

Psalm Study Week 4

Psalms 47-60

Opening prayer

Psalm 47 may be an earlier psalm from before the time of King David and even before King Saul as God is described as King. And God is not just described as the King of Israel be king of all nations. How do you view God and how might you write this psalm today?

Psalm 48 seems a bit odd as it speaks of Mt. Zion in the far north, but it is in the far south of Israel. This may have been written from someone who lived south of Jerusalem, though that would indicate the writer was far south of there, perhaps in Egypt or Ethiopia.

Psalm 49 likewise seems odd starting off with a message to all peoples and all the earth. As a hymn writer I tend to write for the congregation or the preschool chapels and think a handful of people might hear my words but this writer is thinking of a global audience. If you had a global audience what would you want to say to them?

Psalm 50 repeats an idea in verse 14 and 23 of making a sacrifice of thanksgiving. What do you think that means? How might you do that today?

Psalm 51:10 is a heart-felt plea to God. This may be a verse you want to remember. What does this psalm say to you where you are in your faith journey today?

Psalm 52 is broken into sections. The first two speak against someone (named Doeg in the introduction.) Then the psalm ends with an affirmation of the love of God whose goodness overcomes evil. Do you tend to focus on evil of others or the goodness of God?

Psalm 53 let's us know that atheism did not arise in our lifetimes. Even in ancient times there were nonbelievers. Is there any indication for you in this psalm of how to share faith with nonbelievers?

Psalm 54 speaks of a difficult time in David's life when he was hiding in fear of his life. I cannot personally relate to that though I know in wars and violent situations people do live this way. In whatever difficult times we have, we can call for and affirm God's help. What might you pray for today?

Psalm 55 is a lament not about enemies but about a friend or companion that turned against David. I imagine most of us have had that happen at some point in our lives. What comforts me is the first half of verse 22 which you may have heard before.

In Psalm 56 verse 8 there is mention of keeping tears in a bottle. What do you think is the significance of that. Have you or anyone you know ever done that?

Psalm 57 continues in this section of psalms about persecutions and enemies, though here it ends with a focus not on that but on God and singing and giving thanks to God for God's steadfast love!

Psalm 58 like 57 and 59 seems to be written to the same tune of "Do Not Destroy." In all the hymns I have written there are none focused on my enemies. Right now, I do not believe I have any, do you? If you have enemies, can you honestly say some of the words of this psalm about them?

Psalm 59 verse 6 is repeated in verse 14. I pay attention when things are reiterated. What does this say to you? Have you ever experienced anything like this? How do these verses relate to the response in verse 16? Have you ever done that?

Psalm 60 differs from Psalm 59 and others which are personal and talks about "me." This psalm is for the community or the nation of Israel in its battles with their enemies by using the word "us." Sometimes I write first person and sometimes I write second or third person hymns. Think of some of your favorite hymns. In which person are they written? Also note, that the problems lifted up here are not attributed to the enemies but that God has rejected Israel in verses 1 and 16 for some reason. Why?