*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

June 11 - 16

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Monday, June 11 Psalm 23 - 24**

*“The Lord is my shepherd”*

 The flock is secure and also provided for, because their shepherd is faithful in his care for it. So it is for a human being who has the Lord as shepherd. To be Lord means to be the God who is faithful, active in seeing that his people are provided for and protected. The Lord acts in this way “for the sake of his name” (his name, as he tells Moses in Exodus chapter 3, is “Lord”). By being our shepherd, God is shown to be the One his name proclaims him to be.

 Psalm 24 tells us how to be on the receiving end of the blessing of which Psalm 23 speaks. Note verse four which makes four quick, interwoven points about relationship with other people and with God. First, clean hands, which are outward acts of goodness. Second, a clean heart, which is inner goodness. Third, not worshipping idols, which are worldly substitutes for God. Fourth, not telling lies, which means always speaking God’s truth.

*My Heavenly Shepherd. I praise you for your promise to care for me, and I confess the times that I reject your care by wandering off and doing my own thing. Help me to stay close to you through obedience to your will. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 12 Psalm 25 - 26**

*“I put my hope in you”*

 “We can’t wait till we see our grandson again.” If you were to respond, “Well, you’ll have to,” you would have missed the point even if you were technically correct. The expression means “We’re really looking forward to seeing our grandson again and wish we didn’t have to wait.”

 In the Psalms, thinking about the future is important, and hope is waiting for God’s future. It relates to something you believe is going to happen. Psalm 25 emphasizes that our hope is in God. While we can never be 100% certain about earthly realities (such as whether we will, actually, see our grandson again), we can be 100% certain that God will do everything he has promised.

 Psalm 26 speaks of hope being operative in a particular situation: God promises to vindicate the innocent person who has been falsely accused of some kind of offense, be it civil or spiritual. We will be cleared of wrongdoing, if not in this life, then in the next. That is our certain hope!

*Trustworthy God. When we are looking forward to something good, waiting for it is one of the hardest things to do. But our hope is in you, so we will wait with trusting hearts because you always provide what you promise. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 13 Psalm 27 - 28**

 *“One thing I ask of the Lord”*

 “One thing,” says the psalm. “One thing I do,” says Paul (Philippians 3). “You lack one thing,” says Jesus to Martha (Luke 10). “I know one thing,” says the blind man whom Jesus had healed (John 9). These declarations about “one thing” vary, but all recognize that there are moments when you have to focus. The “one thing” of Psalm 27 is to dwell in the Lord’s house. This hardly means living in the Sanctuary of the church. The expression is an image for living in God’s presence and thereby being under God’s protection.

 Psalm 28 speaks about the protection that comes from pursuing the “one thing” of the previous psalm. Against the wicked who plan evil in their hearts, the Lord is a “rock of safety,” “my strength,” “my shield from every danger,” and “the shepherd who leads and carries me forever in his arms.”

*Protecting God. To dwell in your house is to live in close relationship to you so you can protect me from those who oppose you and who seek to do me harm. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

June 11 - 16

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Thursday, June 14 Psalm 29 - 30**

*“Give honor to the Lord”*

 Formally, Psalm 29 addresses supernatural beings in the heavens. But the presence of the psalm in Israel’s prayer book suggests that it belongs in the context of our worship. In one sense, the earthly beings who worship in the temple are listening in on the worship of the angels.

 Through much of Israel’s history, Israelites were tempted to hedge their bets by praying to other gods as well as to the Lord. But if the angels acknowledge that the Lord is the only true God, then worshipers in the temple who slid off home after the service and made a surreptitious offering to some other deity were sadly mistaken to think that it would do them any good.

 While Psalm 29 is about angels praising God, Psalm 30 brings us back to our worship of God. It focuses on what God has done for us by answering our prayers. This kind of worship is like telling a three-part story: you relate how things went wrong for you, how you prayed, and how God answered.

*To the only true God I lift up my prayer. Keep me from being led astray and placing my hope in other gods such as wealth or physical well-being. Amen.*

**Friday, June 15 Psalm 31 - 32**

*“Into your hands I commit my spirit”*

 The words of Psalm 31:5, “Into your hands I commit my spirit,” are spoken by Jesus from the cross. When Pope John Paul II spoke at Yad Vashem, the holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, he began and ended by quoting from this psalm. He commented, “We are overcome by the echo of the heart-rending laments of so many.” But we are not overwhelmed because we know that “evil will not have the last word. Out of the depths of pain and sorrow the believer’s heart cries out: ‘I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.”’”

 Having committed our spirit to God, Psalm 32 speaks to what God does with us, especially with our sin. It tells us that when we confess our sin, he will not allow it to come between us and him. We are cleansed and our hearts are made pure which causes our spirit to rejoice in the Lord.

*Dear God. I confess that I want to be in control of my life. But, I trust in you and I know that my spirit will do much better in your hands than in mine. Therefore, I entrust my spirit into your hands. Thank you for taking good care of it. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 16 Psalm 33 - 34**

*“The Lord’s plans stand firm forever”*

 Psalm 33 declares that God’s act of creation, by giving the sea its boundaries and locking the oceans into vast reservoirs, resemble the act of an engineer who constructs a dam to contain waters. Or we could say it resembles the humbler act of a shepherd who constructs a little dam to contain the waters of a stream so that they will be still waters that don’t frighten the sheep.

 Psalm 34 pictures a person who has gone through terrors - maybe objectively terrifying circumstances, maybe subjectively terrifying fears. It’s an ordinary person, not someone with wealth or position. It’s someone who has had to cry for help. And, it is a person who has survived because God listened and answered. Then God rescued and delivered. In Psalm 33 God contained the waters of creation so that they wouldn’t overwhelm us. In this psalm, it’s as if God’s army camps around the person in need so that the enemies who are on the prowl are no longer able to reach their intended victim.

*Faithful God. You know the plans you have for me, plans for good and not for disaster, to give me a future and a hope. Amen.*