

The Psalms and Gospels “People Speaking to God, God Speaking to People”

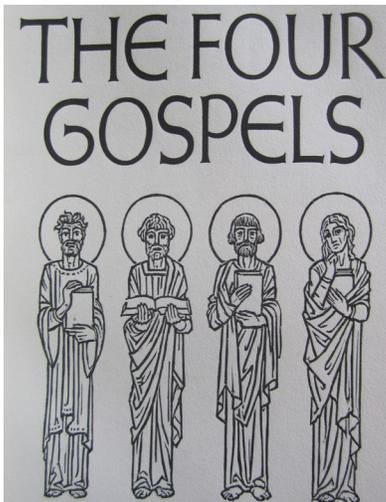
Rev. Lonnie Dufty

Session No. 1, October 2018

Introduction

The intent of this group is to engage in a two way conversation with God and with the other people who attend this group. Our models for speaking to God will be found as we read the Psalms together. Our listening to God will begin as we study the Gospels together. The conversation will continue as class members communicate with God in their private times with him.

The Psalms are the writings of Hebrew believers who lived in ancient Israel and Judah. The earliest one, Psalm 90 is attributed to Moses. The latest one, Psalm 126 was written after the return of the people from exile in Babylon. Many are attributed to King David who was a skilled musician from his youth. The word Psalm is Greek, meaning a “song sung to the accompaniment of a plucked (string) instrument. The Psalms were used for worship in the Jerusalem temple and continue to serve as the foundation of worship in Judaism and Christianity. The Psalms were created by Hebrew speaking people living thousands of years ago. Originally written in pictographs, later Hebrews changed to the Babylonian script we see used today in most of the Old Testament and in modern Israel. Jews in Alexandria also translated the Old Testament into Greek, called the Septuagint (LXX), in general use at the time of Jesus and in the early Church.



The Gospels are the “good news” of Jesus, written accounts of what Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry. Many Gospels were written but only four were attested to by the ancient Church Fathers as being fully trustworthy. Matthew and John are attributed to Apostles chosen by Jesus to be among his inner circle. Mark was attributed to a young assistant to the Apostle Peter. Luke was written by a Greek physician who interviewed many who were with Jesus including his mother Mary. A traveling missionary, Luke also wrote the book of Acts. It is thought that Mark’s short Gospel or perhaps an unknown Aramaic Gospel provided the outline for Matthew and Luke. The book of John was written last, perhaps near the end of the Apostle John’s ministry. John is the most independent and unique Gospel. It has many stories and reflections not found in the other three Gospels. The Gospels were originally written in Koine Greek, the common language during New Testament times. Greek dialects

continue down to our day as the spoken and written language of Greece, Western Cyprus and the Greek Orthodox Church.

Depending upon level of interest of group members we may learn to read some Hebrew and Greek!

Prayer: As did the Psalmists, group members will be provided opportunity to share their life experiences and pray with one another during class time.

Reading and listening to the Scripture: Spiritual growth comes as we take time to speak and listen to God. We will do these things together but all are strongly encouraged to set up their own private time with God outside of the group.

Discussion: The group will discuss the Scripture together. Questions and sharing of knowledge and understanding will be encouraged. Members may divide into twos or threes to discuss the Scripture together as do modern Jewish people studying together at the site of the ancient Jerusalem temple.

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Session No. 2: Psalms 1 & 2, Matthew 1:1-2

Gospel Text: Matthew 1:1

“The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Abraham is called “the father of all believers.” Genesis 15:6 says “Abraham believed God and it was counted as righteousness. God’s salvation plan for the world began with him; he is ancestor of Israel and the Arab peoples. King David of Israel is descended from Abraham and Sarah via their great-grandson Judah. Jesus’ mother Mary and Joseph her husband are descended from King David. For this reason Jesus is called “the son of David” and the “lion of the tribe of Judah.”

The story of Abraham’s life is covered in Genesis 12 through 25:15. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near his home in Mamri, modern Hebron.

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/tomb-of-the-patriarchs-ma-arat-hamachpelah>

Significant events in Abraham’s life:

Abraham gives preference to his nephew Lot in a conflict between their workers.

Abraham rescues Lot and his family after they were taken in war by enemies of Sodom & Gomorrah.

Abraham returns 90% of war spoils to Sodom and Gomorrah, offers 10% to God’s priest Melchizedek.

Abraham’s shame: denied before powerful men that Sarah was his wife, let them take her.

