

David & The Psalms



10am Gathering
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

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This set of studies accompanies the sermon series at 10am on David and the Psalms. Why bother looking at these? There are two reasons:

1. These Psalms **teach us how to pray**.

Jesus' disciples looked to him to teach him how to pray. For centuries, Christians have also looked to the Psalms to teach them how to relate to God in the varied circumstances of life.

The Psalms cover every emotion, and virtually every human circumstance. They take our experiences of joy, triumph, disappointment, despair, alienation, growing old, singing, reflecting, answered prayer and unanswered prayer, and turn them all into prayer. The Psalms teach us how to relate to God in all the circumstances of life. And David himself is the chief model - of the 150 Psalms in the book of Psalms, 76 are ascribed to David.

But oftentimes we are left longing for more information - what exactly was going on for the Psalmist to pray in the way he did? Were his prayers immediately answered? Or not? Perhaps if we'd understood something of his situation, then we'd learn more about living a life of trust with God.

The specific value of these Psalms is that they belong to a select group whose titles *specifically relate what follows in the Psalm to known incidents in David's life.*

Through specific reference to his life in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, we can read about the circumstances David was in which prompted him to pray. We can learn how better to relate to God. Through his own example, we are challenged to pray with the dependency ('O my Strength I watch for you'), or the boldness ('Why have you forgotten me?'), or the delight ('I will praise you, O LORD, with all of my heart!') of a flawed human, who looks to God.

2. These Psalms **teach us about God's goodness to us in Jesus Christ.**

David was the anointed King of Israel - a pre-runner to Jesus *Christ* (meaning 'God's anointed one'). As such, his Kingdom is a pre-runner to the Kingdom of God which Jesus himself came to announce and to open for us. It is into this Kingdom, through this Christ, that we find ourselves brought into through faith in God. This means that even though David's situation may seem miles from our own (we won't necessarily have people seeking to take our lives, for example), David's situation is nevertheless still one which is inseparably connected to our own - for to be a Christian is to also share in Christ's sufferings and victories - which are all pre-figured in these Psalms. God's answering of David's prayers gives us great grounds for assurance - because they relate to God's ultimate deliverance of Jesus from his enemies and from death: a victory in which all those in Christ will also ultimately share.

May God teach you and me to seek him earnestly through these studies,

Chris Jolliffe

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1 Deliver Me!

Psalm 59; 1 Samuel 19

Pray that God would help you learn how to relate to him, and better grasp God's goodness to you in Jesus.

1. When (if ever) have you ever felt physically in danger from someone else, or have you been schemed against? (If this has never happened to you - praise God!) What prayer (if any) did you pray?

2. Read 1 Samuel 19, dividing it into its scenes: (verses 1-6 - Jonathon, 7-10 - Saul, 11-17 - Michal, 18-24 - Samuel), then read Psalm 59:0 (the title) and identify the precise moment in 1 Samuel 19 in which David prayed to God in these words.¹

3. Psalm 59 - Deliver me!

Read Psalm 59.

¹The fact that this Psalm is a song written with instructions for the 'Director of Music' probably means that this was written as a later reflection of David on the prayer he prayed in the heat of the moment on the night Saul's men were seeking his life.

Stand back from it, and try to assign a phrase to each of the following sets of verses which describe what David is doing in his prayer:

Verses	What David's doing
1-2	Crying out for rescue
3-5	
6-10	
11-13	
14-17	

Reflect: Your circumstances will be different, but taking that into account - is this how you typically pray? What are the differences?

- In what way is David bold?

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- What are the different ways he refers to God in his prayer?
 - (verse 5)
 - (verse 9)
 - (verse 10)
 - (verse 11)
 - (verse 16-17)
- What can we learn from the way that David approaches God, and the things that he says?

- David completes his prayer with a determination to sing to God who is his strength - and this before his prayer is answered.

Turn to 1 Samuel 19.

1. What are the different ways that God shows his deliverance of David ...
 - a) before he pens this Psalm? (verses 1-7; verses 9-10)

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- What place do other people play in God's personal deliverance of us, and his answering of our prayers?

2) Thinking now of Jesus Christ, the son of David.

- Does David's prayer shed any light on Jesus' own circumstances? (cf Psalm 22: 16-18, 19-20, Mark 15: 29-32)

- Where in this is our ultimate deliverance? (Ephesians 2: 6; Colossians 3:1)

Application:

1. What are you seeking deliverance from?

2. Write a prayer, using some of David's descriptions of God, and modelling his boldness. Spend time with God.

Praise In The Face Of Ongoing Trials

Psalms 34, 52, 56 & 57; 1 Samuel 21-22

Introduction

A common experience that de-rails our prayer life is unanswered prayer, particularly in the face of ongoing trials. If our prayers don't get the answers we're looking for, or if life persists in delivering one set-back after another, it can be hard to keep praying. Talk about what questions arise at times like this.

