*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 16 - 21

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Monday, July 16 Psalm 79 - 80**

*“Revive us, and we will call on your name”*

A prayer such as Psalm 79 provides us with a way of praying in protest to God when we are suffering: 1. We describe the situation in concrete detail to God. 2. We ask God sharp questions such as, “How long are you going to let this go on?” 3. We appeal to God’s compassion. 4. We urge God to step in and make a difference on our behalf.

Psalm 80 continues the request of God from the previous psalm, and adds the dimension of revival. In American usage, we usually think of revivals as evangelistic campaigns to bring people to faith in Christ. But, in its biblical usage, revival suggests a renewing of spiritual life for those who already know God. It is a prayer for God to bring us back into his presence, to restore us, to bring us back to life with himself. We desire to once again experience God’s face shining on us because it signifies personal warmth, deliverance and blessing.

*Revive me, O Lord God Almighty, in the midst of my troubles, that I may see your smiling face and once again know your presence with me. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 17 Psalm 81 - 82**

*“God presides”*

The two basic elements of a worship service are the sung word (music) and the spoken word (the message). Psalm 81 follows this pattern: the people sing their praises to God, followed by the delivery of the message. Here, though, the message is not given by a minister but by God himself. In it God rehearses his relationship with his people and calls them to account for their response: they are to listen to God when he speaks to them.

Psalm 82 states forcefully why we should listen to God (and, why we should not listen to other “gods”). There are supernatural entities at work in the world who are seeking to frustrate and overturn God’s work, and they are constantly seeking our allegiance. We are to reject them for God, in his judgment, rejects them. In the end, these “gods” will all perish. In opposition to God they came into being; judged and sentenced by God they will one day cease to be.

*I pray to the God who speaks to me every day, that I may listen to and obey your voice, giving my allegiance to no others. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 18 Psalm 83 - 84**

*“O God, don’t sit idly by”*

In Psalm 83 God is silent, mute, quiet, inactive, and hidden at a time when his people are under heavy pressure. The psalm recognizes that silence is not God’s last word. God has shown in the past a willingness to act against people who desired to destroy Israel, so there is hope that God will do so again. Maybe God has good reason for his current silence; maybe God is giving the oppressors a chance to repent. Could this also be why God often seems, to us contemporary believers, silent in the face of culture’s opposition to God?

Psalm 84 moves us from worrying about what is going on in the world and why God seems to be doing little or nothing about it, to the central purpose of the godly life: to live in the presence of God. There we will find comfort, protection, strength, happiness and all the other wonderful gifts God has for us. As Jesus said: “In this world you will have trouble. Be not dismayed. I have overcome the world. My peace I give you.”

*When the world gets me down, Lord, draw me close to you that I may rest in you and unload the weary burdens of my soul. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 16 - 21

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Thursday, July 19 Psalm 85 - 86**

*“Restore us again, O God”*

Psalm 85 teaches that if God’s people are committed to the Lord and hold him in awe, as opposed to foolishly turning to other gods, then surely the Lord will undertake to deliver his people, restore his honor to their land, and make it possible for them to experience well-being. To put it another way, when human beings speak God’s truth toward the heavens, divine faithfulness will look down from heaven upon them.

Psalm 86 continues the praise of God by declaring that he is the one who does wondrous, extraordinary deeds, the kind that began at the exodus and that the people who pray this psalm need to see continued in their own lives. Those miraculous acts of God inspire awe on the part of the people praying, an awe that expresses itself in submission and obedience.

*I praise you, O Lord, for you are compassionate and gracious to me, slow to get angry with me, abounding in love to me, and always faithful to the promises you have made for my welfare. Amen.*

**Friday, July 20 Psalm 87 - 88**

*“My soul is full of trouble”*

Jerusalem, the city of God, reached its highpoint of political and military importance during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. Since then, things have been going downhill. So in almost any period when one imagines this psalm being used, its vision would seem crazy (sort of like England thinking it will one day rise up and rule America again). But, in spite of her decline, Psalm 87 asserts that Jerusalem will rise again because God founded her, she belongs to him, and he gives himself to her. With God, all things are possible!

In the meantime, the suffering of Jerusalem is reflected in the personal suffering expressed in Psalm 88. The speaker describes himself being as good as dead, and the psalm ends without resolution of the pain being experienced. Life doesn’t make sense! As such, this psalm is a gift from God, a prayer for us to pray when we are in the midst of despair and awaiting God’s response.

*O Lord, there are times when I call out to you but I feel that you are far from me. I am told that things will get better but, for now, I am hurting. Still, I await your salvation. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 21 Psalm 89**

*“I will declare your love . . . but you have rejected me”*

Psalm 89 states that the world’s security rests on God’s having constructed it securely. The heavens and the earth witness to God’s steadfastness and trustworthiness. It naturally follows that the creation also embodies and reflects God’s commitment to keep the world secure. What he has created, God will continue to sustain and provide for. The psalm goes on to link God’s work in creation with God’s work in the lives of his people. As creation is secure and provided for by God, so are the lives of his people secure and provided for.

Beginning with verse 38, however, the psalm takes an extraordinary turn. After the earlier celebration of God’s covenant, truthfulness, and commitment, the last part asks, “What has happened to that covenant and truthfulness and commitment?” We do not know to what particular defeat the psalm refers, but something has gone terribly wrong. Having made the kind of commitments referred to in the first part of the psalm, how can God justify allowing his people to be humiliated? Although there is no response to this accusation against God, the last verse of the psalm boldly declares that they will worship God nevertheless.

*Remember me, O God. I worship you as the One who loves me and is faithful to me, even in those times when my experience seems to contradict it. Amen.*