

The Weekly Word

August 1-7, 2016

Wow it is the end of July... summer is moving by. Refresh us with relaxation and with Your word. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, August 1: Psalm 109- How do you pray when you are angry or hurt?...

How do you pray when you are angry or hurt? My hunch is that you do not pray as David prayed. I don't. Generally I am too kind to pray like David prayed. And yet, this prayer is Scripture, so it is an example to us of how we might pray should we be hurting or angry.

And, yes, our prayers move God's heart but our prayers do not bind God so that He must act in a certain way. God remains God and He gets to choose how and if He will answer our prayers.

I take heart from David's prayer. David is so honest with God.

David is angry and hurt so he wants God to punish his enemies who he believes are treating him wrongly. And David prays honestly for God to take vengeance:

May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.

May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow.

May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes.

May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor (8-11).

As Christians, most of us are too polite to pray this way. But these words are Scripture and they stare out at me. They do not require me to pray this way. But they allow it. In my hurt, I can pray honestly. And if my prayers do not model 'turning the other cheek' God will still listen and He may just change me, rather than execute vengeance on my behalf.

I love the fact that I can be honest with God, that I can pray what I am feeling and allow God to sort things out and work in my life what is most needed in the moment.

I believe God not only allows us to be honest, I believe He invites us to be honest with Him. Honesty opens the door so that God can work... and when He can work, He will work.

The next time I hurt I hope I am man enough to pray as David did in this Psalm and allow God to work in my life bringing healing to me, even as He answers my prayers.

How does this Psalms strike you???

Lord, thank You for this and other Psalms that give me an example of how I may pray when trouble assails me. Bless You, Lord, for teaching me to pray. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Tuesday, August 2: Psalm 110- Jesus God's answer...

I must have read this Psalm half a dozen times. Lord, what is there for me today? Where can I hang my hat and find spiritual sustenance for my life?

Lord, for some reason I am very tired and I am wondering if that is keeping me from receiving what You have for me today?

I know the Psalm has a message about Jesus who is the priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6, etc.). But still I am struggling to connect.

So I chose to think about Jesus, the forever priest, in the order of Melchizedek. Jesus, the forever priest, who will never be replaced, whose covenant will also never be replaced. Jesus, God's final answer to the human dilemma of separation from God because of our sin.

As I contemplated Jesus and who He was and what He did for me, for us, I was reminded that Jesus is the only way of salvation. He is God's final answer to our problem. And this provided an enriching start to my day...

Thank You, Jesus, for coming and saving me and all who will trust and believe in You. I praise You because You will never be superseded. Faith in You is all one needs to come home to a saving relationship with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Praise be to you, Jesus, 2nd person of the Trinity. Amen and Amen.

Wednesday, August 3: Psalm 111- Great is the Lord...

This Psalm is wonderful beginning to my day. How it lifts my gaze to the Lord. What a foundation. What a start for my day.

The Lord has done mighty things... His works are a testament to who He is.

Praise the Lord. Praise His holy name.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding (10).

I found my thoughts drawn to these words.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...

Hmmm... There is true depth to these words. Reverence and fear of God is the start of our spiritual journey. It is also the first practice during my journey of faith.

When I reverence God, when I fear Him and His power and might, I get my priorities straight. God first, all other things second.

I realize that God is love. However, God is also God, the Lord, God, Almighty, the One who created all things. And being God I should rightfully and wisely fear Him. And I am thinking fear as in fear. With a single word God could obliterate everything He created. He has absolute power, so there should be fear of God in me! Fear like this is not bad, it is healthy and it is good! It is a constant reminder that I am not God and mustn't ever fool myself into thinking I am.

And then there is fear as in reverence. It is right to reverence the One who has saved me and reverence the One who has called me to His side. As I stopped to ponder this, a wave of awe rolled over me. God saved me not because I did anything, but because He chose to. My heart pounds in affection and amazement at God's graciousness. It is wise and good to reverence God, my Savior!

With these thoughts my heart naturally moves to prayer...

Oh, God, I adore You. You are God... All Mighty, All powerful, Majestic in all You are and do. Praise be to You my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Bless You for saving me. Bless You for revealing Yourself to me in such a way that I did not die.

Oh, Holy Spirit, Counselor and Guide, help me to maintain right perspective... You God, alone, are God. I love You and I praise You. Through Jesus Christ, my Lord, I pray. Amen

Thursday, August 4: Psalm 112- God wins in the end...

One can read this Psalm and think, "Oh, yes, when I fear the Lord everything will turn out wonderfully." Children, great. Wealth and riches, great, and so on.

