

Psalms 18-07-05

This is Thursday, the 5th of July, 2018. We continue our study in the Book of Psalms. We're going to be taking a look at the opening portion of Psalm 9 tonight.

Let's take a moment as we begin, as is our custom, to ask God's blessing on our study, on our fellowship, bless our memory, so that we can hopefully retain and put into practice the things that we learn. This is evermore my prayer as the years roll by, is that my mind doesn't leave me. And we want these things to count, that our time is well spent, that it's invested in something that serves us now and in the ages to come.

So this is something God can do for us in His divine power and grace. Shall we pray? Father, it's such a wonderful thing for us to set aside time for the sole purpose of marinating our souls in the truth of Your Word, coming to understand more fully who we are in the Lord Jesus Christ and the wonderful privileges and blessings, opportunities, and resources that You have granted to us through Him. We thank You for Him and for His love expressed toward us in sacrificing Himself on our behalf, in Your raising Him from the dead and declaring Him to be Your Son.

You have made it possible for us to share not only in His righteousness, but also in His life. And we know that this is a time of preparation, a time of learning, a time of developing our true abhorrence of sin and our desire to be pleasing in Your sight. And we pray that as we spend this time in Your presence this evening, that Your Holy Spirit will be our teacher, that we will have the opportunity to learn and grow and be effective as those who shine Your light, both toward each other and toward the world outside.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. Well, I thought what might be a good thing to do tonight is to quickly review the first eight Psalms that we've covered. I suspect if I said, you know, a few weeks ago we covered Psalm 2, what is the big idea of Psalm 2? You'd quickly have to flip back and say, well, I hope I wrote a note out in the margin.

Our Psalm 6, what's the big idea in Psalm 6? So I have saved the review for now because I thought eight is a good number. You know, eight in Hebrew is the number of rebirth. The young child, young boy that's born in Israel was circumcised on the eighth day and entered into the community on that day.

The cleansed leper was entered back into the fellowship of the community on the eighth day. And so eight, having covered them, this is a good time to review and to perhaps refresh our memory on those things. The thing I'm gonna do here is hand this to Matthew and let them know what I need.

So Psalm 1, let's just go back to the beginning. Psalm 1, you figure, well, this is the introduction to the entire book of Psalms. There's probably going to be something very useful there for us.

And sure enough, there was. So if you flip back to Psalm 1, it does not have a superscription.

The first two Psalms don't have a superscription.

And it suggests to us that these were consciously placed at the beginning of the Psalter and that they have something important to say. And if you remember, or if you took good notes and are looking back at them, or if your memory is phenomenally better than mine, you'll note that Psalm 1 essentially talks about delight in the law of the Lord, right? The man that doesn't do these three bad things, his delight is in the law of the Lord. Well, if you think back to the Old Testament, the structure of the Old Testament, how many parts does it comprise? How many parts are there in the Old Testament? If you want to talk about Tanakh, that's a hint.

Because Tanakh is the sort of made up word. It's almost an acronym for the three parts of the Old Testament. The T stands for Torah, right? And what is Torah? Another way of asking the question is, what is the delight of the righteous man in? The law, the Torah, the first five books, right? So there's the law.

Then the N is Nevi'im, which is the Hebrew word for prophet. So you have the law. Remember what Jesus said when the guy said, you know, which are the best commandments? And Jesus said, love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength.

Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets are summed up in these, right? So that's the first two parts, the law and the prophets. And then of course you have the writings, and the writings include the book of Psalms.

So it is fitting, and it's a helpful memory aid when you're thinking back and you say, all right, I know we studied those Psalms. I just want a quick memory aid. What are they about? Well, what is the structure of the Old Testament? You start with the law and the prophets.

Psalm one talks about the law of God. And of course, Torah is the law proper, but of course God's law is really his commandments, right? So Psalm one, his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in that law doth he meditate day and night.

Tree planted by the rivers of water brings forth this fruit in his season. Leaf doesn't wither, what he does prospers. The ungodly are not so, right? Like the chaff.

There's a really beautiful picture, by the way, of chaff. I was reading, you know, you can get to Ebersheim and some other insights into daily life in ancient times, the ancient Near East. And the winnowing process would often take place in the evenings, because in that part of the world, as the sun goes down, there is a, I don't know, it's an inversion or a temperature change of some kind, and the breeze comes in off of the Mediterranean, off of the water, and you have this steady breeze.

Well, that's what you need when you want to winnow, because you want to bust up the grain, you know, trample it, the ox that treads it out, the millstone that treads it out, or sometimes they would just beat it with a stick if it was a small amount, and crack the husks. Then you take a winnowing shovel, which is kind of like a snow shovel we have today, big, wide, flat shovel,

right? You take that mashed grain and just throw it up in the air. Well, what's going to happen? The heaviest part is the good grain.

It's going to fall back down. The chaff is going to blow away in the wind. If you have a great amount and you are separating it, and maybe there's not a very strong breeze, pretty soon you've got a pile of grain in one place and you've got a larger, more dispersed pile of chaff in the other, and with a lot of grain, they would go ahead and burn that chaff so that it didn't just go, you know, in the house and make your wife unhappy.

So, sometimes they would burn the chaff, like John the Baptist talks about, he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire, and other times they would just let the wind blow it away. So, that is the idea here. And in Psalm 1, we begin with the law.

And so, if you were going to sum up the theme of Psalm 1, proper attitude toward the commands of God. The law is God's commands, right? These are his exhortations for obedience. This is what we're supposed to do and to refrain from doing, the shouts and the shout nots.

