*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 9 - 14

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Monday, July 9 Psalm 69**

*“Those who insult you are also insulting me”*

 “If you were prosecuted for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” is a cliché, but it’s a thought-provoking one. In this psalm, passion for God’s house has consumed someone which, in turn, has brought trouble to that person. Jesus quotes from the psalm in John 15 when he tells the disciples that just as the world has hated him, so it will hate them because they follow him.

 The second half of the psalm addresses the anger that the person feels toward those who are insulting him for remaining obedient to God. It tells us that it is better for us to express to God our anger about our oppressors and our desire for them to be put down than to take action against them ourselves. It encourages us to trust God that, in his time and according to his will, he will take action on our behalf.

*Heavenly Father. There are times when I get frustrated by the way the world disrespects you and disrespects the followers of your Son. While expressing my frustration to you, help me to continue loving those who frustrate me. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 10 Psalm 70 - 71**

*“Come quickly, Lord, and help me”*

 It’s sometimes said that God’s answer to prayer may be “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait,” and that we must be submissive to God’s timing. While in the end we have no alternative to submitting to God’s timing, the beginning and end of Psalm 70 indicate that it is fine to tell God to hurry and not to delay, and indeed for this request to be the beginning and end of our prayer. When you are in a desperate situation, you don’t have to hesitate to tell God that you need action and you need it now. When the going gets tough, the tough get praying, and this is a way they can pray.

 Psalm 71 encourages us to pray “always.” In the past, “my praise has always been to you.” In the present, I need you to be “a shelter to which I can always come.” In the future, “I will hope always.” The psalm affirms that God is true to his people yesterday, today and forever. Therefore we can come to him with confidence “all day long.”

*Unfailing God. You are the same yesterday, today and forever. As I have put my trust in you in the past, so I will trust you today. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 11 Psalm 72 - 73**

 *“As for me, how good it is to be near God”*

 Psalm 72 is a vision laid before the king (“king” and “royal son” are two ways of describing the same person). It involves the exercise of authority and making decisions with faithfulness in relation to God and to the people. While governance is to be concerned with the good of the people as a whole, it must have a special concern for the lowly, the needy, and the poor, who have few resources, and for their protection from the vicious, the violent, and the extortioner who find ways of robbing them of their crops and animals.

 In general, the psalms see two stages in the way God answers prayer. In stage one, God has heard the prayer and he has made a commitment to doing something concerning what was prayed about. In the second stage, God acts to implement his decision. Psalm 73 belongs between stage one and stage two. It looks back on the process of coming to a conviction that God is going to act, and it looks forward with an attitude of trust to when thanksgiving will be offered to God for having acted.

*Dear God. I pray that those in authority will govern according to your will. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 9 - 14

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Thursday, July 12 Psalm 74 - 75**

*“Rise up, O God, and defend your cause”*

 The Prophets of Israel have acknowledged that though it’s fair due to Israel’s disobedience for God to act against Israel and to use foreign powers to do so, it’s also to be expected that God will eventually act against these foreign powers and restore Jerusalem. That’s all the more the case when these foreigner’s action involves an unholy contempt for God. Psalm 74 implies that the sequence seems to have gotten stuck. Disobedience has been punished, but restoration has not yet taken place. When will God act?

 While Psalm 75 does not answer the question of *when* God will act, it assures God’s people that God will act. God is putting on notice the people who are arrogant toward him and believe their wickedness will have no consequences. The image is of a cup filled with spiced wine (these are not nice-tasting spices) that will be poured out on the overconfident faithless people who continue to oppress God’s faithful ones.

*Humbling God. Show me the way to wait patiently for your salvation. Amen.*

**Friday, July 13 Psalm 76 - 77**

*“You alone are to be feared”*

 The Hebrew word for *fear* is a tricky one because it can mean *fear, awe* or *respect*. It appears four times in Psalm 76 (verses 7, 8, 11 and 12). More often than not, when you read about the fear of God in English Bible translations, you need mentally to substitute a phrase such as “awe before God,” “reverence for God,” “submission to God,” or “obedience to God.” When you are in a right relationship with God, then the word for *fear* has a positive connotation. When you have gone wrong in relation to God, then it has negative connotations of being afraid or fearful.

 Psalm 77 expresses a determination to remember how things were in the past. When we do so, we are reminding ourselves of the huge things that God did for us, and we are reminding ourselves that the problems of the present will not be the final word. We are also reminding God of those things, and in effect we are saying to God, “Please bless us as you have in the past.”

*O Lord you are awesome and worthy of my respect. As you have been gracious to me in the past, I pray that you be gracious to me today. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 14 Psalm 78**

 *“He remembered that they were merely mortal”*

 One piece of good news in Psalm 78 is that God thinks about our frailty and makes allowance for it; God is mindful that we are mortal, “a passing wind that does not return.” We are like the wind, not in the sense of a genuinely powerful wind but in the sense of a wind that is here one moment and gone the next. So God makes allowance for our frailty and does not blast us with his own powerful wind in a way that would destroy us. God holds back out of self-restraint and compassion.

 God has many opportunities to exercise self-restraint and compassion. The psalm reviews the story of God’s involvement with Israel when it reminds us of what God did to the Egyptians when he demanded that they let the Israelites go. This involvement should have aroused a response of gratitude from his people, but all it aroused was defiance. So God responded with anger. Three times the psalm refers to the people’s “testing” God to see how far they could push him. Could they get God to abandon them? Answer: No, they couldn’t. Each time it looked as if God had turned his back on them he returned to them and acted on their behalf.

*Loving God. Thank you for remembering that I am weakly human and in daily need of your merciful care and forgiveness. Amen.*