Birth of Ishmael through Hagar and Isaac through Sarah (Muslims say the opposite).

The Lord visits Abraham to confirm birth of Isaac and discuss punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Read and Discuss: God’s Communications with Abraham and Family:

Abraham’s descendants to be a multitude: Genesis 12:1-5; 13:14-18; 15:18; 17:1-8

Sarah blessed with birth of Isaac: Genesis 17:15-19, 21-22

Hagar & Ishmael’s rejection and blessing: Genesis 16:1-16; 17:20; 21:9-21

Abraham & Isaac tested: Genesis 22:1-18

These Names for the LORD: Genesis 14:18-22; 16:13; 17:1; 22:11-12,15-16

Meditation 1, Psalms 1 & 2: The Lord Cherishes Those Who Walk In His Way

“The LORD cherishes the way of the righteous.” Psalm 1:6

“Happy are all those who take refuge in the LORD.” Psalm 2:11

The writer of Psalms 1 and 2 lived in a world such as ours. In many ways things were worse in his day than in our day. People were probably harsher, less gracious and more dangerous to be around than it is for most 21st century Americans. YET the writer of these Psalms did not despair or grow cynical about life. He saw a great power for good working in the world. That power is the LORD who sits in the heavens and His Christ who would be sent to proclaim a better way.

The Psalmist declared that no plot made against the LORD or His Christ would stand. He saw that God is on the side of the righteous and was in the business of blessing those who take refuge in Him. When we choose to live by faith and obedience to God’s will, we find our spiritual glass is neither half full nor half empty – it is full to overflowing. (Psalm 23:5)

Prayer: “Dear Lord, you know the world is not right. Sometimes my response to what goes on is not right either. I want to be better than the world – I want to live according to your ways. Please forgive me my failures and help me put them behind them and never repeat them again.” Amen.

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Session No. 3: Psalms 3 & 4, Matthew 1:1-2 cont.

The story of Three Women

In Romans Chapter four the Apostle Paul refers to Abraham as the father of all who believe in God through faith. Genetically speaking, Abraham really is a father of multitudes of people who originated in the Middle East; no doubt most of us have inherited something of his genetic makeup. But men don't father children on their own – according to the book of Genesis he fathered children through three women! The love of his life (and also his half-sister) was Sarah through whom as an old man he fathered Isaac. The second woman was Sarah's servant Hagar who through a strange custom of that time was offered to Abraham as a baby maker so Sarah could “claim” that child as her own. The third woman was Keturah of whom little is said about her in the Bible except for the names of her sons.

Read and Discuss

Many people get what they know about the Bible from movies. Good or bad, to make for a good story the movies add to what the Bible tells us. Read the following stories and compare what you saw in a movie. How did these people relate to one another and how did God intervene in their lives?

Sarah: Genesis 12:10-20 & 20:1-18; 16:1-6; 18:1-15; 21:1-10; 22:1-3; 23:1-2 & 25:10

Hagar: Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-21

Keturah: Genesis 25:1-4; 1st Chronicles 1:32-33

Recommended Movie:

Abraham starring Richard Harris & Barbara Hershey. From the Bible Collection.

Meditation 2, Psalms 3 & 4: The Lord has set apart the godly for himself.

"O LORD, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying to me, "There is no help for you in God." Psalm 3:1

"But know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him... I will lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety." Psalm 4:3, 4:8

Opposition is as much a fact of life as is sickness and aging. Sometime the person who opposes us is actually doing what is best for us – might even be God! Other times a bad spirit has taken root in the other person and we can't understand why the person is against us. There are also times when people we depend upon seem unhelpful; their lack of support feels like opposition. How should we respond to those situations? We could redouble our efforts to convince the other person to support our cause. We could become angry or discouraged. Or we could do as the Psalmist did, present our complaint to God and then trust him for whatever happens. Allow God to deliver us to the condition HE thinks we need in order to obtain future success. Then, having giving the matter over to God, we can go to our bed and enjoy peaceful sleep. That is the peace that surpasses all understanding!

Prayer: “Lord, grant me the faith to trust the future to you and in the night, grace to sleep in peace.”

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Session No. 4: Psalms 3 & 4, Matthew 1:1-2 cont.

