*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

June 25 - 30

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Monday, June 25 Psalm 46 - 47**

*“God is our refuge and strength”*

 For nearly a thousand years, much of what is now Europe comprised the Holy Roman Empire. It had a legislative assembly called a diet, which in 1521 met at a German city called Worms to consider the pope’s condemnation of the teachings of Martin Luther. The Edict of Worms declared that Luther should be arrested and punished. Luther, threatened with execution, took Psalm 46 as the basis for his defense. He could indeed say that in his time the earth was shaking and nations were raging; they were raging at him. At that time he also wrote the hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” which he based on the psalm.

 Psalm 47 is a celebration of the kingship of God, who rules over the whole earth. The pagan nations defeated in Psalm 46 are called to submit to the rule of God and to join in festive praise of God, clapping their hands and raising their voices in song along with “all the kings of the earth.” Peoples of all ethnicity and heritage join in the celebration as well.

*Protecting God. You are with me every day, ready to help me in times of trouble. I praise you, Lord*

*Most High, that you love me, and I honor you. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 26 Psalm 48 - 49**

*“The permanence of God’s Holy City – the impermanence of wealth”*

 Psalm 48 encourages people to go and have a good look at Jerusalem, the Holy City. Its glory starts from the city’s natural impressiveness and beauty, but its true glory comes from God making it his home. The psalm goes on to recall how foreign forces tried to take Jerusalem and failed. Eventually, however, God let the city of Jerusalem fall, and Lamentations 2 pictures passersby snidely asking, “Is this the city that was called a beauty, the great glory of God?” Still, the psalm reminds us of God’s eternal intention for this city and gives us reason for hope.

 When Psalm 49 characterizes well-to-do people as thinking that their nice homes will be theirs forever, it isn’t implying this is their conscious assumption – it’s more the implication of the attitude they take to their homes. The same assumption is implicit in the instinct to other forms of accumulation, like money (or clothes, or shoes – you can name your own accumulation of choice). The biblical ideal is for those who are wealthy to give generously to those who are in need.

*Everlasting God. My temptation is to put my trust in impermanent of wealth. My desire is to trust only in you. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 27 Psalm 50 - 51**

 *“Fulfill your vows to the Most High”*

 Psalm 50 pictures people who are committed in their participation in worship. They say all the right things there, but their attitudes outside worship don’t correspond to their words. It’s as if they are throwing away God’s words whenever they are away from the Sanctuary. Some don’t care what they say about other people. Others, whereas they may think of tolerance as a virtue, God sees it as a vice. Only if there is moral direction to your life can you expect to see God’s salvation.

 In Psalm 51, David acknowledges his sin of adultery with Bathsheba. In such a situation, offering sacrifices to God is not the answer. When your wife has caught you being unfaithful, a gift of flowers is not going to get you anywhere. It’s the same with God. All you can do when you have committed serious sin is cast yourself on God’s grace as someone who is crushed and broken by the reality of your wrongdoing.

*Loving God. In your mercy, we pray that you not treat us as we deserve. In your grace, we pray that you forgive our sin. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

June 25 - 30

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Thursday, June 28 Psalm 52 - 53**

*“Only fools say in their hearts, ‘There is no God’”*

 As is the case with Psalm 51, there is a connection between Psalm 52 and an episode in David’s life (see 1 Samuel 21 – 22). The psalm depicts Doeg as one who exults in evil, plans evil, gives himself to evil. He tells the kind of deceitful lies that destroys someone; he has the kind of resources that will buy someone’s downfall. He takes no account of God’s commitment, of God’s willingness to act on behalf of the faithful. Thus, the person confronted by this dangerous threat can stand tall and look forward to the moment when God will eliminate the threat. He knows there is a God and he trusts in him.

 Psalm 53 takes the individualized concept of the evil person in the previous psalm who lives as if there is no God, and applies it generally. These are people who have made the logical inference that in our moral lives we can live as if God is not real. They are people with no moral commitments. The conviction that “there is no God here” generates a situation in which “there is no one doing good here.” They are ruthless in the way they indulge themselves at the expense of others.

*You are God! I worship you for you have revealed your law to me so I can obey you and act with righteousness in your sight. I seek to be one who does good. Amen.*

**Friday, June 29 Psalm 54 - 55**

*“Give your burdens to the Lord”*

 Once again we have a psalm related to the life of David in which he allows God to take control of his situation (see 1 Samuel 23 and 26). He had several opportunities to kill King Saul and become the next king, but he didn’t take them. He knew it was not up to him to determine Saul’s destiny. Psalm 54 is a statement of trust in God and a promise to give God the praise when he has acted to elevate David as king.

 Psalm 55 describes the experience of attack and pressure, of people’s wicked harassment, of deceit and betrayal, all being allowed by God. At the moment it is happening God seems to be doing nothing about it. What do we do? We take everything evil that comes our way and give it to God. God is able to both sustain us in our inner being and protect us from the implementation of the threats and the success of the deceit. In the psalm, protest moves toward confidence, and it gives another illustration of how the psalms provide ways to pray for people in all degrees of need.

*Embracing God. I give you my burdens. Thank you for taking care of me. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 30 Psalm 56 - 57**

 *“I put my trust in you”*

 Psalm 56 interweaves talk of fear and trust in a way that might look contradictory but reflects the way things are in such a crisis. Fear is a God-created human instinct that encourages us to avoid danger. It is when a person undertakes an act of bravery in circumstances of which they are properly fearful that they show courage. And it is in such circumstances that the question of trust in God arises. Trust in God is the antidote to paralyzing fear, because the reality of God is bigger than the reality of the object that causes us fear.

 There are generally two biblical phrases thought to be the most frequent commands in the Bible: “Remember” and “Don’t be afraid.” Psalm 57 implies that the two might be connected, for one key to not being afraid is to remember past experiences of God’s faithfulness like when people attacked us and then fell by means of the trap they set. Remembering the past is key to living in the present and trusting God for the future.

*Trustworthy God. When I feel afraid I will center my mind on trusting you, and I will know that there is nothing that can separate me from your love. Amen.*