So, proper attitude toward the commands of God, and by definition, this is rejection of alternatives, the standards of man. I'm not gonna walk in the counsel of the ungodly, I'm not gonna stand in the way of sinners, I'm not gonna sit in the seat of the scornful. Instead, I'm gonna take delight in the law of the Lord, I'm gonna think about that.

That's gonna be the standard that I imbibe, that I internalize, that's gonna be my basis of thinking. It's a choice, what are you gonna choose? You're gonna choose the way of the world, the way of the common. There's a lot more chaff than there is good grain, so if you wanna choose the way of the chaff, you can.

But Psalm 1 is an encouragement to have a proper attitude toward God's standards. The do's and the don'ts. And adopting God's standards and rejecting the world's standards leads to a blessed and fruitful life, and you will be able to stand unashamed at the judgment.

It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgment. Like it or not, there is no place under the bleachers you can hide when it comes time for the judgment. God is going to judge, remember it used to say the quick and the dead? The quick, it's like the quick in your finger.

That's how I learned that quick used to mean what's alive. And the old King James, remember, said, for the word of God is quick and powerful? And when I was a little kid, I thought, boy, you know, the word of God is quick, but it means alive, and the more modern translations say alive and powerful. God is ready to judge the quick and the dead, the alive and the dead.

When the Lord Jesus comes back, there will be a judgment. It is coming, just be ready. So if you wanna stand in the judgment, Psalm 1 says, you've got to be immersed in and be familiar with and be living your life according to God's standard.

You got nothing to fear in the judgment. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind blows away. People like to say, I saw something really awe-inspiring and it just blew me away.

I'm blown away. You don't wanna be blown away. Blown away is a bad thing, okay? So that's Psalm 1, it's the law.

So if you want a quick, short note in your margin, attitude to the law, fruitfulness and blessing. Proper attitude toward God's law results in fruitfulness and blessing. Tree planted by the rivers of water.

And you remember, see if this jogs your memory, Annie. Remember when we were talking about the plea, the plea granted by the rivers of water? Remember that? Do you remember what the verb planted actually meant? He shall be like a tree transplanted. And the word is not the usual word for river, it is the word for cut.

Now you think about this. We drive to our alternate church location in Owasso and we go by and there's a beautiful orchard where all of the trees are in regular rows and they have a specific way of irrigating them and cultivating them and trimming around them so that their maximum fruitfulness potential is maintained. And it's fun to look over there, but you can tell right away that that's not a natural grove of trees.

That is a cultivated plot. The man who delights in the law of God, the person who thinks about it day and night will be like a tree that's been transplanted out of the wild next to a constant and well-maintained source of water. It's not a river, it's a cut.

He's like a tree transplanted next to an irrigation channel. Now, if somebody's taking all the trouble to transplant that tree and ensure that it's always got good fresh water, that's a tree that's being looked after, right? It's being cared for. It's like the cultivated vineyard you have in other passages of scripture.

But the man who loves God's law and immerses himself in it, the person who recognizes it's important and wants to have a fruitful and blessed life, God transplants them and ensures that they are next to a reliable and constant source of water that doesn't depend on the vagaries of nature. That's a constant supply. And he'll bring forth his fruit in his season.

Different trees, different season, different fruit. It's his fruit. It's unique to that person.

So Psalm 1 is great, but it all hinges on, are you appreciative of and committed to God's law? Psalm 2. Psalm 2. Why do the heathens rage and the nations imagine a vain thing? You remember that? The kings of the world set themselves up and they laugh and mock and say, let's break these bonds and cast their cords asunder. And you see that in our society today. Oh, this Christianity is a bad thing.

Look at all the terrible harm it's caused. Best thing we could do is expunge religion from off the

planet. Get rid of Christ, get rid of crosses, get rid of Christians, especially Christians.

And I'll throw all the other religions in. Let's just get rid of it all. That's the problem right there.

Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us. Of course, this goes back to the original sin, the original fall of Satan. Satan doesn't like God's way, doesn't like God's law, doesn't want to be submissive to it.

I've got a better idea, or my idea is at least equally as good, and it doesn't involve me having to pay attention to God. I will be, remember the five I wills? I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the most high.

I can run a scenario that doesn't involve God and it'll work out just as well. Well, Psalm 1, what did we say the big idea was if you sum it up in one word? The law, right? It's what do you think about the law? The ungodly disregard God's law and they're gonna be chaff blown away. The godly who meditate on it are gonna be fruitful and productive and blessed and have a future.

Stand in the judgment, unashamed, got something to show, be ready to move forward into the next phase. You've got training and experience and when the Lord Jesus comes back and starts doing things, you'll recognize him and you'll recognize what he's doing. It makes me so sad to think about how many Christians when the Lord Jesus returns, if you're anywhere in the group of the cloud that comes back with him and the blood at Armageddon runs as high as the horse's bridles and people that say they're shocked because our border control people are trying to keep illegal aliens from coming in and they lock a guy up but they don't wanna lock up his kids.

Well, if you don't lock up his kids with him, you've separated the kids and so then there's this big hue and cry, oh, the children and this sort of namby-pamby emotionalism without regard for practicalities, they're not down there slapping the little kids around and throwing them into the Brazos or the Rio Grande or something and saying, go swim home, kid, we're locking up your parents. There's not cruel people doing this but this is a policy that's been in place a long time and I think the hue and cry is, the only reason I bring it up, I don't really like to talk about politics but it is a failure to A, be informed and B, to think rationally instead of emotionally, oh, the children. You know, why do you have all these puppy commercials and all of these little dogs shivering? You know, why don't you put your camera down and get that dog out of the cage and wrap it in a blanket and do something for it and oh, you know, we want it to look pathetic and you know, can you, here, bang on the cage and make it shiver so it'll look more pathetic and then we'll get more money and most of the money doesn't go to the pets anyway, it goes to those TV ads.