The story of Isaac & Rebekah: Genesis 24:1-67, 25:20-28, 26:6-11, 27:1-17, 41-46

The second name in Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus is Abraham’s son Isaac. Abraham was determined that Isaac would not marry a Canaanite woman so he sent his most trusted servant back to his homeland in search of a suitable wife. Abraham told his servant the LORD would send an angel ahead of him to help find the right woman. He did not go empty handed – Abraham sent ten camels worth of goods as gifts to the family of the woman who would agree to the marriage! In doing this, Abraham entrusted much wealth into the hands of his servant. He was also trusting in the LORD to lead the servant to the right woman. The woman turned out to be Rebekah, a distant relation of Abraham. Rebekah and her family agreed to the marriage, trusting that all would go well. This kind of arranged marriage still happens in many parts of the world!

Rebekah returned to Canaan with Abraham’s servant. Unusually, Genesis 24:67 tells us Isaac loved Rebekah. They had twin sons; one was named Jacob, the other Esau. Problem As the boys grew older each parent formed an alliance with one of the twins. Isaac preferred Esau and planned to make him his primary inheritor but Rebekah wanted her favorite, Jacob, to become the family head and recipient of God’s blessing. Meanwhile Esau had joked away his right to inheritance to Jacob and also offended Rebekah and Isaac by marrying two Hittite women. Feeling Esau was undeserving of a spiritual blessing from his father; she made a plan to deceive her husband into giving over the family blessing to Isaac. The plan worked. Jacob received the father’s blessing which the LORD had given him. Esau was enraged at what had been done and vowed to kill Jacob. Isaac & Rebekah, fearing Esau would indeed kill Jacob, sent him to live with her family in far off Padan-aram, apparently to never see him again.

Read and Discuss:

The Journey and Prayer of Abraham’s Servant: Genesis 24:10-28

The LORD Appears to Isaac to Pronounce the Blessing: Genesis 26:1-5, 23-25

Meditation 3, Psalms 5 & 6: The LORD Shelters Those Who Abide in His Ways.

“For you are not a god who abides wickedness; evil cannot abide with you.” Psalm 5:5

“Oh Lord, turn! Rescue me! Deliver me as befits your faithfulness.” Psalm 6:5

Many Psalms tell of suffering at the hands of enemies. Sometimes the enemy is a malevolent gossip who twists facts around to make the Psalmist look bad in front of other people. Other times the enemy represents a mortal danger to life and security. Whatever the danger, when the writers of the Psalms experienced worry, loss of sleep and terror, they took it to God. In speaking to God of their oppressors they wrote such things as “there is no sincerity on their lips; their heart is filled with malice; their throats are open graves; their tongues are slippery.” They also wrote of the unpleasant physical symptoms they experienced when oppressed: languishing spirits, bones shaking with terror, eyes wasted by vexation, feeling worn out, groaning and weeping.

We also sometimes experience opposition. When attacks come it is right and good to go to God with our feelings. With God, even anger is OK to express. Jesus’ disciples were once angry at an entire town and asked Him to call down fire on that town like had happened with Sodom and Gomorrah! Understandably human but not the way for those who have decided to follow Jesus. For us, the path to safety and security is to take the SUPER natural high road; pray for grace and spiritual strength to endure hardship and in God’s good time, receive His victory.

Prayer: “Loving heavenly Father, though oppressed and opposed by enemies, I seek protection in your arms and deliverance through your abundant grace.”

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Session No. 5: Psalms 7 & 8, Matthew 1:1-2 cont.

The story of Jacob: Genesis 27-33

The story of Jacob has all the makings of a modern soap opera. Favored by his mother (Rebekah) over his twin brother (Esau), Jacob went along with his mother’s scheme to steal the blessing her husband Isaac intended for Esau. Though tricked into promising the inheritance to Jacob, Isaac felt he had no choice but to honor his word. Esau was enraged with Jacob and vowed to murder him. Isaac and Rebekah believed it might happen so sent Jacob away to live with Rebekah’s brother Laban. What they thought would be a short stay turned into twenty years because Jacob fell in love with Laban’s youngest daughter Rachel. Having nothing for the bride’s price Jacob worked seven years to get Rachel but Laban gave him the older daughter (Leah) instead, saying he could have Rachel if he worked seven more years! Jacob, Rachel and Leah were not happy with how they had been used by Laban but all three submitted to him. YET Jacob determined to have his revenge on his father-in-law. Over a period of years he executed a strange plan that resulted in him gaining great herds of livestock at his father-in-law’s expense. After 20 years Jacob decided to take his family, herds and servants back to his home country. As they were preparing to leave Rachel (without Jacob’s knowledge) stole her father’s gods! This was a great offense. Laban was furious and chased them down but Rachel avoided exposure as the thief. The family survived Laban’s fury only to come face to face with Esau who was waiting for them at the border with his own private army of 400 men. Things did not look good.