But is this Psalm a promise of the wonderful life if we only fear the Lord? In broad strokes, yes, but in particulars not always.

I know too many who love and fear the Lord who have gone through pain and trial and difficult times. Even other Psalms are prayers during difficult times.

As I wrestled with this, my eyes fell on verse 8: *Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.* I shouted YES! *In the end they [we] will look in triumph on their foes.* No matter how things turn out this side of eternity, I know that my God will win in the end and all who stand with Him will be on the winning side then, too!

No matter the frustration I am facing at this point in my life, God will win in the end and His foes will be vanquished and His followers will be invited into paradise with Him for eternity.

I cling to this truth and pray to Jesus for strength to hold onto my faith in my ever changing and faith-challenging world...

Lord, I pray for my world... for the political scene, which seems to becoming more polarized and more harsh in tone and rhetoric and less loving in action and caring. Lord, I pray for my neighbors who dive more and more deeply into loving the world and the pleasures of the world and move further and further from You. Lord, I pray for my local church that we would rise up in faith and live the Gospel message even as we hold out Your hope to our hurting world. I pray for myself and my family that we would be faithful to You above all things... I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, August 5: Psalm 113- God is good, all the time...

In some Christian settings I hear people say, "Praise the Lord" all the time. In Nigeria where I teach yearly, it seems like anytime a person speaks in public you must start with "Praise the Lord." In other circles, some groups have a call and response that goes like this:

God is good...

All the time

All the time...

God is good.

Declarations like these can be good for the soul, but they can also be a rote response with little or no thought connected to them. When someone says "Good morning" to me, I will automatically reply, "Good morning" back. I may or may not honestly engage the individual with my response.

The Psalmist begins as a number of Psalms begin, *Praise the Lord* (1). However, the Psalmist is not content to let his/her opening words be mere formality. From the opening, the Psalmist dives into why we can praise the Lord and he lists a number of God's attributes (The Lord is exalted above all nations, v 4) and deeds (The Lord raises the poor and lifts the needy, v7).

It hit me as I was considering this Psalm, what would I write as my reasons to shout, "Praise the Lord" or "God is good?"

I, too, could praise God for who He is... mighty and powerful, above all gods and over all nations, gracious and slow to anger, just and my justifier. It does my heart good to consider the wonders of who God is. God is great and mighty.

Like the Psalmist, I would then shift my focus to praising God for what He has done. I would praise Him for things like:

- Sending Jesus to bear my sins on the cross and for teaching the way back to God
- Sending the Holy Spirit to be with me all the time, teaching, leading and empowering me to live for and serve my God
- Health and provision for me and my family
- The goodness of a spouse who has loved me and helped me become more like Jesus

- The church and my church, sisters and brothers who walk with me and love me as we walk the way of Jesus together.

God truly is good... all the time. And recalling who God is and some of the many things He has done is a perfect way to begin my day and place myself in His hand for the day.

Lord, God, thank You for this Psalm, both a prayer to pray and an example of prayer from which I create my own song of praise. Bless You Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. I love You and I offer You my life and my all today. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Saturday, August 6: Psalm 114- ...

Since it was a short Psalm I read it in more than one translation. The way 'The Message' translated verse 7 drew me in.

*Tremble, Earth! You're in the Lord's presence!
in the presence of Jacob's God.*

You're in the Lord's presence... how I often take that for granted.

I think of being in the Lord's presence during worship on Sunday or when I am in prayer or Bible study. But the Psalmist recognizes that as God's people we carry the Lord's presence with us and this is His world, He created it, so we are in the Lord's presence constantly.

And when God moves even the earth responds. The Jordan River stopped, the Sea parted (3) because of the Lord's presence.

Do I respond when the Lord moves? Do I obey like the Jordan and Sea did?

These questions pound me like a hammer driving a nail. Do I respond to the Lord when He speaks? Do I respond to the Lord when I read His Word and it speaks?

James bid his readers to *be doers of the word, not hearers only* (James 1:22 KJV)

As I sit this morning I am reminded that God is always around me and speaking with me throughout my days. Am I listening? Am I listening as I go through the work and play and mundane times of life?

Oh, God, help me to be attentive to You all the day long... not only when I am engaged in direct spiritual activities like prayer and worship. Lord, thank You for the reminder that You are always with me. What a blessing that is, but it also is responsibility to pay attention to You and Your voice as I live every moment of my life.

Help me, Oh, God, to recognize Your presence all the day long. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, August 7, 2016, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

[Click here for a link to my sermons on the web.](#) Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.