*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 26 – July 1

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Monday, June 26 Psalm 13 - 14**

*“How long?”*

 How long, how long, how long, how long? Psalm 13 is written for someone facing a problem that has been going on for a long period of time. It encourages him to continue trusting in God’s commitment and to expect to celebrate God’s deliverance, in spite of seeing no human end of his trouble. It challenges him even to talk about the moment when he will be singing God’s praises because God *has* acted in deliverance and done that thing of which there is no sign at the present moment. It’s one thing to say you’re confident of God’s commitment, another to act as if the deliverance has already happened.

 Psalm 14 can be thoughts of as God’s “how long?” as in, “how long before you begin looking to me, asking me what I am doing, urging me to get involved?” Foolish persons look everywhere before they look to God, who has been right here with us all along.

*My God who is Present with me. I confess there are times when my discouragement with life’s problems causes me to question your presence. Strengthen my faith, I pray, so I can trust you whole-heartedly. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 27 Psalm 15 – 16**

*“A godly and full life”*

 The book of Psalms began with a reminder that people can’t separate their praise of God from the question of whether their lives are in accordance with the will of God. Now that we have read a few psalms since that expectation, we are reminded of the point here in Psalm 15 in case we have come to think that honoring God in praise or prayer is possible without honoring God in one’s relationship with other people and in one’s life in society.

 Where Psalm 15 focuses on living a godly life, Psalm 16 speaks to living a full life. When the psalm speaks of God’s not abandoning our life to *Sheol*, it means God will not let the person die prematurely. Of course, we all eventually end up in *Sheol -* it’s the place you go when you die. It’s not a place of suffering; if anything, it’s a place of relief from suffering. What the Psalm objects to is our being in *Sheol* before we have had the chance to live a full life.

*Life-Giving God. You have given me life, measuring out its time limits here on earth; and, you have given me purpose for my life which is to be in relationship with you through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 28 Psalm 17 - 18:15**

 *“Test my heart, Lord”*

 What kind of person do you have to be in order to be at ease with the idea of God’s testing your heart - that is, looking inside you and examining your deepest self? The psalm uses the idea of refining silver, heating it to huge temperatures to reveal and remove impurities. If you are to invite such testing with a confidence that it will not uncover anything unconfessed, you have to be a person who has looked unflinchingly at your own life and not hidden from the truth about yourself. Having uncovered sin within - and, we all sin! - you have confessed your sin to God, received his forgiveness, and you are now ready for God to test your heart.

 Psalm 18 begins by giving a testimony of glory to God. It expresses gratitude to God, something we can do silently, but is here done publicly so that others may hear and join us. As a community we rejoice in God together because we are all glad about what God has done for members of our spiritual family.

*Loving God. Even though I sin against you, you have promised forgiveness when I confess. Give me insight by your Holy Spirit to look honestly within myself. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 26 – July 1

*Summer in the Psalms*

**Thursday, June 29 Psalm 18:16 - 50**

*“God reached down from on high and took hold of me”*

 Psalm 18 is David’s story of his life, told here in the Psalms and in the book of Second Samuel 22. First Samuel tells the story of David before he became king of Israel, as well as the stories of the prophet Samuel and Saul who preceded David as king. Second Samuel tells the story of David after he became king. We can divide the psalm into six parts:

Part 1: God is a Rock for David (verses 1-3)

Part 2: David asks for help (verses 4-6)

Part 3: God answers David (verses 7-19)

Part 4: Why God gives help to people (verses 20-27)

Part 5: Everything that David owns comes from God (verses 28-42)

Part 6: God made David king (verses 43-50)

*My God who Rescues me. Just as you loved David and rescued him in his time of trouble, I know that you love me and will answer me when I call to you for help. Amen.*

**Friday, June 30 Psalm 19 - 20**

*“May the words of my mouth . . . be pleasing in your sight”*

 The first part of Psalm 19 talks about the universe declaring God’s splendor. The cosmos gives out a clear message, but more is needed. In connection with the question of what makes people live their lives God’s way, the middle part of the psalm attaches importance to the concrete teaching you find throughout God’s Word. This leads into the closing prayer which asks God’s help to speak the right words to other people and to God.

 Psalm 20 is a prayer of blessing that the people pray for their leader. In this case their leader is the king, and a key aspect of the king’s responsibility is leading the people to face the enemy when trouble comes. The second half of the psalm begins with the king’s response to the people’s prayer (in verse 6). To know people are praying for you is a blessing, not just because it indicates their concern but because you know that God takes note of the prayers of his people.

*Dear God. I pray that you bless our leaders, especially in times of trouble. Answer them when they call out to you and help them to know your will. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 1 Psalm 21 - 22**

*“My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?”*

 While Psalm 21 speaks of God wonderfully blessing the king with victory over the enemy, Psalm 22 laments those times when we feel that God is withholding his blessing, with the first verse famously quoted by Jesus on the cross.

 When God blesses us it is not merely for our personal benefit. As God said to Abraham (Genesis 12): “I will bless you so you may be a blessing.” The idea is that Abraham (and now Israel’s king) would be so blessed that other people would see what God has done for them, trust in God and pray to him, and ask God to bless them. We are blessed so we can witness the goodness of God to the world, thus drawing the world to God.

 Psalm 22 is a prayer for Israelites (and for us) to pray when we need to acknowledge our sense of abandonment and our overpowering fears without worrying that God will disapprove. This is how the crucified Jesus used the psalm. It also looks forward to thanking God for the deliverance that will come in his time.

*Faithful God. There are times that I feel you have forsaken me. Thank you that I can admit it freely to you, and trust that you will bless me in your time. Amen.*