Read and Discuss the long term impact of Rebekah and Jacob’s great scheme.

Genesis 28:10-22: Jacob’s flees his brother and dreams a dream. What does the LORD say to Jacob?

Genesis 32:1-23: Jacob is between a rock and a hard place. What does Jacob pray to the LORD?

Genesis 32:24-32: The LORD confronts and handicaps Jacob. What does He say to Jacob?

Genesis 33:1-20: Jacob comes face to face with Jacob and his private army of 400 men. What happens?

Meditation 4, Psalms 7 & 8: The Lord is worthy of praise

“I will praise the Lord for His righteousness, and sing a hymn to the name of the LORD Most High.” Psalm 7:18

“What is man that you have been mindful of him, mortal man that You have taken note of him?” Psalm 8:5

In Psalm 7 we find a deeply wounded and perplexed man. Feeling persecuted and plotted against without just cause, he contemplates that perhaps - by some accident - he may have done something to provoke his own sufferings. Finding no good reason for what is happening he cries out to God over the injustice of it all. Suffering for wrong doing he could accept - but punishment without having done any wrong? That was difficult to accept. He calls upon God for justice.

Having cried out to God, the Psalmist sets aside his lament and contemplates the nature of repentance and God’s righteousness judgment of all the peoples of the world. He confesses there is justice in the universe and notes that evil doers provoke their own destruction. He also observes that beyond every evil action of man there remains the promised remedy of a just and righteous God. Resting in renewed confidence, he writes into Psalm 8 great praise and exaltation over the magnificent things God has created.

Prayer: “Lord, sometimes it seems even my good deeds are punished. When things like that happen, cause me to trust in your justice and show me the way forward. When there is sin in me, help me turn from that sin. When I am innocent of wrong doing, cause me to trust you anyway and rejoice in your glorious creation.”

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Session No. 6: Psalms 9 & 10, 1st Chronicles 2:1-10, Matthew 1:3-4

The Strange Story of Judah and Tamar: Genesis 38

Judah was one of Jacob’s many sons. Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son by his most loved wife. One day some brothers jealous of Joseph decided to kill Joseph. Judah proposed they sell Joseph as a slave. This decision set in course events that led to Joseph becoming one of the highest officials of Egypt.

Tamar was the childless daughter-in-law of Judah. She had married one of his sons who died, then a second son who also died. The custom of the day was a widow had the right to marry ANY surviving brother of her deceased husband and raise a child in his name. Judah had one more son but viewing Tamar as bad luck, he sent her back to her family. Tamar, knowing Judah often went to prostitutes, disguised and presented herself to her father-in-law as a prostitute. He fell for her trick and gave over some personal items as payment. Tamar became pregnant; Judah never realized who she was.

When people noticed Tamar was pregnant out of wedlock they were scandalized and reported her to Judah. Judah proposed putting Tamar to death but she produced the items he had given her. Judah realized the truth, confessed himself as being in the wrong and let her live. Generations later Judah and Tamar’s descendent through their son Phares, a man named Nahshon, was appointed by the LORD to stand with Moses as the leader of the house of Judah.

Read and Discuss

Genesis 38:24-26: What does this passage say about the value system of these Bible characters?

Genesis 44:18-34: What did Judah do and why did he do it? What does this reveal about his values?

Genesis 49:8-12: Discuss the prophetic blessing Jacob made over Judah.

1st Chronicles 2:1-10: How many generations separate Jacob (Israel) from Judah? From Nahshon?

Meditation 5, Psalms 9 & 10: God is the Judge of the Nations

"Let not men have power; let the nations be judged in Your presence. Strike fear into them, O LORD; let the nations know they are only men." "The Lord is king forever and ever; the nations will perish from His land... You will incline Your ear to champion the orphan and the downtrodden, that men who are of the earth tyrannize no more." (Psalm 9:21, 10:16-18)

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) in wrote in his book Democracy in America "in a democracy, people get the type of government they deserve." He was probably thinking of ancient Athens, a beautiful and powerful state that failed miserably to exercise wisdom and justice towards other states, engaged in wars of aggression against neighbors and through incredible acts of hubris, lost an empire. We moderns view the fall of Athens as tragic but at the time it happened her neighbors believed it was the justice of the gods.