You know how much that TV time costs? I don't wanna be giving all my money to somebody who's, if I wanna contribute, I'll go to the animal shelter where the money is gonna do something for the animals, not pay for TV time and pay the salaries of people who are sitting around and yes, in the course of it, there are certainly animals that are helped but you know, 83

cents out of every dollar is going to overhead and infrastructure and advertising and 17 cents out of a buck is gonna help some poor dog and believe me, we get our dogs from the shelter, I'm all in favor of helping animals but not that way. It's a typical human solution where it is almost entirely ineffectual and self-serving and freighted down with inefficiency, not so God. So our word for Psalm 1 is law.

What would you imagine Psalm 2 would be? Just guessing, talking about the structure of the Old Testament, if Psalm 1 is the law, what would Psalm 2 probably be? The prophets, the law, the prophets, Psalms itself is the writings. So stay with me now, wake up, feel free to participate, law, prophets, law, prophets, Psalm 1, Psalm 2 and what do you find? Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing? Kings of the earth, let's break their bonds asunder, let's, we have a better way, we'll do it without God. He who sits in the heavens will laugh, the Lord will hold them in derision, he'll speak to them in his wrath and distress them in his displeasure.

I have my king on Zion, my holy hill. You can acknowledge divine authority, you can recognize that God has a plan and purpose and you can get with that program and you can be a part of it and be blessed by it and be a useful and contributing member of it or it can roll right over you. Do you wanna be in the car or do you wanna be under the car as it rolls down the street? I don't know about you, but given a choice, the car is there, the car is not gonna change, God made the car, God fueled the car, God started the car, God's put the car in gear, I can either ride or I can get run over.

The Lord Jesus Christ is either the rock on which we throw ourselves and we are broken, we recognize our insufficiency or he is the rock that falls on us and crushes us to powder and you don't get a third choice. I just wanna opt out. No, there's only one or the other.

Law and the prophets, the heathens, the nations, the ungodly are raging against this and God just chuckles. Do you really think you're gonna escape the inevitable here? I will declare the decree. The Lord said to me, you are my son, today I begotten you, ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.

You will break them with a rod like pottery. Therefore, be wise, O kings, recognize reality and make a good decision that is a win-win. God is pleased, you are blessed, how is this a bad thing? Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice eternally.

But what is the message of the prophets? Psalm one, how do you respond to God's authority expressed in his commands? Psalm two, how do you express, how do you feel, how do you respond to God's authority expressed in his son? Prophecy is all about the Messiah. It's all about the coming king. It's about the suffering servant.

It's about the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. It is about God's salvation through the Lord Jesus. The law, God is a righteous God.

There is sin, righteousness and judgment. This is the scenario. But into that where we would be hopelessly judged because we can't meet a righteous standard when we ourselves are inherently not righteous.

Prophecy says God has made a way. All of those sacrifices, picture God's gracious gift of his own son who is going to solve that problem. Why so much blood? Why so much bloodshed? Why so much carnage? How else are we gonna recognize the seriousness of sin? Oh, I see this.

I saw it just this past week. Somebody saying, you know, if God's an omnipotent God, if he's got the power to do anything and he thinks we've sinned, why doesn't he just say, I forgive you? If he was really loving and gracious, he would just forgive us. He doesn't have to hang his son on a cross.

He doesn't have to slay tens of millions of animals over the course of centuries. He could just say, eh, you're forgiven. If God just waved his hand and said, hey, no big deal, how serious would we realize sin actually is? This is like saying, oh, got a cancerous tumor? No problem.

Don't worry about it. It's not hurting, is it? Well, no sweat, no problem. The only way to get across to us how serious, how metastasizing, how destructive sin is, look at with all of God's blood and carnage and judgment and all of the other communication to us about the seriousness of sin, and sin goes on anyway, how vicious it is, how much suffering it causes, how much carnage the human race reeks on itself and everything around it.

I've told you before how comical I think it is that people wanna leave the planet and go colonize the rest of the solar system and you'd go to some nearby galaxy and colonize that, and I think, we're like termites. We destroy this planet, now we wanna go destroy everything else. You know, a really smart alien intelligence would say, you know, that right there, that needs to be wiped out before it spreads.

That's a metastasizing cancer right there. They wanna go, you know, mess up everything else. There's a reason.

God doesn't, you know, inately delight in suffering or in blood or in carnage, but how else are you gonna communicate how serious sin is and how inevitably disconnection from God leads to death? God is the source of life. If you unplug your computer, how long is it gonna keep running? Barring a laptop and most of my laptops, battery life's about, you know, three and a half minutes. You've got just about enough time to run to the next plug and plug it back in, but your PC that doesn't have a battery, how long is it gonna last if you unplug it from the source of its power? Well, we are created with God's life.

He breathed into us the breath of life and if you disconnect from that, how long can you live? Oh, I think I can be fine. God has given us an illustration. That's the prophets and it is the sun.

The sun is coming. It says, kiss the sun, and we talked about that textual problem, but the big idea there is prophecy says, yes, by the law comes the knowledge of sin and we commit

ourselves to trying to keep God's law and try to attain God's righteousness and to eschew and distance ourselves from alternatives that are hopeless and short-sighted and inevitably lead to death. Prophecy in Psalm 2 says, God has made a way and it's coming.

