

Bible Reading Schedule The Golden Thread

July 10 - Psalm 4

Consider Jesus as you read the words of Psalm 4. While this Psalm is not considered to be a Messianic Psalm (a Psalm that points us directly to Jesus), it is a Psalm that shows us how we can have hope and assurance even in the worst times of our lives through having a right relationship with God. A right relationship that comes only by way of Jesus.

John 14:6 *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

As you can tell things are not going well for David as he writes this Psalm. He is in distress, and the world is in turmoil around him. But David knows that no matter how bleak things may seem to be, he can be confident of his future. Look at verses 6 – 8. Those are words of complete confidence and assurance in God. In spite of all of the turmoil, David is at peace and can lie down and sleep, because David is secure in his relationship with God. How can David have such assurance? It is based on what David says in verse 5: "Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord."

Now think about Jesus. Is there any sacrifice we can offer that is better or more right than the sacrifice Jesus has made for us on the cross?

Hebrews 10:5-14 *Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; ⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. ⁷ Then I said, 'Here I am-- it is written about me in the scroll-- I have come to do your will, O God.'" ⁸ First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). ⁹ Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

There is no sacrifice better than Christ. We must trust in him and the sacrifice he has made for us. The more willing and able we are to do that, the more confidence we will have no matter how much turmoil our world is in. That confidence comes because we know that through Christ God is with us no matter what.

Romans 8:31-32 *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

July 11 – Psalm 8

Psalm 8 is a Psalm about God's creative power and the praise that is due his name for the wondrous creation he has given us to live in. In verse 2 the Psalmist says, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise." Jesus quoted the words of this Psalm in Matthew 21: 16.

Matthew 21:15-16 *But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. ¹⁶ "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"*

Children instinctively knew to praise Jesus for the wonderful things he did, just as children instinctively know to praise God for His beautiful creation. It's the adults who seem to have a problem giving God the praise that he is due. Maybe that's why Jesus said unless we become more like little children we will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:3-4 *"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

The reason we are not willing to praise God like little children is because we are proud and we want to be our own gods. Seeing the wonders of creation and the wonders of the works that Jesus did, should humble our hearts so we are able to praise, but often times our pride gets in the way of doing that. We refuse to elevate God's name because doing so automatically humbles us.

As this Psalm points out, God made man to hold a position in creation that was second only to Him. God created us and elevated us to the position of being his governors over his creation (verses 5 – 8). But as you recall the story of what happened in the Garden, that wasn't good enough for us. Through Adam and Eve, we took the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge to try to make us equal to God (Genesis 3). Because of our pride, God had to send Jesus to fix what we had broken. As Jesus came to earth and took on flesh he became like us and he took our place and did what we couldn't do. Jesus allowed himself to be made like us—a little lower than the angels, and then Jesus came and made right what we did wrong. Jesus came and perfectly obeyed the Father

and died so our position could be restored and we could live and rule as we were originally created to do.

Hebrews 2:5-9 *It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶ But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁷ You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor ⁸ and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

July 12 – Psalm 16

As you read this Psalm, you can once again see the confidence and security that David had in his God. But go beyond that and once again consider Jesus as you read this Psalm. Jesus knew the Psalms well and this Psalm may very well have been running through his mind as he went to the cross for us. There is an amazing contrast in this Psalm that, if we stop and think about it, will amaze us. To see the contrast, let's start by looking at the last few verses of the Psalm (9 – 11). It is clear that David is in a situation where death is certainly a possibility, but it is also clear that David is very confident about his future, because he is confident that even if he dies he will enjoy life eternally with God. That's amazing confidence, the kind that we should have too. Think how those words would have comforted Jesus as he went to the cross and then to the grave. Jesus was completely confident that God would not abandon him to the grave, and that his body would not decay, because Jesus knew that God would indeed resurrect him from the grave after three days.

John 2:19-21 *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." ²⁰ The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.*

But that confidence and assurance is only one side of the contrast, to see the other side of the contrast let's look again at verses 5 and 6. As you read these verses remember that David is in a situation where death is a real possibility, but look what David says. In verse 5, he recognizes that God is the one who has assigned him this position in life. In other words, whatever is happening to him is from the hand of God. Then in verse 6, David says, "the boundary lines have fallen for him in pleasant places." That means that David is happy with his situation in life—remember that happiness comes in spite of the fact that David is facing the possibility of death. How can somebody say they are

happy with facing the prospect of death? Because they know they are eternally secure. Because they know and are confident that God will not let their bodies see decay. Having that confidence gives us the ability to look past our present circumstances to our eternal hope. Even though death is a possibility in the short term, eternal life is a sure and certain fact. Jesus could be secure with the portion God had assigned to him, because Jesus knew that God would not abandon him to the grave. Because he knew this, Jesus could go to the cross not just with confidence, but also with joy.

Hebrews 12:2 *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

July 13 – Psalm 22: 1 – 5

Psalm 22 is a Psalm written by David during a time of great distress in his own life, but it is also a prophetic Psalm that points us toward Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. In verse 1 David is wondering where God is, and it causes David to ask the question: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" If those words sound familiar, they should, because they are the words Jesus cried out as he hung on the cross.

Matthew 27:46 *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-- which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

As you read today's reading, David realizes that even though God seems far away, God has not forsaken him. Look at verses 3 – 5. David realizes the truth that God is there and God will deliver him just as God delivered his forefathers in the past.

