*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 30 – August 4

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Monday, July 30 Psalm 103 - 104**

*“Praise the Lord, O my soul”*

 Whereas we would always like for worship to come naturally, Psalm 103 assumes that there are times we need to stir ourselves up to worship. So “I” say to “my soul” and to “all my inmost being” that they must worship God. It’s not just that you tell yourself to feel things you don’t fell or to sing loudly when it doesn’t seem natural. It’s rather that you remind yourself of the reasons for worship. We worship God because of all he has done for us – for his forgiveness, for saving us from death, for filling our lives with good things, and much, much more.

 Psalm 104 points out what God has done for us in creation. It starts with a poetic portrayal of the way God went about making the world at the beginning, but it does not picture God as simply setting the world going and then letting it work on its own. God is active in the world now as he is pictured sitting in heaven with his watering can, watering the earth so the ground will produce its fruit. It is God who gives life; it is God who continues to sustain life.

*Providing God. I praise you as creator and sustainer of the world, and as creator and sustainer of me, your child. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 31 Psalm 105**

*“Give thanks to the Lord”*

 You could say that Psalm 105 is Israel’s response to the question “What do we have to be grateful for?” Its answer reminds Israel to be grateful for the extraordinary sequence of events that lay at the foundation of its life as a people, a story that is told in the Bible from Genesis through Joshua. The story establishes how God is the one from whom Israel is to seek help, the one to whom it has recourse. While this is a reason for gratitude, it is also a reason for caution as Israel’s story shows how often she had been inclined to look to different deities or to other nations as allies, instead of looking to God.

 The relationship between God and Israel started off as a covenant (a covenant is a promised commitment) that God made to Israel, and it continued as a covenant that Israel also made to God. Failure to keep their commitment means Israel risked being treated the same way as the Gentile nations, which is what actually happened. So the psalm ends by reminding Israel to obey God’s law, which is what they promised God that they would do.

*Holy God. I thank you for your love and commit to following your way. Amen.*

**Wednesday, August 1 Psalm 106**

 *“The Lord was angry with his people”*

 While Psalm 105 told the story of Israel as the story of God’s protection and faithfulness, Psalm 106 goes over much of the same story (though it starts later and it finishes later) in order to bring out a different message. While it does talk about God’s blessing the people and delivering them, it concentrates on their unresponsiveness. If Psalm 105 is thus more a salvation story, Psalm 106 is more a disobedience story.

 The people’s unresponsiveness to God goes back to their time in Egypt, when Moses and Aaron had a hard time convincing the people that God was acting on their behalf. God delivered them anyway, and they recognized this fact, but they then soon forgot, and the story of their journey toward the promised land is one of testing God, being jealous of Moses, making idols, failing to trust in the nature of the country that God was taking them to, and joining in the worship of the false gods of the nations around them. As a result, they were constantly oppressed by their enemies rather than enjoying the protection of God.

*O Lord, may I be quick to obey and slow to rebel against you. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

July 30 – August 4

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Thursday, August 2 Psalm 107**

*“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so”*

 When I was leading youth ministry in the 1980s, one of our camp activities during the evening meetings was the “say so” when the students talked about what they were learning and experiencing about God. It had a powerful impact on the youth to hear such testimony from their peers, and it also had a powerful effect on the individual who did the sharing.

 The opening lines suggest that the testimony urged by Psalm 107 relates to the return of people to their home country from exile in a foreign land and what this event meant to them. The psalm then celebrates their restoration from four types of experience. For some people the experience meant being lost, hungry, and thirsty. For some it meant captivity and darkness. For some it meant sickness or injury and the likelihood they would die. For some it meant a hazardous journey across the ocean to start a new life on some other Mediterranean shore. The redeemed of the Lord are to “say so” for their own sake, and for the sake of others.

*Lord. I will praise you and speak of your redemption of my life to others. Amen.*

**Friday, August 3 Psalm 108 - 109**

*“My heart is confident in you, O God”*

 Psalm 108 asks the question: “What do you do when you don’t see God fulfilling his promises?” The middle section of the psalm recalls assurances God made way back at the beginning of Israel’s life. The problem is that the reality of Israel’s subsequent experience often contrasted with those assurances. The recollection leads into protest, prayer, and the expression of the conviction that God will fulfill the promises. The psalm begins with an extended expression of praise for God’s commitment and truthfulness, though this praise leads into the concerns of the middle section.

 Psalm 109 is the prayer of someone who has been falsely accused, with verses six to nineteen quoting the words of the accusers against the psalmist. Most troubling is how they take God’s name in vain by attaching God’s name to their untrue charges. The psalmist’s answer is to pray. He is right to be angry, and he is entitled to express his anger rather than pretending it does not exist, but he expresses it to God and asks God to take action on his behalf. He does not seek personal revenge.

*Dear God. I bring the highs and the lows of my life to you. Amen.*

**Saturday, August 4 Psalm 110 - 112**

 *“Praise the Lord”*

 In Psalm 110, God’s opening and closing words are promises that the king will be able to lead his people with God’s power behind him. The king is also a priest who blesses the people and brings them into relationship with God. The New Testament uses Psalm 110 to help us understand the ministry of Jesus who is both our powerful king and our reconciling priest.

 Psalm 111 makes the connection between making a commitment to worshipping God with a commitment to “doing” the requirements of his commandments. God has “done” on behalf of us; in loving response, we are called to “do” on behalf of God.

 The Bible has no ideal of everyone having the same wealth. It realizes that some people are better off than others, and calls those people to be gracious and to help others who are experiencing difficult times. As you live this generous and faithful life and stay reliant on God, Psalm 112 promises that God will take care of all your needs.

*I praise you, Lord, for calling me into relationship with you that I may do your will, and for providing me enough to share with others. Amen.*