

Devotions – February 21-27, 2016
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For the Pray Faithfully devotions this week, we will be reflecting upon “Psalms of Comfort.” Although the Psalms are not often a basis for preaching on Sunday morning, they have been a source of strength and encouragement for people of faith for thousands of years. The following are Psalms that I use often in my personal life of prayer in addition to many pastoral situations that call for reassurance in the face of fear.

Sunday, February 21, 2016

Psalm 23 The Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

my whole life long.

Let us pray: God of all comfort, be with us at the start of this week. Allow us to release control over our lives to you, for you shepherd us through every valley of fear. Give us the strength to see you call us through our faith unto the day of Resurrection. Amen.



Monday, February 22, 2016

Psalm 139

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know
very well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the
depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were
formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you.*

Let us pray: Lord God, we cannot escape from you, thank you for this! While our sinfulness may draw us away from you, you remind us that you died for our sin, not our attributes. When we are joyous, may we see you celebrating with us. When we are surrounded by sin and fear, may we see you struggling along with us. Thank you for your unending love. Amen.



Tuesday, February 23, 2016

Psalm 62

¹*For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.*
²*He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken.*
³*How long will you assail a person, will you batter your victim, all of you, as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence?*
⁴*Their only plan is to bring down a person of prominence. They take pleasure in falsehood; they bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. Selah*
⁵*For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.*
⁶*He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.*
⁷*On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.*
⁸*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.*
Selah

⁹Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

¹⁰Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

¹¹Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,

¹²and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

Let us pray: Lord God, we wait for you in the silence. In the cacophony of this world, allow us to take a moment to reflect on all the ways we are blessed, and all the promises you have for us. You are our rock and our Redeemer. Amen.



Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Psalm 84

¹How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!

²My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

³Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

⁴Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.

⁵Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

⁶As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.

⁷They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

⁸O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob!

⁹Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed.

¹⁰For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.

¹¹For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly.

¹²O LORD of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Let us pray: Lord, so often we do not feel your presence in our lives. We know that this is not your absence, indeed through our baptism into Christ, we know you are with us always. Strengthen our faith so that we may see challenges as opportunities to live a life of daring hope. In the name of Christ, Amen!



Thursday, February 25, 2016

Psalm 1

¹Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,

*or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
2 but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law they meditate day and night.
3 They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.*

*4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
6 for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Let us pray: Lord, in so many ways we feel the urge to divide the body of Christ. May we see all people as your priceless treasure and not let politics, borders, or differing viewpoints keep us from loving each other as you first loved us. Amen.



Friday, February 26, 2016

Psalm 95

*O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of
praise!*

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

*For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today
you would listen to his voice!*

*Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
when your ancestors tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.*

*For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they do not regard my ways."*

Therefore in my anger I swore, "They shall not enter my rest."

Let us pray: Lord, you hold all of creation in your hand. If you wished, all the hardhearted could be crushed. Yet you call to all, and give all people daily bread. May we be vessels of your love, seeing each person as another opportunity to love. Through Christ we pray, Amen.



Saturday, February 27, 2016

Psalm 16

¹*Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.*

²*I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."*

³*As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.*

⁴*Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.*

⁵*The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.*

⁶*The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.*

⁷*I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.*

⁸*I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

⁹*Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.*

¹⁰*For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.*

¹¹*You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Let us pray: Lord, we have confidence in your plan for us, and yet we will always have fear and doubt. Assure us that faith is not the absence of doubt, but a living relationship with you. Thank you for loving everything about us. Amen.