The Psalmist agreed with his Greek contemporaries that the collapse of a nation is the work of God. He was convinced that God will judge ALL nations, irrespective of their form of government or ethnic makeup. Twice, perhaps three times the LORD has judged his covenant people Israel. How many other nations has he reduced to nothing? We do not know. What we do know from the Bible is the LORD looks down from heaven, sees arrogance, injustice and idolatry practiced by nations and eventually reaches out his hand to chastise those nations. Rough justice perhaps, but justice executed as a work of grace. Grace to avenge the weak and defeated upon whom the nations of this world are built, grace to deliver the weak and downtrodden from the strong and mighty.

Prayer: "Lord, let not my confidence be fixed upon human government but rather let it be fixed upon the righteous kingdom you are seeking to establish in human hearts and in your soon return."

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Session No. 7: Psalms 11 & 12, Joshua 2:1-15, 6:22-25; Ruth; Matthew 1:5

Strange Stories and Customs: Rahab & Ruth

The genealogy of Jesus includes accounts of two foreign women who left their own people to join up with the people of Israel. These stories reveal strange customs but also human feelings like our own.

The first woman is introduced in Joshua as “Rahab the Harlot.” If she was indeed a practicing prostitute, she was no simple street walker. The Bible and the 1st century Jewish historian Josephus describe her as a kind of a matriarch in charge of a family business - an inn built against the city wall. In those days (as you might find in our day in the state of Nevada), it was common for inns to serve as brothels. Not surprisingly, considering the nature of their work, the two Israelite spies entered into her business. Rahab decided to help them. On her roof there was a large amount of flax (used to create linen sheets, etc.) waiting for processing. A lot of flax – enough to hide the two spies from the Jericho authorities who came looking for them!

Ruth the Moabitess was the widow of an Israelite man who along with his mother and brother, migrated to Moab in search of better living conditions. Her story takes place several generations after the story of Rahab and culminates in Israel when, after her husband died, she moved to Israel with her mother-in-law. Soon after their arrival Ruth met and married Boaz, a descendant of Rahab. It was their great-grandson, David who was appointed by God to be Israel’s second king.

Read and Discuss

Joshua Chapter 2:1-15, 6:22-25: What did Rahab know of the LORD and Israel?

What do you think of Rahab and Joshua’s response to what she had done?

Book of Ruth: Chapter 1 discusses the relationship between the three women. What do you notice about their views of God and the gods? Chapter 2, how does Boaz reward Ruth for her faithfulness to Naomi (the mother-in-law)? Chapter 3, how do Naomi and Ruth respond to what Boaz did? Chapter 4, how did it come about that Boaz could marry Ruth?

Meditation 6, Psalms 11 & 12: The LORD is in His Holy Temple

"The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked... For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face. The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." Psalms 11:4, 4, 7; 12:6

The Psalmist felt his was an age of unprecedented wickedness; that righteousness was in retreat and the wicked strutted about on every side (12:8). Are things any different in our day? I don’t think so. While exercising in a fitness center, I used the TV remote to scan the cable channels. Finding nothing but violence and corruption, I switched off the TV. That evening I made the best choice but there are times when I do not chose so well.

Temptations, choices and actions-God sees them all. Sometimes we resist temptation. Other times we do not resist. What we know is no matter how many times we choose the good over the bad, our bad choices prove to us that we fall short of the glory of God. The perfect is far from us and we all need deliverance from the evil that surrounds us and dwells within us.

Prayer: "Father in heaven, you see all and know all that I am. I confess you are good. I confess my own lack of goodness. Please place your Spirit within me so I will be able to do what is right. Amen."

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Session No. 8: Psalms 13 & 14, 1st Samuel 8-18; Matthew 1:6

Israel Demands a King

1st Samuel describes Israel’s transition from a political and religious confederation lacking strong central government (the period of the Judges) to a centralized government with a single king as political and military head. Prior to King Saul leaders called “judges” came and went depending upon the situation and their personal qualities. This system lasted for generations but as time went by Israel came to feel this arrangement was not good enough – they demanded of the LORD a king so they could be like other nations. In 1st Samuel 8 we read the tribal leaders agreed together to send word to Samuel who was judge at that time saying “You are old and none of your sons are good and competent like you. We need a king to make us like other nations.” Samuel felt rejected by the people but the LORD said to him “They have not rejected you. They have rejected me as their king. I will give them what they want. Anoint Saul to be their king.” Saul was exactly the kind of man they wanted but spiritually he was a failure; the LORD sent Samuel to anoint another who was better suited: David, youngest son of Jesse who was a grandson of Boaz and Ruth.

