

DAILY BIBLE STUDY SHEET

Daily meditation on the Word of God is imperative to our growth. As the people of God we should commit to reading Scripture every day. There are questions to help prompt your meditation. If you do not have a Bible, please contact the church office and one will be given to you. To locate the passages, use the Table of Contents to find the page number. The number before the colon will tell you the chapter to find. The numbers after the colon are the superscript numbers in your Bible indicating the verses to read. Our Soul Food lessons are guided by "Opening Up The Psalms Commentary" written by Roger Ellsworth.

Monday, April 18th – Psalms 3, 22, 42 and 55 (Personal Laments)

This week we will look at the individual and corporate laments, as well as the imprecatory psalms. We begin with the individual lament. To lament is to express deep grief or sorrow for the circumstances we face in our lives. David had much to lament. Note that 3, 42 and 55 are believed to have been written by David, after his son Absalom betrayed him and ran him out of Jerusalem. Even though David had seen the righteous God act throughout his life, David still laments over the situation. Just because we are mature (or maturing) believers, that does not mean we don't lament to God when sorrow and grief, even fear overtake us. What is David's request of God at the end of Psalms 3 and 55? These Psalms are personal laments, but these two end with our last set of Psalms this week, the imprecatory request. How does Psalm 42 end? This ending reflects confidence that David can put his hope in God and praise God again. Now let's briefly look at Psalm 22. We will study this Psalm in more depth at the end of the series, when we study Messianic Psalms, since Psalm 22 is tied to Jesus. But as you read through it today, what is David's lament? Where does the shift from lament to praise take place? Why is it important to lament, but then be able to move on? What kind of experiences do you lament to God over? Do you stay in the lament or do you shift to praise, confidence or even imprecation? Do you lament at all and if not, why not?

Tuesday, April 19th – Psalm 12, 35, 51 (Personal Laments)

Today we finish the personal laments. Psalm 12 is a lament for the lack of godliness amongst the people. What specifically is the problem? How is it personally effecting the Psalmist? This Psalm ends with words of confidence. What should boost our confidence (vss. 6-8)? Is this Psalm applicable to our world today? If so, how? Turn now to Psalm 35. As you read verses 1-16, what is the problem leading to this lament? How is it personal? What is the request of David (vss. 17-25)? Once again you will notice that the Psalm does not end as a lament. Rather verse 26 is imprecatory, in that it demands God give dishonor, disgrace, and humiliation to David's enemies. How does the Psalm end (vss. 27-28)? How does praise balance the lament? How does it produce confidence in what you know about God? Finally, we look at Psalm 51. This lament is very personal in that it is David's lament for mercy, forgiveness and cleansing from God for the sins that David had committed. Sin has broken David's spirit. David knows his sin is against God and has separated him from God. Imagine your sin as a wall between you and God. Without repentance we sense less and less of God. What do you learn about sin from this lament? What do you learn about true repentance? What do you learn about God? This is one time that the Psalm ends with the lament. Why do you think that is? Can David just "praise" himself out of this one? Can he manipulate God into forgiving him by being confident? The reason this ends as a lament is that the next action has to come from God and God alone, for only God can show mercy, forgive, cleanse and renew. So David put it all out there and waits on God to act. What do you need to put out there today and let God act?

Wednesday, April 20th – Psalm 71, 85, and 90 (Corporate Laments)

Today we turn to corporate or communal laments. As we read Psalm 71, at first glance you would think this is an individual lament. Corporate laments may be personal, but are concerned with the spiritual state of Israel. Verses 1-13 tell God what the Psalmist needs. As you read verses 14-18, think about why the Psalmist makes these requests. We see the request is for the community and for the following generations, not just for the Psalmist. Psalms 85 and 90 are distinctly corporate. What is the lament of each psalm? What does each ask God to do for them? Do they end lamenting or in some other way (praise/confidence/wisdom)? How does the church lament together? Why would this be important for us to learn? What lament would you write for the church or for the world today?

Thursday, April 21st – Psalm 62, 74 and 80 (Corporate Laments)

We will look at a few more corporate laments today. Psalm 62 starts off as a personal lament. David wrote this during Absalom's rebellion. As you read verses 1-8, notice that while it is personal, it does affect the community of Israel, since David is their king. But the personal lament shifts to a corporate lament/instruction beginning in verse 9. David laments that the people will not live as God has designed. Psalm 74 is believed to have been written after the fall of Jerusalem. What is the lament to God in this Psalm? What do the people ask God to do? Has it not at times here at Saint James felt as if God has left us as well? What encouragement does this Psalm offer us as we continue to pray for God's help? What should we too be asking God to do? Psalm 80 laments that God has abandoned Israel, because of its sin. What is the repeated lament (vss. 3, 7, 19)? There is a complete reliance upon and understanding that only God can turn this around. Only God can save. Only God could save Israel and only God can save the church. The church is completely reliant on God. After reading these Psalms, how is our understanding of being faithful to God so he can make us fruitful fulfilled? How should these Psalms shape our corporate prayer life before God? Is it okay to cry out, confess and beg God's presence and restoration?

Friday, April 22nd – Psalm 58, 83, 109, and 137 (Imprecatory)

We will close the week with the most difficult Psalms, the imprecatory Psalms. Imprecatory means to invoke judgment, calamity and curses upon others. This is not a very popular thing in our culture today, yet we have all done or thought these things. We will look at the imprecatory Psalms that upset most Christians. As we study these, keep in mind the four lenses Julie Tennant gave us to use while studying these psalms. What is the chief complaint in Psalms 58 and 83? What is the request of the psalmist? Which of the four lenses should we use as we read these (spiritual warfare, vengeance transferred, curse absorbed or the final end)? The motive behind the psalm is to see that God is honored. So while making us uncomfortable, we do want God to resolve evil in the world, right? Now read Psalm 109. Again, what is the issue the Psalmist wants addressed and which lens is best to use while pondering the Psalm? As you read 109, note the distinct difference between the path of the righteous and that of the wicked. When have you been on each of these paths? Finally, read Psalm 137, probably the most challenging one of them all. God's people have been conquered and captured and were being hauled away to Babylon. The imprecatory begins at verse 7. What are the requests they make of God? Seems pretty harsh. Now put yourself in their shoes. You have been invaded, your towns leveled and burned, and your children and other family members killed. You know the scripture about "An eye for an eye." You are lost, scared, hungry and angry. This Psalm reflects this experience and explains the request. Which lens do you think we need to use to view this imprecatory? How might these words have helped them cope?

Saturday, April 23rd – *In preparation for tomorrow's worship, please read Psalm 30.*