But Jesus was really forsaken by God as he hung on the cross. Jesus was completely abandoned by God as he hung there dying. Imagine how Jesus must have felt as he hung there. His Father whom he had known and loved for all of eternity turned his back on Jesus as he hung there. If you have ever had a close friend or relative abandon you in the midst of troubles in your life, you can begin to know how Jesus must have felt. But Jesus' pain ran even deeper than anything we feel, because his relationship to the Father was more intimate than any relationship we could have. Why did God abandon His own Son as he hung there? It was because of our sin. As Jesus went to the cross, the spotless lamb of God was covered with our sin, and because of that the holy and righteous Father could no longer bear to look at Jesus, so God turned his back on His own Son.

We often think of the cross just in terms of the physical pain that Jesus suffered as he hung there, but the spiritual pain, the separation from the Father, and having the wrath of the Father poured out on him was far worse than the physical pain.

Galatians 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

It was hard for Jesus when his friend Judas betrayed him, it was hard for Jesus when his friend Peter denied him, it was hard for Jesus when the other disciples ran and abandoned him, but none of that even began to compare to the pain Jesus felt as the Father abandoned as he hung on the cross and died for our sins.

*I'm forgiven because You were forsaken; I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me; Because You died and rose again
Amazing love, how can it be; That You, my King, should die for me?*

Amazing love, I know it's true; It's my joy to honor You

In all I do, to honor You

You Are My King (Amazing Love)

July 14 – Psalm 22: 6 – 11

We are not sure what David's personal circumstances were as he wrote this Psalm and exactly what he was going through as he wrote these words, but clearly David is picturing a time in his life when life had brought him so low that people were mocking him. As you recall the events of David's life, you will remember a time when his own son Absalom led a rebellion against him (2 Samuel 15), and David was forced to flee the palace. As David was fleeing from Absalom, one of King Saul's relatives, Shimei, came and cursed and mocked David.

2 Samuel 16:5-12 ⁵ *As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. ⁶ He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. ⁷ As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you scoundrel! ⁸ The LORD has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The LORD has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a man of blood!" ⁹ Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head." ¹⁰ But the king said, "What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'" ¹¹ David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, who is of my own flesh, is trying to take my life. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. ¹² It may be that the LORD will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today."*

It may very well be that David wrote these words during the time he was on the run from Absalom and his own people turned against him. But even as these words applied to David's life, they also point us forward to Jesus. In verse 6 of Psalm 22, David speaks of being scorned and despised by the people. Isaiah foretold that Jesus would also be scorned and despised by his own people.

Isaiah 53:3 *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

In fact, the New Testament writers tell us that as Jesus hung on the cross people hurled the exact same insults on him that David prophetically spoke about 1000 years before Jesus was crucified.

Matthew 27:41-44 *In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.*

Mark 15:29-30 *Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ come down from the cross and save yourself!"*

It is hard to believe that David, the greatest king Israel had known during its Old Testament history, would be subjected to such ridicule and insults, but how much harder is it to imagine that the great king of the universe, Jesus, would allow those whom he created to ridicule him as they nailed him to the cross?

July 15 – Psalm 22: 12 – 18

As David continues his lament before the Lord it is clear that he is a man who is in great distress, but once again David's words point us right through his suffering to the suffering of Jesus. In these verses, David describes those who are persecuting him as wild animals surrounding him and tearing at his flesh (bulls – verse 12, roaring lions – verse 13, wild dogs – verse 16). In many ways, the humans who persecuted and inflicted suffering on Jesus behaved very much like wild animals. Jesus was spit upon, beaten, and insulted as men surrounded him and took of advantage of him. Jesus knew ahead of time that all of this was going to happen to him.

Luke 18:31-33 *Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock*

him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. ³³ On the third day he will rise again."

But even knowing all that was going to happen to him, Jesus went to the cross anyway.

Luke 9:51 *As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.*

Stop and think about that, Jesus knew exactly what he was in for as he set out toward Jerusalem, but he didn't back down, he resolutely stepped forward toward the cross just for you and me.

Because the cross was about much more than just physical pain and suffering, we can only begin to imagine what Jesus went through, but in Psalm 22, David describes a man who is experiencing suffering to the extreme. Look again at verses 14 – 18 and see how David describes the effect that the suffering has on his body:

- Bones out of joint- as Jesus hung on the cross none of his bones were broken, but they surely were pulled out of joint as he hung there suspended by the nails in his hands,
- Heart melting like wax- imagines the heart ache Jesus felt as he hung there and saw the ones whom he loved mocking him, and then on top of that his Father turning His back on him as he took our sins upon himself.
- Tongue sticks to roof of mouth- As he hung on the cross Jesus cried, "I am thirsty." (John 19: 28)
- Casting lots for his clothing- **John 19:23-24** *When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.*

David paints an amazing prophetic picture of the suffering Jesus would endure. Jesus knew full well the suffering he was about to face, but he went to the cross anyway just so that we could be forgiven and accepted by God.

July 16 – Psalm 22: 22 – 31

As David concludes his Psalm of lament, he moves past his present suffering, and looks toward future glory as he remembers God's faithfulness and considers what God will do in the future because of His faithfulness. Once again, this gives us a wonderful picture of Christ. As Jesus went to the cross he knew his suffering would result in future glory.

John 17:3-5 *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

In fact, Jesus went to the cross so that we could see and be part of his future glory.

John 17:22-24 *I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

David wrote Psalm 22 in the midst of his own personal struggle with suffering, but as David thought about his God he knew that one day his suffering would be transformed into glory. In verses 25 – 31, David speaks of a day when God will be praised in “the great assembly” and all the families of nations will bow down before him. That is exactly the picture we see happening in the Book of Revelation as people from every tribe tongue and nation gather around the throne of Jesus and proclaim praises to his name.

Revelation 7:9-12 *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"*

In the midst of our own personal times of suffering we must remember that the day will come when our own present suffering won't hold a candle to the glory we enjoy as we gather in the eternal presence of Jesus.

Romans 8:15-18 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*