

Praying the Psalms

Zoom Bible Study | Lesson One

September 12, 2023

Praying the Psalms of Praise

The Psalms are designed to be prayed.

This is the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. This is where the Jewish temple stood until its destruction in AD70. It is still a most sacred place for Jews, even though it is now an Islamic shrine at the center of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound on the Temple Mount.



This is a picture of how the Temple Mount would have looked in Solomon's time. Solomon built the first temple, while David wrote many of the psalms that were used there. For nearly a thousand years the priests and the Levites and lay people sang the psalms in the Jerusalem temple.

You and I are following this incredible train of God's people who through all the ages have repeated and sang the Psalms.

It was traditional to sing Psalms 113 – 118 at the Passover meal. We know that Jesus used these psalms at the Last Supper:

Matthew 26:30: *When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

Imagine Jesus singing this **Psalm 118** on that night. Here are a few verses:

- ¹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
- ⁵When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD;
he brought me into a spacious place.
- ⁶The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?
- ¹⁷I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
- ²²The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

Most likely the disciples and Jesus knew many psalms by heart. Jesus quoted from a psalm on the cross:

Psalms 22:1: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

And just before he died, he quoted **Psalms 31:5:** *Into your hands I commit my spirit.*

The early church continued the practice of praying and singing the psalms.

Ephesians 5:18 – 19:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.

Colossians 3:16:

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Through the ages the Church has used the psalms as their song book, their prayer book, their encouragement book.



This is a page from an Irish psalter, with Psalm 112, which begins “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord.”

It is from the 7th century. Only wealthy people could have owned such a psalter.

Praying the Psalms connects you to God’s people from ages past to now.

“Whenever you read the Psalms . . . you are praying, singing, and reading alongside a huge crowd of faithful witnesses throughout the ages. The words you speak have been spoken thousands—even millions—of times before. . . . As you read or sing or pray, off to your right stand Moses and Miriam, in front of you David and Solomon kneel down . . . while from behind come the voices of Jerome, St. Augustine. . . . Luther, Calvin, and more—so many more!” (Source unknown)

Genesis 24:48:

I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son.

This was the praise and worship of Abraham’s senior servant who had been sent by Abraham to find a wife for Isaac, his son, from among his own people.

Exodus 15:1 – 2

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

“I will sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.

Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea.

²“The LORD is my strength and my defense^[a];
he has become my salvation.

He is my God, and I will praise him,
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.

Exodus 15:20 – 21:

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. ²¹ Miriam sang to them:

“Sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea.”

Psalms 33:1:

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

ESV: *Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.*

We are carrying on with millions of saints of old the practice of praising God – openly, loudly, specifically. It is fitting for us to do this. I

We will look at several “categories” of psalms, i.e.,

- Psalms of praise
- Psalms of lament
- Psalms of penitence
- Psalms of commitment
- Psalms of petition
- Messianic Psalms

Psalms of Praise**Approaching God with Praise****Psalms 100**

¹ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

³ Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

What happens when you shout something?

What specifically are you praising God for in this Psalm?

Here's what a secular doctor wrote about joy:

- It promotes a healthier lifestyle
- It boosts your immune system
- It fights stress and pain
- It supports longevity

The world system is now promoting what the Bible has taught from the beginning of time.

Praising God Continually

Psalm 34:1 – 3:

I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
²I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
³Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.

What does this Psalm teach us about praising God?

- At all times – good times, bad times, up times, down times.
- Praise should always be on our lips

Hebrews 13:15: *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.*

Praise comes through words that come from our lips.

- Praise so others can hear and be encouraged
- Praise together with others. This doubles your praise; it is great encouragement to hear others praise God.

Praising God for His Creation

Psalm 95:1 – 7:

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
²Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.
³For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
⁵The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
⁶Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
⁷for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

What will it do for you if you regularly praise God for his creation?

What part of God's creation speaks to you most powerfully of God's greatness?

Praising God for His Creativity in You

Psalm 139:13 – 17:

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book

before one of them came to be.
¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!

When was the last time you praised God for the way he made you?

The Power of Praise

Praise Changes Your Thought Life

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV): *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*

You drive out wrong thoughts with praise!

2 Corinthians 10:5:

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Praise is guaranteed to bring wrong thinking into captivity and force it to obey Christ.

Praise Drives Out Despair and Discouragement

Isaiah 61:1 – 3:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

When you put on praise, you have protection against the spirits of depression, discouragement and despair.

- The language of God's kingdom is PRAISE!
- The language of Satan's kingdom is GRIPING AND COMPLAINING!

How often are you living on the border between God's kingdom and the kingdom of the world? When you do that, you speak PRAISE-GRIBE.

James 3:9 – 11:

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

The Psalms end with a great Psalm of Praise:

Psalm 150:

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens.

² Praise him for his acts of power;

praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with timbrel and dancing,

praise him with the strings and pipe,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,

praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.