So we adjust and we recognize and we submit ourselves under God's mighty hand in Psalm 1 and we look with hope to his salvation in Psalm 2, the law and the prophets. Okay, Psalm 3. Remember, this is the first one with a superscription, with a title. A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom, his son.

What's handy is these first eight Psalms kind of fall naturally into pairs. So Psalm 1 and 2 are law and prophets. That really makes sense.

If you remember Psalm 3, we said this is a morning Psalm, not M-O-U-R, but M-O-R as in, I got up this morning and had coffee. It's a morning, it's something when you wake up. How do we know this? Well, because David wakes up and he looks around and all of us have done this.

I did it every day of my career as a plebe, I think. You wake up and at first you're just kind of in a fog and a haze and maybe you had a good night's sleep and everything's fine. And then memory comes in and you realize, oh yes, the giants that face me today, all of the challenges and the troubles and the problems and it's all coming back to me now.

And your anticipation dwindles and is crushed under the weight of challenge. That's how David begins this thing. He wakes up in the morning and he remembers my son.

My son that is most like me, the son that I thought would be my successor in error has lifted up his heel against me. He's in rebellion, he's run me out of the capital city. He is everything that I didn't want him to be and he's nothing that I wanted him to be.

Lord, how they have increased to trouble me. Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say there's no help for him in God.

And then Selah. And by the way, this Psalm and the next Psalm both introduced the concept of Selah. Psalm three and Psalm four, you'd expect if one and two are a pair, three and four are gonna be a pair.

Well, this is one of the things. We have Selah punctuating both of the next two Psalms. You, oh Lord, are a shield for me, my glory, the one who lifts up my head.

I cry to the Lord with my voice. He heard me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept last night.

I awoke for the Lord sustained me. The reason I'm awake right now, God still has a plan for my life. There is still potential.

If God thought it was hopeless, I wouldn't have awakened this morning. But he gave me life and he gave me breath. We've talked about this.

Every morning, isn't it kind of like a resurrection? You go to sleep at night and it's like death and death is like sleep. The New Testament uses sleep for death over and over again. What happened to Stephen after he looked up and saw the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God? What's the very last thing in Acts seven? He fell asleep.

God will raise those who sleep in Jesus, right? Sleep. Well, sleep and death are closely related and it's an interesting thought that when you lose consciousness at night, you've basically died. And when you arise to new consciousness in the morning, you've basically been resurrected.

You know, a lot of people, God blesses them and they check out in their sleep. And the next time they open their eyes, they're gonna be expecting it to be the next day and it's gonna be a whole new day. Didn't see that coming when I said, now I lay me down to sleep, pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. So Psalm three, it's a morning Psalm. He says, I laid down and slept last night in verse five.

I awoke this morning, the Lord sustains me. I will not be afraid of 10,000s of people. He started out and the first conscious thought is, oh, the array of enemies against me is overwhelming.

Says, I don't have to be afraid of that. These who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, oh Lord.

I woke up this morning and arose, but the Lord can arise even better and higher and greater and more powerful. Arise, oh Lord, save me, my God. You have struck my enemies on the cheekbone.

You've broken the teeth of the ungodly. Deliverance, salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon your people.

And this is what gets David literally out of bed in the morning. He says, somebody was listing the symptoms of depression, clinical depression and deep depression. And one of the things is people don't wanna get up.

They'll lay in bed and just roll over. They just wanna disappear from life. They just wanna sleep.

I don't wanna face the day. But David says, the Lord is gonna arise. The Lord is gonna handle these enemies and I'm gonna move in his wake.

I'm gonna follow the path that he clears for me through these 10,000. So that's a morning psalm. So what is our thought here for psalm three? It's a morning hymn facing a day of challenge.

You anticipate this is gonna be a tough one. Challenge and opposition. We look to God for help and for vindication.

All of these things that have risen up against me, it's kind of like in psalm two, you're crying out against the Lord and his anointed, but I've got promises from God. You're my son. This day I've begotten you.

Ask of me and I will give. And so this is already in David's mind in psalm two. Now in psalm three, he rises up, faces this sea of challenges.

And he says, well, God, I've got those promises. I'm his son. He says, he's begotten me.

He says, ask and he'll give. And so I say, arise, oh Lord, give me some momentum against all of this challenge. And he says, your blessing is upon your people.

So it's a morning hymn facing the day, challenge and opposition. We look to God for help and vindication. Now there's a lot of points of connection here between psalm three and psalm four, the next one.

I mentioned the Selahs already. Psalm four, as you might expect, if you've got the law and the prophets, and then you've got a morning hymn, what would you guess psalm four is gonna be? An evening hymn, right? Morning hymn, evening hymn. Stay with me now.

Don't wanna have you fall off the bus here. Evening hymn. What does he say? Hear me when I call, oh God of my righteousness.

You have relieved me in my distress. This is in the past. Have mercy on me now and hear my prayer.

You have been my refuge. Remember the hymn, oh God, our help in ages past? Our hope for years to come, right? You think back and all of us, I think, have a memory of wonderful sustaining grace and deliverances that God has put into our life. And as we face a new challenge, we say, you know, the Lord has never suffered the righteous to be moved, never seen the righteous go hungry or his seed begging bread.

I look back and just when I thought it was hopeless, God made a way. And so, Lord, I ask you to do that again. I'm facing a big challenge here.