Ask God to teach you how to pray when trials are ongoing.

David's ongoing trials

1 Samuel 21-22 documents a difficult period in David's life. Last week, we read in chapter 19 how David has left King Saul's palace for good, and is now on the run. This week, his desperation leads him to seek refuge in enemy territory - no less than the city of Gath (the Philistine city which was home to Goliath, whom David killed). From there, he moves to seek refuge in a cave, and then in the neighbouring enemy territory of Moab. All the while, Saul keeps up his relentless campaign to hunt down David, with terrible results.

It's no surprise that, within this time, David writes four Psalms which we have preserved. Whilst lessons can be learnt from each of these four, a wider lesson is learnt from the fact that David kept on praising God right throughout this time. It's worth noting the determination and confidence David has as the Psalms progress.

Two more points for leaders -

1. Try not to spend all your time on any one Psalm. The value of this study is in seeing the movement within the Psalms, as well as what each might individually teach us. The leader should keep his or her eye on the clock, and move the group through the episodes, leaving enough time to reflect on what can be learnt from David's prayer right throughout the whole of this time.
2. Also, there is room in the boxes provided for group members to write what one point they've learnt about prayer from each individual Psalm.

What I've learnt about how to pray

Review:

1. Did David have to wait for his prayers to be answered and him to be safe before he praised God?
2. What was the basis for his confidence?
3. What value did his praise and prayer have?

Against You Only Have I Sinned...

Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 11-12

This study looks at David's prayer of confession following his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband, Uriah. It is a pivotal moment in David's life. David is at the height of his glory: Saul is dead, David's own kingdom is secure, God has made an eternal covenant with David promising to secure his kingdom forever through a 'son', and yet - following this incident, David's glory declines, his own immediate kingdom begins to fall apart, resulting in murder, rape and treason from within his own family. But even apart from all this, Christians who are convicted of their sin identify with David's personal and honest confession, and find in his words their own.

Pray for honesty and humility in coming before God.

1. Read 2 Samuel 11: 1 – 12:13 in the following chunks, pausing briefly to answer the following questions, (but leaving most of the time for the Psalm).
 - a) The fall - 11: 1-5.
 - What indication is there in verse 1 that David is ignoring his responsibilities?

 - Note how Bathsheba is described in verses 2 and 5 - what does this show about the error of David's thinking?

 - b) The thwarted cover-up - 11: 6-13
 - How does Uriah distinguish himself over David?
(cf also 2 Samuel 23: 34)

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c) The murder - 11: 14-25

- What is vile about the attempted 'hiding' of this sin?

d) The conclusion - 11: 26-27

- Why will the cover-up not work?

e) The judgement - 12: 1-12

- Why the story? .. for Nathan?

... for David?

f) The confession - 12: 13a

It was at this point that David wrote Psalm 51. He has been confronted with his sin, and convicted of his sin. He reminds us of the Tax-Collector in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-collector from Luke 18, who would not even enter the temple, but stood a distance, and beat his breast, saying 'God have mercy on me, a sinner'. (Luke 18: 13). He was convicted of his guilt to the core of his being, and realised he had nothing to boast of before God. His only hope was that God would show him mercy.

Read Psalm 51

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4. What does David realise about what God requires of him?
(cf Luke 18: 9-14)

5. In verses 12-19 David looks beyond his sin and guilt to a new possibility for him. What progression do we see in his hope?
(verses 12-13, 14-15, 18-19)

6. What assurance does Jesus' death for our sin give us?
(Hebrews 9.27-28)

7. Given David's sinfulness, and his role as the Lord's anointed, how important is Jesus' contrasting sinlessness, and his perfect path of obedience to God?

8. What is the place of confession in the life of Christians?

Conclude by pausing to think about what you need to confess, and by praying verses 1-12 together.

Then read 1 John 1:9-10

The Lord Is My Rock

Psalm 18; 2 Samuel 22

After last week's study on David's sin, we might be surprised to read at the conclusion of the books of Samuel, 'I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin' (2 Samuel 22.24). But the first verse of the chapter reminds us that these words constitute David's song to the Lord for delivering him in 1 Samuel 16-31 (ie. *before* his catastrophic fall of 2 Samuel 11). Those words are also found in Psalm 18. The placement of this Psalm at the end of the books of Samuel reminds us that this is to be David's lasting legacy to us: not his later sin, but his righteous and humble dependence upon the Lord in the days when David played the role of the Lord's anointed, and Saul played the role of his persecutor: the *anti*-Christ. In that respect, those days shone much light on Jesus' time on earth: before he had ascended to sit on his throne, he was much like David - with 'no place to lay his head', and beset with opposition and trials on every side, yet humbly looking to his Father for deliverance.