Discuss the The Life of David (Part 1)

1st Samuel 8:1-9: What prompted Israel’s elders to demand a new governmental style? What did the LORD say about their request? Why do you think He agreed to their demand?

1st Samuel 15:10-11; 16:1-23: Discuss the way in which the actions of the LORD and human beings work together to bring David into Saul’s court not as a great man but as a humble musician.

1st Samuel 18:6-16: Discuss David’s transition from court musician to a man feared by the king.

Meditation 8, Psalms 13 & 14: Living in the Presence of the LORD

"Lord, who may sojourn in Your tent, who may dwell on Your holy mountain? ... You will teach me the path of life." In Your presence is perfect joy; delights are ever in Your right hand." Psalm 15:1 and 16:11

How can a mere human walk day to day with the eternal God, and dwell in his presence? The answer we find in the Psalms is to do what is right, acknowledge what is true, speak no evil against others, harm no one, keep a promise even when doing so is not advantageous to yourself, honor other people who fear the Lord, loan to those in need without interest and do not accept a bribe or harm the innocent.

Some argue against living in such a way. They say "It is foolish to live like that in our world." Others say "trying to live like that is works righteousness; salvation is a free gift not dependent upon works."

The truth: salvation is more than asking Jesus to forgive us our sins so we can go to heaven when we die. There is a here and now aspect of salvation evidenced by how we live. Our Psalmist understood the spiritual goal was not just to enter some future paradise that arrives after this world is over. His desire was to live for GOD today, to experience God through an obedient life. He was not disappointed! The LORD became his benefactor. The LORD provided his daily needs. The LORD controlled his fate. The LORD caused him to live in a delightful country and the LORD blessed him with unshaken security. These are the good things that come to us when we walk obediently with God.

The Psalmist rejoiced in his life, his whole being exalted in God and in confidence that even in death, the Lord would never abandon him. Rev. Ben Cachiaras spoke of this way of living when he said "Your life is God's gift to you. How you live it is your gift to God."

PRAYER: *"Lord, I want to walk with you every day of my life. Please teach me what it is I must do to experience you more fully. Amen"*

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Session No. 9: Psalms 17 & 18, 2nd Samuel 7 & 12; Matthew 1:6

David’s Messed Up Family System

Among the rich and powerful of the Bible, love marriages and loving family relationships are rarely mentioned. Marriages were based upon family needs, political convenience and economic necessity. Many rich and powerful men had multiple wives and concubines; David had so many women and children that few are mentioned by name. 2nd Samuel 5:13 tells us he had multiple women from Jerusalem alone!

David’s first named wife was Saul’s daughter Michal. At first she “loved” David and protected him from her father but later came to despise him over something he did in public that she did not approve of.

David’s second named wife was Abigail, widowed after her husband choked to death because she provided food and supplies to David’s soldiers after he refused to send anything. David married Abigail out of gratitude because she stopped him from killing the husband and just taking what he needed!

The most important named wife was Bathsheba, mother of Solomon. She became pregnant by David while married to one of his foreign military officers (Uriah the Hittite). To cover up their sin David gave Uriah permission to sleep with her while his unit was encamped in Jerusalem. Uriah refused because he felt doing so would be unfair to his men who could not be with their wives. Desperate to protect Bathsheba and himself from public shame, David sent Uriah’s unit to the front lines and ordered the rest of the army to pull back. Uriah and his men were killed by the enemy.

The LORD was not pleased. The child of adultery died at birth, people lost respect for David and the remainder of David’s life was filled with one crises after another. Family conflicts, a nearly successful rebellion led by his son Absalom and attempts to usurp David’s authority characterized the final years of his reign.

David’s Relationship with the LORD (David, Part 2)

2nd Samuel 7: David desired to build a house for the Lord. How did the LORD respond? Was He fair?

2nd Samuel 12: The LORD responded to David’s sin with Bathsheba. Does His response seem fair?

1st Samuel 13:14 and Acts 13:22 refer to David “as a man after God’s own heart?” Why David?

Meditation 9, Psalms 17 & 18: “The Lord Vindicates Those Who Honor Him”

"My vindication will come from You; Your eyes will behold what is right... I determined that my mouth should not transgress... my feet have held to Your paths; my legs have not given way. I call on You... Then I, justified, will behold your face; awake, I am filled with the vision of You." Psalms 17:2, 3b, 5, 6a, 15



"With the loyal, You deal loyally; with the blameless, blamelessly, With the pure, You act purely, and with the perverse you are wily. It is you who deliver lowly folk, but haughty eyes You humble. It is You who light my lamp; the LORD, my God, lights up my darkness... The LORD lives! Blessed is my rock! Exalted be God, my deliverer, the God who has vindicated me... For this I sing your praise among the nations, Lord and hymn Your name." Psalms 18:26-29, 47, 50

The writers of the Psalms experienced and wrote much of sufferings and tribulations. David also, though a man of heroic faith was no stranger to suffering; quite often in his life he was forced to endure great stress, danger and loss. Sometimes his difficulties were the result of personal sin or misjudgment; other times his difficulties were undeserved and not of his own making. What made David extraordinary was his resolve to trust God at all times, wait upon his salvation and when he sinned, confess his sin and submit himself patiently to God's chastisement. Even in times when he was persecuted unjustly and enemies opposed him to his face, David shunned responding in kind. Perhaps it was these qualities that earned for him the accolade "a man after the Lord's heart."

Prayer: “Lord, cause me to know what is true, to value right over expedience and when stressed, strengthen me to do what is right. Then when trials are over, let me not forget to praise you. Amen.”

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Session No. 10: 1 Kings 2-11; 1st Chronicles 22-2nd Chronicles 31; Matthew 1:6

Solomon Becomes Israel’s Third King

The last years of David’s reign were not peaceful. Near the end of his life there was an attempt by his son Adonijah to usurp the kingship. General Joab and the priest Abiathar conspired with Adonijah because they did not want David’s choice – Solomon – to become king. Nathan the prophet informed Bathsheba of what was happening and together they went to David to inform the king of what had happened. David called for Zadok the priest to join with Nathan and a military man named Abiathar to proclaim Solomon king. Joab was executed, Adonijah was temporarily spared but executed after attempting to manipulate Bathsheba and Solomon into giving him as wife the young woman who had slept in David’s bed during his final months of life. Shimei, who had cursed David during Absalom's rebellion, was sentenced by Solomon to remain in Jerusalem and never leave on pain of death. Shimei did leave the city without permission and was executed.

Solomon began his reign well and was widely recognized in his time as having exceptional wisdom. He built the first temple of the LORD using materials and designs David had arranged. The LORD blessed what Solomon had done by sending His Shekhina glory into the temple when it was completed. Solomon went on to build up the kingdom through strategic marriages but unfortunately some of those alliances were with peoples the LORD had forbidden Israel to ally with. A very great mistake was that Solomon built temples to the gods of his foreign wives. In this he was more faithful to his political vision than to the LORD; his wives and their gods became a stumbling block to God’s people. The LORD was not pleased with Solomon’s alliances.

Solomon and the LORD Form a Partnership

Retell in your own words what happened in 1 Kings 3:4-15 (also 2nd Chronicles 1:6-13)

What did the Lord say to Solomon in 1 Kings 6:11-13? Explain what it means.

Read and discuss Solomon’s prayer of dedication of the temple. 1st Kings 8:22-30.

Read the Lord’s response to Solomon’s prayer. 1st Kings 9:1-9. What kind of relationship is this?

Meditation 10: Psalms 19 & 20: “The Lord Is Our Help.”

"Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." Psalm 19:13-14

"May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion... Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." Psalm 20:1,2, 7

In Psalm 19, David expressed awe at the multitude of stars and the expanse within which the sun rests. He gave glory to God. Perhaps he remembered God had promised Abraham "as many as the stars of heaven, so shall be your descendants." From that memory of what God had done in the past it would be a natural progression to think of the commandments God gave Israel. To David, those commandments of God were not oppressive but "sweet as honey in the honeycomb." He desired to obey all that the LORD had commanded.

Psalm 20 is a prayer to God to deliver some other people from trouble. Because God had delivered David through many troubles, the king was confident the Lord would deliver others as well. David understood safety and deliverance was dependent not upon the strength and numbers of the military but upon God's response in our time of need.

Prayer: "God of Jacob in whom we trust, cause us to love and obey your commandments. In times of need, deliver from trouble all those who look to you for salvation. Amen."