So then he turns in Psalm 40 and says, how long, oh you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood? And this sons of men here is a term in Hebrew that means it's like the gibbereem, it's the brave ones. The sons of men, the word for man there is man in his nobility and in his strength and in his courage. It's courageous men.

And you almost get the idea, and I did not mention this when we covered Psalm four, but in looking back through it and reviewing it for this class, it almost, one possibility is that in the days of retreat from Absalom, some of the people who are with David and went with David and are staying with David, they are getting discouraged and saying, you know, we could probably

use some humanly engineered coup to regain the throne. We could deliver ourselves. We could recruit some allies from outside the country.

We could go back and wage war on Absalom. We could, you know, and with these false solutions and sham hopes, you can translate the second phrase there, how long will you love a sham and seek something that is deceptive? It looks like it would work, but it won't. You're being deceived by what you're looking at.

And what you think is strength is just a hollow shell. And these could, it intrigues me that it says, you sons of courage, you sons of brave men, you're supposed to be good guys. Why are you turning to what is deceitful? Why are you turning to what is a sham? Why would you take my opportunity to exercise faith and make it shameful? Well, you can't just sit there and trust in God.

We need to do something. Here are some human alternatives. And another reason I think that is, he says, you should know that the Lord has set apart for himself the one who is godly.

And the Lord will hear when I call to him. You need to trust. You need to understand that you don't have to turn to these alternatives.

Then when he says, be angry and do not sin, this is actually sort of read back into this text from the quote that Paul uses, I think in Ephesians. It might be 426 if my memory serves. But Paul quotes this in Ephesians.

And he says, be angry and sin not, do not let the sun go down on your wrath. And he's quoting this. But the Hebrew word here actually means to be in awe of a thing, to tremble with respect.

And to tremble at the magnitude of something. And it's not that distant from what Paul says when he says, you can be outraged at a thing. You can be trembling at its hubris, at its irreverence, at its arrogance in doing a thing.

But don't sin, don't add sin to sin. And so the Greek text there, and Paul just uses it, the Septuagint text, translate this, be angry. But a better translation of the Hebrew here is tremble.

Tremble with awe, tremble with respect. And when David says, you should know that the Lord has set apart for himself the godly man, the Psalm 1 man, and the Lord will hear when I call on him. So you should tremble and not sin.

Meditate within your heart on your bed and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Why would David tell enemies to offer sacrifices of righteousness? I think he's encouraging people who are starting to fade and starting to wilt and starting to say, we need to use a human solution here.

And David says, no, you need to be awestruck in God's presence and recognize how powerful he is. Offer the sacrifice of praise. Be still on your bed.

He just gave the morning prayer, and this is his nighttime prayer. He says, meditate within your heart on your bed and be still because that's what he's doing. And then he says, Selah.

And so you've got the same Selah break that we had in Psalm 3. Many say, who will show us any good? These that have fled with David. I think Psalm 3 and Psalm 4 were written around the same time. And it's still the Absalom scenario.

And they're out there and how the mighty have fallen and oh look, you were doing well and this thing got away from you. Now Absalom's sitting on your throne and parading your concubines up on the palace roof and you're out here in the weeds. And many say, how is any good gonna come of this? If God wanted to do good, he'd have left you in Jerusalem.

He would have left you in charge. He would have squashed this rebellion. But this God that you're trusting in, the God that you're encouraging us to trust, he lets you get run out of town.

So show me where the good is in that. David says, Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us. These guys I'm encouraging.

Vindicate my prayer. Vindicate my exhortation to them that they need to trust you. They need to be in awe of you.

They need to wait for you and understand that you've got a purpose. You have put gladness in my heart more than in the season that grain and wine increased. I am glad for God's presence.

I'm glad for God's help. I'm glad for God's promises and God's watch care even more than when I had everything in Jerusalem. I'm back.

It reminds me of the days in Adullam. It reminds me of the days when I was fleeing from Saul. It reminds me of the days when I really had to trust.

I saw a survey earlier today talking about the happiness of people and why there is so much suicide and depression. This was all kind of in the same realm, talking about depression and people wanting to sleep all the time. But they were doing a survey.

And so they went to countries where people are poor. And there was also kind of an informal talking with people. And so the guy was talking to someone who only made a very little bit of money and a guy who had to work 24 hour shifts every other day to support his family.

And they were in great hardship and didn't have much. But they asked him, they said, are you depressed? And they said, what do you mean depressed? And he said, well, you know, do you feel like it's not worth it to live and you want to end it all? And they looked at him so incredulous and they said, no, you know, I'm glad I can work. I'm glad I have a family.

And the only thing they said is, if you're going back to America, take me with you. But they weren't, the level of depression and suicidal thoughts often happens more in prosperity. You know, it's the Richard Corey thing.

If you've ever heard that poem or song, you know, where people reach the upper limits of success and attainment and affluence, and it's empty. And they say, well, you know, there can't be anything else than this. I've exhausted all the possibilities.

What's the point? And they, you know, end themselves. But people down grinding through the difficulties, they're like, you know, your survival instincts kick in. And you're like, you know, I'm going to make this work.

I've got a, you know, I've got responsibilities. I've got people depending on me. And look, you know, could be worse.

I'm alive. I've got some of my health I can do. And these suicides are very, very rare among those that are really in grinding poverty and in extreme difficulty.

Those people are fighting for survival. You know, they're getting with it. It's the lazily affluent who sit around and, you know, convince themselves that life is not worth living and, you know, end it with a bullet or a pill.

So that's Psalm four. You have put gladness in my heart. You have put gladness in.