As such, this final Psalm contained within this chapter lifts us from our own circumstances to provide us a window into Jesus' own thought-world. Of course, because our salvation is inseparably bound up with Jesus' own faithfulness to God (and God's faithfulness to him), this Psalm will have relevance to us too - through Jesus, and the victory God accomplished through him.

Pray for humility and faith as you begin.

1. Read 2 Samuel 22: 1-7
 - Why does David call the Lord his 'rock'? What is meant by this image?

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- In what sense may we say that God was Jesus' 'saviour' from his enemies? (cf. Acts 2: 24)

2. Read verses 8-20

- What is the picture painted of God here?

- What is the impact of this description?

- Why did God do this? (verse 20, cf Matthew 3: 16; 17: 5)

3. Read verses 21-28

- Could you say these verses?

- What importance does Jesus' perfect life of obedience have for us? (1 Peter 2: 22, 24; Hebrews 2: 10; 5: 9).

 - In what sense can we say that God deals with us according to Jesus' righteousness? (Romans 5: 17-18; 1 Corinthians 1:30)
4. Read verses 29-46
- David makes much of God as the secret of his success as a warrior.

 - To what extent can the same picture be applied to Jesus as David's son? (think ... what enemies did Jesus overcome? How did he do it?)

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- In what sense is Jesus NOT like the warrior pictured here?
- cf Colossians 2: 15; 1 Corinthians 15:26)

- In what sense IS he like the warrior pictured here?
(Matthew 12: 27-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, Revelation 14.10-11)

5. Read verses 47-51

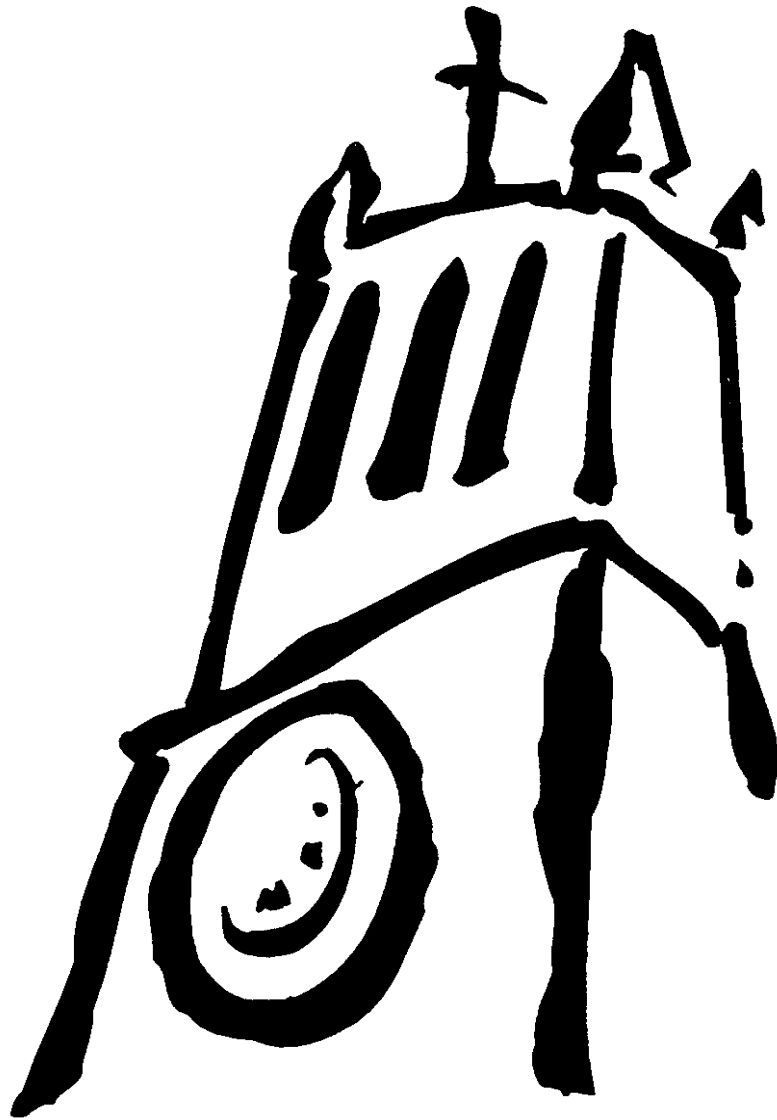
- These last verses burst forth from David in a waterfall of exultation. What realisation drives his praise?

- What is the scope of his praise?

Reflection:

1. What has God rescued you from through Jesus?
2. Does this matter to you? ... Or not?
3. Have a go at writing just one verse in a song of praise, exulting in your God.

Conclude with a time of praise.



Holy Trinity Adelaide
87 North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
t: 8213 7300
f: 8212 3611
office@trinitycity.org.au
www.trinitycity.org.au