

Devotions – May 26 – June 1, 2019

By Pam Long

Grace Lutheran Church, South Range, MI

Introduction: Sometimes we read the Psalms only responsively during worship or read them as ancient songs, prayers, or praises that belong to a somewhat primitive, pre-Christian religion, but with a little imagination and interpretation they can be just as applicable to life in the U.S. in the 21st century. Let's take a look at **Psalm 97**. You can read it through yourself from your favorite version of the Bible. The following verses are from the NRSV.

Sunday, May 26, 2019

Text: Verse 1: ***¹The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!***

Now, as when it was written, this reminds us that our God is lord over all the earth. In 2019 there are more known coastlands, more continents and many more countries than the writers of the Psalm knew. We can rejoice and be glad that there are people in all of those places who we can call brothers and sisters, who worship the same God, the creator and lord of all. People in diverse countries may speak different languages and worship in different ways, yet we call the same God our king.

Let us pray: *Creator God, help us to recognize others as our true family even though we may speak differently, and help us continue to spread your word to all the earth. Amen.*



Monday, May 27, 2019

Text: Verses 2-3: ***²Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. ³ Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side.***

It was thought that a person could not look at God and live so he created a "veil" so that people could see his power without gazing on his presence. Even today when I see a bright sunny day turn into a thunderstorm I am reminded of God's power and presence. Yet, as the psalm reminds us, the foundation of this power is good and fair, not malicious, so when we see that thunderstorm, we can know that it is not meant to harm us.

God was often manifested as a fire in the Old Testament, but not a fire out of control and burning everything in its path. It was how people knew God was there and wanted to communicate with

them. I think it was also a reminder that God could be dangerous to the enemies of his people as well.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, when we see your sun, your clouds, your thunderstorms, and even a forest fire we know that we are your children and you will be with us always. Amen.*



Tuesday, May 28, 2019

Text: Verses 4-5: ***⁴His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. ⁵ The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.***

Sometimes in a thunderstorm, the house actually shakes and it feels like the earth is trembling. I know this frightens dogs and cats, but perhaps strangely, I have never been afraid of lightning and thunder. It seems like the most powerful thing ever, yet since we know it comes from God, we can all know that it is not meant to harm us. I have never seen an active volcano except on television, and even on TV it looks like a melting mountain. Maybe the writer of this psalm saw a volcano. These manifestations of God's power may seem frightening, but they aren't meant to be destructive. We know that God loves his creation and he loves us as part of that; we shouldn't see ourselves as victims of God's power, but rather protected by a powerful father.

Let us pray: *Father, be with us when we are frightened and comfort us with the knowledge that you sent your Son so that we will be forever safe in your arms. Amen.*



Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Text: Verses 6-7: ***⁶The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory. ⁷ All worshippers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.***

Everyone sees how just and honest our God is and everyone sees how magnificent he is! There is none that can compare, yet somehow we manage to put other images before him. Although we often talk about money being an idol of humankind, we have others that we put before God on a routine basis: our own will and intellect, our children, our houses, our boats and campers

and ORV's, all our toys. I think most of us do also realize how shameful that is and we do return to bow before our God and Father once again.

Let us pray: *Holy God, forgive us for worshipping worthless idols. We know in our hearts that you are the only one worthy of our adoration, yet we are still sinners and sin against you by putting worldly idols before you. Remind us daily to repent and turn back to you as our only God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*



Thursday, May 30, 2019

Text: Verses 8-9: *⁸Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgements, O God. ⁹ For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.*

Indeed, the Mount Zion on which the temple in Jerusalem was built and all the surrounding towns rejoiced because of their righteous God. But now in this day, God is hailed and praised not just in Judah, but all over the planet because of his wisdom and compassion. Many people of many religions, not just Jews and Christians pay tribute to him, listen to him and sing songs of joy and gladness to be sons and daughters of this most Holy Lord.

Let us pray: *Lord God, we do rejoice to belong to you and even when we are ill or in danger, we put our trust in you because you always know what's best for us. Amen.*



Friday, May 31, 2019

Text: Verse 10: *¹⁰The Lord loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.*

It's difficult for me to understand how this must have been interpreted when it was written. I think that it must have been written and understood with the coming Messiah in mind. Clearly, the people living in pre-Christian times knew that sometimes wicked people do kill faithful people as much as they would like to think that the Lord will rescue them. This one verse gives me great comfort to know that especially in this day and age when I am bombarded by senseless

school shootings and murderous road rage killings, and just plain evil things all around me, I will be rescued, perhaps not in this life, but forever when it really matters.

Let us pray: *Compassionate Father, we know that you gave your Son so that we can be with you in a place that knows no evil. Even as we may encounter wickedness here on earth, we thank you giving us eternal safety and peace. Amen.*



Saturday, June 1, 2019

Text: Verses 11-12: **¹¹ Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. ¹² Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!**

We all look toward the time when we can be made righteous in the eyes of God, through the blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This was not always true for me and probably for most of us because while we are here on earth we are still tainted by sin and want things and events to enjoy. We want to grow up, fall in love, marry, have children, get a good job and a nice house. As we get older, we see loss and pain all around us and know that we are helpless to prevent it from happening. It is then that we long for the day that the light will dawn and pain will be no more.

Let us pray: *Our Father in heaven, help us to do what we can for those experiencing evil and pain here on earth so that they, too, can look for the dawn of a new creation and rejoice and give thanks to your holy name. Amen.*