I didn't have to generate it. I didn't have to buy it. I didn't have to try to attain it.

God gives it as a gift. You're like the tree planted by that reliable source of water. So those are the first four Psalms.

Quickly now, Psalm five is talking about inheritances. Remember we had this, it says with flutes or something in your superscription in the New King James. It says to the chief musician with flutes, a Psalm of David.

Well, nobody knows what the word for flute was, but this isn't it. But the closest we can figure out is that this is about inheritances. It's about, you know, remember the famous play called *Inherit the Wind*? What is the outcome? What's gonna be the long-term fate if you pursue one path or another? And that's what Psalm five is about.

So Psalm one and two, the law and the prophets. Psalm three and four, a morning hymn and an evening hymn. I wake up in the morning.

I look at the challenges. I'm gonna trust God. I come to the evening and I'm exhorting others.

And I say, look at my past life. Look at what God has done this day. You should meditate on that on your bed and you should have the same faith that I have, that he is a God of deliverance and a God who will put gladness in our hearts.

Psalm five and six are going to be a pair. And Psalm five talks about the fate, the outcome, the inheritances of the righteous and of the wicked. And of course, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that the fate of the righteous is gonna be blessing and the fate of the wicked is

gonna be destruction.

But Psalm five takes a turn with that theme. You would say, well, that's fairly obvious. You can't just say, well, the righteous will be blessed and the wicked will be judged.

What does he do with that? What's the application of it? Well, I want to be on the right side of God's judgment. I will commit myself. I will dedicate myself.

So when David says here, give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God. Notice how he is acknowledging Psalm one and Psalm two, God's authority, God's authority reflected in his commands, God's authority reflected in the prophetic future of David's greater son.

To you, I will pray. My voice you shall hear in the morning, O Lord. In the morning, I will direct it to you and I will look up.

For you're not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness. Evil doesn't dwell with you. The boastful will not stand in your sight.

You hate workers of iniquity. You'll destroy those who speak falsehood. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

As for me, I will. Remember Joshua, choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

You choose, I'm telling you what I've chosen. David says the same thing here. As for me, I will come into your house in the multitude of your mercy.

In fear of you, I will worship toward your holy temple. Looking at inheritances, looking at outcomes, I am committing my way to the way of righteousness. I'm making that choice.

I am making that commitment. Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness. Because of my enemies, make your way straight before my face.

There is no faithfulness in their mouth. Their inward part is destruction. Their throat is an open tomb.

They flatter with their tongue. Pronounce them guilty, O God. Let them fall by their own counsels.

Cast them in the multitude of their transgressions, cast them out, for they have rebelled against you. And this is the theme of all of the Bible. Going back to Lucifer in the stones of fire, he rebelled.

Let all those rejoice who put their trust in you. Let them ever shout for joy because you defend them. Let those also who love your name be joyful in you.

For you, O Lord, will bless the righteous. This is faith. This is confidence that God knows what he's doing.

With favor, you will surround him as with a shield. So Psalm 5 is a psalm, if you wanted to sum this up, this is what to be. What do you want to be, given the possible inheritances? There's two different kinds of inheritance.

You want to inherit the wind, you want to be blown away by the chaff, like the chaff, or do you want to be those who God blesses? So what do you want to be? Psalm 5 makes it clear, you want to be the righteous. What's the downside of being the righteous? It's all blessing from God, grace from God, preservation from God, provision from God, joy from God, happiness from God. Well, if Psalm 5 is the blessed inheritance of the righteous and what you should be and what you decide you're going to be, Psalm 6 is how to be that.

This is what I'm going to be in Psalm 5, David says. Psalm 6 is going to say how to be that. And if you remember, Psalm 6, we said this is sort of a penitential, this is a confession Psalm, this is David offloading his own personal failures.

I'm not sufficient in and of myself. I fail, I mess up. I dedicate myself and commit myself to this great standard, but I fall short.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, right? So what do you do? Psalm 6 is the answer. Oh Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, chasing me in your hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, oh Lord, I am weak.

Heal me, my bones are troubled. My soul is troubled, but you, oh Lord. And then he just, how long? Return, oh Lord, deliver me.

Save me for your mercy sake. He doesn't say save me for my wonderful characteristics and my winning personality and my flashy smile. Deliver me for your mercy sake.

In death, there is no remembrance of you. In the grave, who will give you thanks? If you preserve me, I am here to celebrate and to reflect as an example of your mercy and your grace. I'm weary with groaning.

I make my bed swim. I drench my couch with tears. My eye wastes away because of grief, grows old because of all my enemies.

Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. This is genuine acknowledgement of failure. It is genuine recognition of shortcoming.

And we avail ourselves of God's grace that is restorative. It repairs us. It renews us.

It lifts us up, takes us out of the miry clay. It puts our feet back on the solid ground. It is often our fault that we fail, but God is gracious.

And David says, the Lord has heard my supplication. He'll receive my prayer. Let my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled.

Let them turn back and be ashamed. Suddenly, David has been ashamed, but David has done something about that. He's taken it to God whose grace can compensate and restore and renew.

You can be ashamed and the shame does nothing. Just like you can wish to be thin or you can wish to be strong or you can wish to be popular or you can wish to be a great person in some field. You can wish to be skillful.

You can wish to be knowledgeable. You can wish to be successful, but wishing doesn't do anything. Well, just being sorry that you messed up doesn't do anything.

It takes God's action. It takes God's grace to fix that, to patch it, to take away its sting and its effect and only God can do it. Well, those are the first six Psalms and hopefully we've had a little bit of a reminder and renewal here.

