, what He has saved us from, what He has saved us to, what and when He will have His way with all the earth. We pray for a new understanding and experience of His intimacy and love, His protection, power, and plan for all who trust in, believe, and obey Him.
3. We **actively** and **specifically repent** (do a U-turn from), both personally, as a cluster group, and as a Church, of the ways and instances where we have dropped the ball and taken on the beliefs and ways of the unbelieving world. We repent of worshipping a small God. We repent of worshipping small gods. We repent of placing the humanistic lie of the Theory of Evolution above the God-proclaimed (and scientifically backed-up) truth of a Sovereign Creator.

QUESTIONS:

Take the time tonight to walk out under the stars, lie on your back, and look up. As you study the vast stellar spaces, remember that God loves you, individually, more than He loves His created universe. Humankind alone is created in God's image. Read Genesis 1:26-27.

- Then, examine your habits, choices, ambitions, world view, and big-picture goals. Do they match up with what God has called you to?
- Individually and collectively I/we are called to be rulers and managers over all earthly creation. Really? Mission impossible now?
- Am I really gifted with glory and honour?
- So, I, as a redeemed child of God, am I a stronghold against the Lord's enemies, and the avenger (Satan). Really? How does that work?!!!
- That's a huge call. Dare I believe God on that?
- Given a 'Yes' answer, how can I expect my praying, worshipping and witness to change as I lean into God's agenda, not my own?
- Lord, I wait on you to answer my plea. I so want to honour You in all I do.

OVERFLOW: 1 Corinthians 1:27, Psalm 21:5, 103:4; 1 Corinthians 15:25,27; Ephesians 1:22

PSALM 15 - Oct 22 * Please read before you come to Cluster Group



¹Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? ²The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; ³whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbour, and casts no slur on others; ⁴who despises a vile person but honours those who fear the Lord; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind; ⁵who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

THEME: An uncorrupted Life

AUTHOR: David

TYPE: A Psalm of Liturgy (public ritual of worship) and Instruction. It may have been recited as worshipers approached Jerusalem. The priests or gatekeepers would call out the opening question, and those approaching the city would respond with the answer. Then the priests or gatekeepers would respond with the final line.

CONTENTS:

David meditates on the required moral (inward working) and ethical out-working) character of the one who is received into the presence of God. He asks and answers the question of who can dwell in God's sanctuary and holy hill:

Question: "Who may abide in your tent?" (in your presence) (v. 1)

Answer: "He who **walks** with (moral & ethical) integrity, who **speaks** truth, who **does** righteous (acts)" (vv. 2-5)

Promise: "He will never be shaken." (v. 5)

NB: This goes beyond being declared righteous through faith in the atonement for sins obtained by priestly sacrifices and rituals (**OC**).

This goes beyond being saved by believing on Jesus Christ (**NC**).

Footnote: All Scriptures used in this booklet are from the NIV translation.

They are already established 'givens' for God's chosen and redeemed people, as seen in Psalm 1. Salvation enabled our adoption into God's 'forever' family – we are through the door – BUT, am I in the back rows, struggling to experience the glory of God's presence from a distance, or do I have front-row seats, even a 'stage' participation, in an indescribable and intimate relationship with the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Saviour and Spirit?

In short, Psalm 15 shows us how to please God, and how to live in His **immediate presence**.

-As an aside, the word "blameless", as used here, is not synonymous with "perfect", but with an attitude and action of the heart desirous of pleasing God.

Three presenting attitudes & actions to becoming blameless, and living in God's Presence:

1. It's all up to me. I can do this – I just need to clean up my act; just use **my** willpower to exchange bad habits for good ones.
... "Tried that – failed miserably - stopped trying."
2. Let's go 50/50 – I'll let the Holy Spirit convict me of areas in my life that are not pleasing to God, and I'll do my best (don't put a percentage on the time) to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in transforming my life, and maybe some others, to goodness, health, holiness, witness, and service.
... "Oh yeah, that is so much better – and I feel so much closer and obedient to God but I still feel so unsatisfied, so weak, so unpleasing to God There must be a better way!"
3. There is nothing in me that I can rely on, except You! Lord, by your great mercy, forgiveness, love, and grace – I cast myself upon You. I desperately pursue your love and beauty with all my feeble expectancy and effort, knowing that the Spirit within me responds with a "Yes, and Amen!" I start running toward You, and every step becomes stronger as the Holy Spirit within strengthens my resolve, scatters my obstacles, shrinks the size and influence of my enemies, and brings the finish line into greater focus. And look, who is this running toward me? It is the Father - with arms wide open and eyes filled with such tears of joy, love, forgiveness, and longing. And look again, what has He prepared for me? He draws me in - to cleansing and refreshment, a new set of clothes, a new seat right near Himself, a new relationship, a restored authority, and a new assignment.

(Read Luke 15:11-24)

I am so very thankful, Lord, but it's not about me – it's all about You, Lord! It's about Your glory, Your will, Your Sovereignty. In short, 'My utmost (effort) for Your Glory'.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus replied: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”*³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.*³⁹ *And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’*⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

The relevance of Psalm 15 to our focus on Prayer, Worship, and Transformation:

An Observation of two extremes

- Saved, but in the ‘back row’ → Weak, spasmodic prayer; lip-service, ‘comfort’ worship; little or no transformation.

OR

- Saved, and sold out as a willing ‘captive’ of the Holy Spirit, knowing the presence and power of being in the virtual ‘throne room’ of God → two-way, intimate, communication with the Godhead; a growing revelation and understanding of the living Word of God; the Holy Spirit gifts and fruit combining in power ministries of transformation, both personally and in those around me.

Meditate on and discuss these Key Verses:

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Colossians 3

Romans 5:1-8

OVERFLOW: Ephesians 1:4, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, Micah 6:6-8

These Notes on the Psalms have been written by Richard Duffield, in 2023.

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External Gospel Support (EGS) - Oct 29

- Jenny Chacko, Co-Founder of EMPART



Jenny Chacko is the co-founder of Empart, a global ministry that transforms communities by training local people to start churches. Empart operates in 11 countries across Asia and Africa, and has a vision to plant 100,000 churches by 2030. Jenny Chacko is also the wife of Jossy Chacko, the president and founder of Empart. Together, they have three children and live in Melbourne, Australia.

Jenny Chacko is passionate about empowering women and children, especially those who are marginalized and oppressed. She oversees Empart's women's and children's ministries, which include literacy programs, vocational training, health awareness, and child sponsorship. She also travels around the world to speak at churches, conferences, and events about the work of Empart and the needs of the unreached people groups.

Jenny Chacko has a background in nursing and midwifery, and has worked in various hospitals in India and Australia.

"Empart is now an international organisation which exists to empower and partner with communities through various social development programs. We equip local leaders, empower women, nurture children, restore health, improve livelihoods, and respond to emergencies. Through our unique programs, our teams in the field provide vocational skills training, relief and development, hygiene education and medical care."

Some of the ministries that Empart has established:

- Empowering Women
- Mental Health
- Rising above Disability
- Maternal & Child Health
- Wells and Clean Water
- Nursing College
- Schools

Teachers College



Empart is one of our current Mission Partners. Please support them in regular prayer and giving, that they may be effective agents and ambassadors of Christ's transformational love and care.

Your gift brings hope and change to communities!

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