

INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS

The Psalms are rich with God's word and full of blessings to those who trust in Him and love Him. Out of 98 psalms there are 108 blessings, approximately 57 where God is blessing man and about 47 referring to blessing the Lord and the remainder being unable to categorize. The reading of Psalms is something we should do on a regular basis. It will enlighten us, enrich our prayer life, strengthen our trust and love in God, give us greater knowledge of Him, open our hearts to Him, provide wisdom beyond belief, and above all will bring us closer into the presence of God. How can we ignore the significance and importance of the Psalms? Yet, it is not a book that demands the same way of teaching as we have done with the questions through Josh Hunt. While that is a way we could go in this study, let us take a different approach that is built around a sharing of what God is telling each of us as we study the selected Psalms for this series. In that regard, we will approach each week's lesson with the following steps in mind.

1. Read the whole Psalm, not just the selected passage.
2. Look at who wrote the Psalm.
3. Read the selected scripture of the Psalm with the following objectives in mind.
 - a. Provide an overview of the selected scripture in your own words.
 - b. What is the Psalter telling you? What is the main point?
 - c. Is there any progression or steps that lead you to a deeper understanding of God?
 - d. How does the selected scripture impact your walk with God?
 - e. Finally, pray through the selected scripture with particular attention to your reflections and study of the selected scripture.

Lesson One – May 31

THE HEART OF HAPPINESS

PSALM 5:11-12

Overview:

There is great joy and happiness knowing that God will be there for us when we seek His refuge. However, we must first trust Him and demonstrate our love for Him. It is this kind of faith that leads us to a life of righteousness, and God blesses the righteous by surrounding them with a protective shield.

What is central focus of this Psalm? What is David telling us?

No one really knows for sure when David wrote this Psalm, but it was probably during a period when he was on the run from Saul. Regardless, we see David call out to God every morning in prayer comparing his faithfulness and loyalty to God in comparison to the arrogant, the wicked and the unrighteous. In Verses 11-12 David shows that there is a way to God's heart. When we rise above and separate ourselves from the wickedness and unrighteousness that rules in this fallen world, trusting in Him in every circumstance of our life, God will provide us with peace and comfort. We can rejoice and sing out with joy to God. It is like the little bird who feels the danger lurking and runs to his mother who spreads her feathers out over her baby covering it, protecting it and caring for it as only a mother can.

David takes us to the next progression that surely flows from trust. When we show faith and take refuge, our trust leads us to love, for if we trust with the kind of faith that gives us confidence that God has the power to protect then we must love Him. If you love God, there must also be confidence that He also loves us for our love can never really be anything other than in response to His love. We love Him because He first loved us. David doesn't just say love, he says that for those who love your Name. What David means by Name is God's character. We gain knowledge and insight when we believe in the truth of God's word, have faith in Him, seek His counsel and trust that when we go to His refuge, that He will be there for us.

We see that a believer who has come to a trusting relationship with God, develops a loving relationship with God, and we see that in that process of maturity, the believer has grown to be righteous in God's eyes, because of that

trust. Faith leads to righteousness because in the very act of showing faith we put off the pride, the self-determined nature, self-dependence, and the self-centered life that we once had. That leads us to thoughts that are pure, good, kind and noble. Then when we act upon our thoughts that are in line with God, we show obedience to Him. But faith also leads to righteousness in another way. Open our heart and give it up to Jesus, who comes in and abides with us. Trust in him and He will fill our hearts with the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and that frees us from the law of sin and death. If we trust in Jesus, His righteousness is imputed to us and it is not I that live, but Christ who lives in me. (Galatians 2:20) But do not lose sight of love for it also leads us to righteousness, because we have such delight and enthusiasm that in serving God, we do not see our obedience as being a duty or responsibility that is burdensome, but a joy and happiness that comes from the love of a Father who first loved us.

Progression or Steps that lead to a deeper relationship with God.

There is only one way in which righteousness can be obtained. Not by works, not by our own effort, but by faith and then by love. You can visualize them as the steps to God. First step depends on your having faith. Have you come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and now as a believer have you developed faith that “gives you confidence in what you hope for and assurance about what you do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1) We also have faith and know the love that God has for us. It is our trust in Jesus that forms the first step, then comes our love knowing that He first loved us. We show our love, by keeping His commandments through our obedience we express our love, and then the third step completes the progression for those who trust and love God are, and only they, are the righteous.

How does this impact your walk with God?

When we really come to faith that is genuine and real, that is built upon a trust surrounded by God’s word, and strengthened by confidence in the saving power of Jesus Christ, you cannot help but see the love God has for you. Your love for Him which flows from your faith is a reflection back to Him of the love He has shown you. That is what leads to setting aside your self-centered life and turning everything over to Jesus by surrendering all to Him. Then in times that you run to God seeking His refuge, He will give you comfort and peace, and whatever comes to be, know that God has your best interest at heart. Then sing out and rejoice in Him for He blesses the righteous. Pray that your faith and love will lead to a righteousness that brings God’s blessing by surrounding you with a shield of

protection in this fallen world. We are to take refuge in the Lord, when under attack and know that in this world, we will be attacked. Draw near to Him by His grace, rejoicing in Him as your Defender. Paul and Silas knew that joy when they sang praises to God from the Philippian jail after being wrongly accused and beaten. Walk with Him in faith, love and grow in righteousness that you might receive God's blessing and His shield of protection. What a joy it is to know that God is there to protect and care for us when we seek His refuge. Have you experienced the comfort and peace that come when you seek His refuge? Can you recall any difficult times where you felt the same joy that Paul and Silas experienced when they were detained in the Philippian jail?