Seven and eight are gonna be another pair. We had the law and the prophets. We had morning and evening, looking at challenges.

We've had what I wanna be and how I am going to be that. I don't have it in my own strength. I have to cast myself on God's mercy and let him give me strength.

Let him renew me and cleanse me. That puts me in a position to be righteous. I have to have his righteousness.

I can't generate my own. So now seven and eight, we expect are gonna be another pair and sure enough, they are. So Psalm seven, and you remember, this is the one where you've got Cush, the son of Benjamin and we know that this is Saul.

Earlier on, you had Absalom and this is my familiar friend. My son has lifted up his heel against me. There's somebody in my own house and that hurts a lot.

Here, this is the king. The duly anointed king of Israel is out to get him, but he doesn't want to disrespect him directly so he alludes to him indirectly and almost covertly here. Concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite.

Oh Lord, my God, in you I put my trust. Save me from those who persecute me and deliver me, lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces while there is none to deliver. And for us, in terms of application, the so what question being answered here on this Psalm, we don't necessarily have a King Saul pursuing us, right? Who gave Saul his kingly authority? How did Saul become king? Who said, go make that guy king? God did.

God told Samuel, anoint the guy. God chose Saul. That's the title of, who's it's his translation? Not Robert Alter, but yeah, Everett Fox.

When he translates Kings and Chronicles, the title of the book is, give us a king. The people said, give us a king. God said, okay, here's your king.

And he gives him Saul. He's God appointed. When man fell in the garden and went out and you've got Cain and you've got, you know, the guy that says if Cain was avenged sevenfold, I'll be 70, you know, Ada and Zilla is two wives and he sings a little song.

When the human race says, we think we can make it without God, God says, okay, I'll give you a king. Who's the God of this world? You can answer out loud. The God of this world is blind to the minds of them that believe not.

Who is that? It's Satan. Who made Satan God of the world? Did Satan make himself God of this world? Did Saul grab a horn of oil and pour it on his own head? Who made Satan king of the world? God did. Think about that.

God made Satan the God of this world. He gave him the authority, but who is anointed to be the king of this world ultimately? What does Mashiach mean? What does Messiah mean? The anointed one. So just like Saul is what the people, it's the people's choice, but he's not really God's choice, but God says, let me show you what's gonna happen if you get what you want.

Let me show you how your thing turns out. This is the answer. Everybody says, oh, if there's a God and he's powerful enough to stop suffering and sin and carnage and death and all that, then he's a mean, petty God because he won't do it.

If you tell your child, don't touch that stove, it's hot, and they look at you and they reach their finger out and they're reaching and reaching and reaching, you have two choices. You can just shout or you can go snatch them up and take them away and say, I'm telling you that thing is hot. If you don't let your child touch a hot stove at least once, they're never gonna understand what hot is.

And so they're going like this and they say, I think I've got a better idea than you. Fine, touch the stove, see what it gets you. I don't want you to die, but I want you to learn a lesson.

God doesn't want us to die. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all come to repentance, right? It's not the will of God that any should perish, but if you really want that and that's what you choose, God's a gentleman and says, fine, that's what you want. There you go.

And here's the result. So you have Saul in Israel as the first king. I used to ask myself, if God knew that David was a man after his own heart, why did he ever let Samuel anoint Saul? Why did he tell him to anoint Saul? Let me show you what a bad king looks like before I give you a good king.

Let me show you the God of this world before I show you the Lord of all creation and give you a frame of reference, give you a way to tell. Well, that's what these Psalms are about. So save me from those who persecute me, lest they tear me like a lion.

What does Peter say? Satan goes about, well, the Lord Jesus says to Peter, a roaring lion seeking whom he may desire and Satan desires to sift you like wheat, right? We have all of these descriptions of Satan to rend us in pieces and there's none to deliver. Oh Lord, my God, if I am truly guilty, if I deserve this, if there's iniquity on my hands, if I've repaid evil to him who was at peace with me, ever plundered without a cause, then I deserve judgment. But I'm a Psalm 1 guy.

I don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly. I don't stand in the way of sinners. I don't sit in the seat of the scornful.

By the way, I can't remember if I mentioned this in Psalm 1 or not, but blessed is the man that walketh not, nor standeth, nor sitteth. Those are all perfect in Hebrew. It's not so much a tense, but it's a perfect form and it speaks of kind of a completed action.

This is something you've not done and it stands in that sense. But when it says his delight is in the law and in the law he meditates, that's an imperfect. It means it has a continuous idea.

You have not walked or stood or sat in the way of the ungodly, but your continuous thing, what you do as a practice is to delight yourself in the law of the Lord and think about it day and night. And the same thing here. If I have regarded iniquity in my heart, if I've chosen it, if I've rebelled, if I've been unfaithful and I went my own way, I deserve judgment and you can lay my honor in the dust.

But arise, O Lord, in your anger. Lift yourself up because of the rage of my enemies. Rise up for me to the judgment you have commanded.

That way the congregation of the peoples will surround you for their sakes. Return on high, the Lord will judge the peoples. Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness.

Now, how can he claim righteousness? Because of Psalm 6, because of the previous Psalm. He was penitent. He acknowledged his weakness to God and threw himself on God's mercy and asked for God's strength and God's forgiveness and God's cleansing.

Of course, you get that in Psalm 51 in his fullest expression. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

So he can say here, the Lord will judge me according to my righteousness and according to my integrity within me because it comes from God. I didn't generate it, I didn't manufacture it, I didn't make it up, I didn't declare it to myself that I'm right, it's not my truth and you have a different truth. This is God's truth and God's righteousness.

It's absolute, God recognizes it and David can bring the righteousness that God gave him before God's presence and say, I have embraced what you gave me, therefore, vindicate me, deliver me and silence my enemies. Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end and establish the just for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds. My defense is from God

who saves the upright in heart.

That was Psalm 7. We saw Psalm 8 last time. The interesting feature being dominion. Dominion, you've set your glory above the heavens and you have allowed babes and suckling infants to declare that glory and to bring about strongholds of strength just with speech alone.

Out of their mouths, you've ordained strength. You think the mouths of babes and suckling infants that it's all intake, but David says, out of those mouths, the most unlikely source you could imagine, you'd think, well, they need to be taking in the sincere milk or whatever, but he says, out of their mouths, you've ordained strength, strongholds to silence the enemy and the avenger. And believe me, the enemy did not see it coming.

It's the strategy of the indirect approach. One of my favorite books on strategy. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you ordained, second use of ordaining there, what is man that you were mindful of him or the son of man that you visited him? You made him a little lower than Elohim, little less than God, crowned him with glory and honor.

You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands. You put all under his feet, sheep and oxen, beasts of the field. And I was thinking about this idea of dominance and dominion and authority over.

Oxen, when you have herds of cattle, flocks of goats and sheep and so on, we have pretty much complete control. We can fence them in, we can corral them, we can put a ring in a bull's nose and lead him wherever we wanna go. You got pretty well complete control over oxen.

It's not like, well, you know, my brother's house was run over and destroyed by a wild herd of oxen yesterday. We typically have them under complete control. But then you say the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.

In what sense do we have dominion over those? Largely, we let them go their own way, but you can select, in a sense, a group of fish and net them. You can hook one fish and you've got complete control over that fish, usually, if he doesn't flip and get away. But there are maybe lots of doves, lots of game birds, pheasants or quail or whatever, but you exert dominion over certain ones and bring them in for food or domesticate them or use pigeons for message sending or whatever.

In some cases, the domain of control is almost complete. In others, we selectively exert control. And this is really what God does.

God has complete control over those who are faithful and are seeking to please him and serve him, who love him and do the Psalm 1, Psalm 2 thing, right? But then there's the rest of the world and God largely lets them, he's got just as much control and authority and omnipotence over them as he does us, but he doesn't exercise it. Only a few, like Pharaoh. Pharaoh, I raised you up just like I would hook one fish or shoot one bird or domesticate one pigeon because I

had a special purpose in you.

You can have control of a thing selectively or opportunistically, but you don't have a need to exercise it and so you don't. Other things like your oxen and your sheep and your goats, you put a shepherd out there and for reasons of protection, for reasons of accountability, you have a different kind of authority, but both are potentially in the hands of the one with the authority. So you've made him have dominion over the works of your hands.

You put all things under his feet, sheep and oxen, that's your largely dominant control over nearly all of them and even the beasts of the field, but then the birds of the air and the fish of the sea and those things that pass through the path of the seas, when would you have dominion over those? Well, you would have to go target a specific one. There's one shark that's coming in causing trouble, so we're gonna go harpoon one denizen of the deep. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name, the knowledge of you, the reputation of what you are and what you've done in the earth.

Well, that brings us to Psalm 9 and I think we'll save it for next time since as I somewhat suspected my review took up the whole time, but I don't want us to lose what we've learned in these first eight Psalms. There's a reason. It's not like the hymnal where, well, we just kind of grouped the songs together and we put the doxology at the beginning because we thought that would be a good way to start.

This is an inspired hymnal and the order of thoughts that it presents is meaningful and purposeful. So you start with God's revelation of himself in the law and the prophets. What's your attitude gonna be toward those? You continue with the daily life that we lead in the light of those things.

What am I gonna think in the morning as I anticipate the day? What am I gonna think in the evening as I review the day? That's important and it's right at the beginning of the Psalms. And then you have five and six. The evening and the morning, that's short-term perspective, right? But what is the long-term perspective? What's the inheritance going to be? What is the long-term outcome of my life? And what do I wanna be? And if I want to be the righteous, how am I going to accomplish that? And so that's your Psalm five and your Psalm six.

And then in Psalm seven and eight, you have what we just covered. And so it's purposeful, it's meaningful, it makes a difference. And we wanna try to retain it and review it.

And if we're going to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night, if we're going to not only reflect on His standards on sin and righteousness and judgment, but also on what we have in Christ, it's the law and the prophets, it's the problem and the solution, it's sin and righteousness, and God's grace versus God's judgment. All of that thematic, powerful material is in these first eight Psalms. And it's a tremendous beginning to this collection of Psalms.

And so we'll try to reflect on that in the days ahead and pick up with Psalm nine next time. Let's

close here in a word of prayer. Father, we do thank you for the privileges we have in the Lord Jesus.

We thank you for the elevated perspective that you give us that takes us beyond the material, beyond the momentary, beyond the ephemeral and the material, and helps us to see that there is a meaning and purpose that you have imbued our lives with and our consciousness with. And you have planted in our consciousness the knowledge of these things and the recognition that they need to be dealt with. We pray that your Holy Spirit will take these truths and illuminate our thoughts, illuminate our circumstances, and show us clearly the opportunities we have to choose as David chose and to avail ourselves of your grace as he did and to become people after your own heart as he was, foreshadowing as he did his greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our ultimate and perfect example.

We pray all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen.