

The Psalms: A Bible Within The Bible

March 3, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled "Psalms, a Bible Within the Bible." Thank you to Glynis, Rhonda, Gloria, and Dawn for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Psalm 150. Happy birthday to Violet and happy anniversary to Heather and Paul.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning, everyone. It's good to hear the buzz. It's awesome. And the south wind is blowing in some nicer weather. But I can't say that I object to all this glorious sunshine. Even yesterday, while it was a little chilly outside, it was sure nice to see that sunshine. I think we got a little cloudiness on the way, but the temperatures are warming up. How good is it to think that spring is just around the corner? I don't know. I used to have a friend that lived, that had come from the Caribbean, and she would say, "Oh, it's so cold here." It's like, "Yeah, it doesn't really get to be warm here until May. Sorry about your luck." And even then, it's kind of iffy. So, we are so happy to have you here this morning, and great to see all these smiling faces smiling back at me. It really is good to be here, isn't it?

This morning, I'd like to read Psalm 8 for us. "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands. You put everything under their feet, all flocks and herds and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea, all that swim in the paths of the seas. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." Amen.

So we have a few announcements this morning. We do have some congratulations and celebrations. So we've got Martin having a birthday and Tim as well. Martin's birthday's on Friday. So if you're one of his friends, don't forget to text him. And thank you to Marcy, Helen and Barbara for organizing the games on Friday night.

Then we also have a prayer request for Helene and Violet who are visiting Halifax today. And by God's grace, they are, they have a reunited family, which is awesome. Her sister Leya and her children are living in an apartment. The kids who are school-aged have started school, which is awesome. Their parents are living in a transitional hotel at the moment. And at the end of our service, we're going to have a short video to mark some of their progress and their visit together. And then finally, as I go to God in prayer, let's remember that we are now beginning the third year of the war in Ukraine. We have wars in Gaza and I know many countries are still at war and continue to be at war. So let's go ahead and pray to our father.

Dearest Lord God, we do come to you and pray for peace. God, it seems impossible, but with you, we know that all things are possible. And I pray that you would stir the minds and hearts of people

to back down from their stances, God. And just really, we pray for our world. God, we are so grateful that we can come together this morning. We ask your blessing on our meeting together and we thank you so much for the abundant blessings you give us in this world, God. And truly, we are grateful for you and for Jesus. God, we love you. We thank you. We're so grateful for your spirit. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Call To Worship

Thank you, Glynnis. I add my welcome to hers this morning. So this morning, we're going to do something that we don't do very often. We are going to have a reading that we all do together. So I'd like to invite you to stand. And so there will be a reading on the screen that says call, and I'm going to do that. And then there's going to be a reading on the screen that says response, and you're going to read that. Okay? Everybody got it? All right.

And God said, let there be light, and there was light.

God called the light day and the darkness he called night, and there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

He gathers the waters of the sea into jars. He puts the deep into storehouses.

For he spoke and it came to be. He commanded and it stood firm.

Every day I'll praise you and I will extol your name forever and ever.

One generation commends your work to another. They tell of your mighty acts.

They tell the power of your awesome works and I will proclaim your great deeds.

I will speak and praise the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever. And everybody said together, amen.

Let's sing.

Communion

I want to start by saying something off topic. When I came in this morning, I was met by somebody about this high, I'm used to being met by Ed, but I was met by somebody about this high who welcomed me. I just want to say how much I appreciate, and I'm sure God appreciates, are so many young people in our midst. We've got a lot of children and we've got a lot of teenagers, young adults, and it's so nice to have you all here and worshipping God. It's good to have a variety of ages in our group.

I want to read Psalms 53. At the beginning of Isaiah 53, I think the emphasis is on God does not operate in the world that in the way the world thinks that power should work. That the people of power in our world are people who have money, credentials, education, and it starts out with, it says, "Who would have seen the Lord's hand in this? It was the will of the Lord that his servant grow like a plant, taking root in dry ground, and this servant is Jesus. He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him." When you see films and it shows a picture of Jesus, it shows him as being pretty handsome, but that's not true. It said he had no dignity or beauty to make us take

notice of him. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him. We despised him and rejected him. He endured suffering and pain. No one would even look at him. We ignored him as if he was nothing, and that's the person of power.

Then the next section is talking about his suffering. Suffering is compatible with God's love. God can use people who are suffering. He loves them, he can work through them, and you can have a big impact on people while you're suffering. It says,

"He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God, but because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. He was healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received. All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way, but the Lord made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved. He was treated harshly but endured it humbly. He never said a word like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared. He never said a word. He was arrested and sentenced and led off to die, but no one cared about his fate. He was put to death for the sins of our people. He was placed in a grave with those who are evil. He was buried with the rich, even though he'd never committed a crime or ever told a lie. The Lord said it was my will that he should suffer. His death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness, and so he will see his descendants, he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed. After a life of suffering he will again have joy. He will know that he did not suffer in vain.

And that's kind of interesting that that's where he gets his joy, knowing that he didn't suffer in vain. My devoted servant with whom I am pleased will bear the punishment of many, and for his sake I will forgive them. And so I will give him a place of honor, a place among the great and the powerful. He willingly gave his life and shared the fate of evil man. He took the place of many sinners and prayed that they might forgive him. Jesus was treated as if he did everything that we have done. As if he did everything, all the evil that has been done in the earth. He was treated as if he had done everything we have done, so that we can be treated as though we have done everything that he has done.

So that's pretty neat that basically that's what this is saying. He took the punishment and he was treated, and basically that's what this whole book is about, is he was treated in the way we should have been treated, and as if he'd done all the things that everybody in the world has done so that we can be treated as though we have done everything that he has done. And we can accept that with faith. And that's the gospel, that's the good news of the Bible, that's the purpose of the Bible.

Thank you God so much for sending Jesus to the earth and thank you for Christ for coming to the earth and thank you for enduring your suffering and thank you for enduring it willingly so that we can be forgiven for our sins and be treated as if we are perfect and pure by God and that God will look at us and see us as beautiful, pure people in spite of the fact that we are really not, but that in your eyes we are beautiful because of what he did and that we are pure and good because of what he did. And we pray that we will have the faith to accept that and that we will, in our joy, that we will be willing and eager to share your word with others and to do everything that we can for others. In Jesus' name, amen. [MUSIC]

Scripture Reading

Psalm 150:1-6

The scripture this morning, I'm going to speak from this seat because my back is sore. It's 150, Psalm 150. Praise the Lord, praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power, praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre. Praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe. Praise him with a clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. We all have breath, let's all say, praise the Lord.
[MUSIC]

Sermon

The Psalms: A Bible Within The Bible

Good morning, everyone. [Good morning.] Thank you very much for being with us today. I want to spend some time in the book of Psalms. Psalms remind us that God is everywhere. A gentleman, by the name of Oliver Holden wrote these words in the late 1700s, here are his words. Those who seek the throne of grace find that throne in every place. If we live a life of prayer, God is present everywhere. In our sickness and our health, in our want or in our wealth. If we look to God in prayer, God is present everywhere. When our earthly comforts fail, when the woes of life prevail, it is time for earnest prayer. God is present everywhere. Then my soul in every straight to my father come and wait. He will answer every prayer because God is present everywhere.

I want to spend some time talking about the Psalms, sometimes called the Bible within the Bible. There are 150 Psalms. They are individual, they are specific, and even though they've been written thousands of years ago, they remain profound and helpful and hopeful for all of us. They are quite literally 150 sermons in the Psalms. Quite incredible. Some very brief, some lengthy as I've said. And many of the Psalms speak the unspeakable. The wonderful ballerina, Anna Pavlona, was asked, "Anna, when you dance, what are you saying to us?" And her response was, "If I could tell you, I wouldn't need to dance."

The Psalms are sensitive to our nature. Even though written thousands of years ago, we can put ourselves into the words written by multiple people in the Psalms. And I would encourage all of us that on occasion, just grab a song, get to know it, love it. Is it a hymn? Yes. Is it a poem? Yes. Is it a sermon? Yes. Is it something that will help me? Yes. It's ongoing. We capture emotions in the Psalms, love and joy and peace, but at the same time, sadness, depression, anxiety, they make us think, they can help us get through the day, the week, the month and the years ahead. It is a Bible within the Bible. And I would encourage each one of us, sometime this week, just grab a song. It doesn't matter which one it is. Just grab a song, turn to the Psalms and just get to know these wonderful words.

The Psalms portray God, His everlasting love for each one of us. And I suppose, and I think there's no doubt about it, that the beautiful Psalm 23 is the Psalm that's quoted many, many times. Depending on what version you have, the translation goes something like this. "The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His own namesake. Even

though I walk through the valley of a shadow of death, I will not fear, no evil. For you are with me. You're rod and staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." And even though we have read these words over and over and over again, may I just one more time read these words.

"You, Lord, anoint my head with your oil. My cup overflows from you. And surely from the Lord, goodness and love follow me. They follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." He has been with us from our first breath. He was with us even before we were born. He's with us today, and He will never leave us. He will never forsake us. We will dwell in the house of the Lord, not for a week, not for a month, not for a year, but forever and forever and forever. God will recreate all things from the beginning to new beginnings.

So in the Psalms, nature itself declares God. Psalm 19, "The heavens declare the nature of God. The skies proclaim the work of God's hands." Day after day, they pour forth speech. And you know what that's like when you have a majestic sky. You know what it's like. It's powerful. It's wonderful. You can't really describe it. It takes your breath away. These are wonderful gifts from God.

"Their voice goes out into the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from His pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run His course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other. Nothing is hidden from its heat." And I don't know if you've ever had the experience when you get far enough up north. And the lights are off. There's the darkness, but you look at the sky and you just say, "Wow!" The stars, the satellites, even stars that are going across the sky that have burned out thousands of years ago, the trail of them still exists. The past comes to the present when you see the wonderful stars all throughout the evening in the nights. It's beautiful. And so God just reminds us not only of the beauty that we have, but He gives us this display of the stars, knowing that we are so grateful that God loves us even more than the stars.

So even today the Psalms offer strength and peace. Psalm 103, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, for my inmost being. Praise His holy name." Listen to this. He forgives all my sins, not just some, all my sins. And He heals my diseases. He redeems my life from the pit, if you've ever felt that way, and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with God's good things. Wonderful Psalm. Psalm 124. The Psalms remind us that even though we have endured difficulties in life, and haven't we all, God has always been with us. If the Lord had not been on our side when people attacked us, when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive. The flood would have engulfed us. The torrent would have swept over us. The raging waters would have swept us away. Our help, however, is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.

It's amazing to me, no matter what generation we've lived in, these Psalms are for all of us. A Bible within the Bible, if you will. And then there are lament Psalms. Spoken in the Psalms with passionate grief and sorrow, because we've all had times of grief and sorrow. And maybe you're listening to this today somewhere, and you are in that period of sorrow and grief.

Psalm 3 says this. This is the way the psalmist felt. "O Lord, how many are my foes? How many rise up against me? Many are saying of me, God will not deliver him. However, you are a shield, O God, around me. My glorious one who lifts up my head to the Lord, I cry aloud, and the Lord answers me

from his holy hill. Therefore, I will lie down and sleep. I wake again because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side. No, arise, O Lord, and deliver me, O my God." Many of the Psalms are these personal testimonies.

Psalms are important, and I feel like I don't do it as often as I need to. Maybe you feel the same. But it's important to share our faith in words and in how we live our lives. "O my people, hear my teaching. Listen to the words of my mouth. I will speak in stories, in parables. I will utter things out of my mouth, things that we have heard and known, things our fathers have told us. We will not hide from them. We won't hide our children. We will tell them to the next generation, the praiseworthiness, the deeds of the Lord, his power and the wonders he has done." Then he says, "He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them. Even the children yet to be born, and they in turn will tell their children. They put their trust in God and be faithful to him, and we are doing the same today." For many of us who are getting older, we can recall that. Aunts, uncles, children who are now adults raising their children, how they were raised with this precious faith of love.

And when you think of the wonderful statements in the Bible, the beautifulness of love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control, these are all gifts that we receive and gifts we give. It's living our life in such a way that honors God, that trusts God, that allows God's Holy Spirit to change our lives, to grow and to develop into maturity in the faith of God. And all this is because of the Psalms, many of them from the Psalms, where even though they were written long before Jesus was born, these precious Psalms are still so important to us today. "O my people, hear my teaching, listen to the words of my mouth." And then it says that they will teach their children, and their children will teach their children, and on and on.

So the Psalms were written by and sung by many of them, most of them, by a gentleman we don't know, except his name is in the Psalms over and over and over and over again. His name is Asaph, a wonderful writer of hymns. I wish we would know more about him. But in the Psalms, that name is pronounced. In Psalm 80, he says this, "Hear us, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who sit enthroned between the cherubim. Shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might, come and save us, restore us. O God, make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved." I think there are times in all of our lives where we are very fearful. We don't want to face what we're going to have to face, what we think we may have to face. But it's a reminder, and the Psalms help us with this. He's always with us, never leaving us, never forsaking us. It's written thousands of years ago, it's just as relevant today.

Psalms are often encouraging, mostly. And yet, there is lament. The sun doesn't shine every day. Psalm 5, "Give ear to my words, O Lord. Consider my sighing. Listen to my cry for help." Have you ever had that experience? You somehow just can't figure it out. You've wept, you're angry, you're upset. Turn to the Lord. "Hear my words, O Lord. Consider my sighing. Listen to these words. My cry for help. For to you I pray, O Lord, morning by morning, I lay my requests before you, and I wait for your answer in expectation. But let all who take refuge in you be glad. Let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those that love your name may rejoice in you. For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous, and you surround them with favor as with a child." If somehow we can just remember that no matter what is going on in our life, wonderfully happy, wonderfully

successful, horribly poor, horribly upset, all kinds of emotions, the promise of God remains the same. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am with you. Help me. Always. Not a second goes by when he's not with us. So because of that, we rejoice.

Psalm 10. There are times when we wonder if God is with us, and he says, "I'll never leave you, and I'll never forsake you." Sometimes it's difficult to believe. Sometimes there are people who want to hurt us. But God never leaves us. Psalm 10. "A wicked man hunts down the weak who are caught in the schemes of the wicked man. He boasts of the cravings of his heart. He blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord. In his pride, the wicked does not seek the Lord in all his thoughts." There's no room for God for this man. His ways are always prosperous, but he's haughty. God's laws are far from him. He sneers at his enemies. He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me. I will always be happy, and I will never have trouble." Ha-ha. Good luck. "His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats. Trouble and evil are under his tongue. He lies in wait near the village. From ambush, he murders the innocent. He lies in wait to catch the helpless. But in the end, we take refuge in the Lord." Psalm 11. "In the Lord, I take refuge." This was written thousands of years ago, yet we continue to take the refuge and love that God promises us.

In fact, Psalm 136, the psalmist writes over and over and over again that God's love endures forever. Some 25 times, the psalmist reminds us of God's love in that chapter alone. If you get the chance, read Psalm 136. Let it be one of your favorite psalms. Some 25 times, the psalms remind us of God's love. And as you know, singing is a large part of our worship, and singing in the psalms, well, it's everywhere. We read the psalms, we read the psalms, yet mainly they were sung. And those hymns that we're singing, they're majestic in God's ears. For those of us who are a little bit older, and we have grandchildren, small, young, teetering, learning how to walk, if you ever listen to them sing, they just make up music. They're not ever upset, they just sing. And if they don't know what the song is, they'll make a song up. They just sing. You know when they're cranky, but you know when they're happy. You know when they need help. You know when we need our arms around them. And see, part of the psalms is this. It's God just gaffing up all of us with a great big hug. I will never leave you. Never. I will never forsake you. I am with you always. Sometimes we forget about that.

So Psalm 149 and 150, it ends with these beautiful, beautiful words. Praise the Lord, sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints, which we've done today. Let Israel and us rejoice in the maker of, let the people be glad of their king, of course, who is God. Let the people of Zion be glad of their king. Let them praise His name with dancing and make music with Him, with the tambourine and the harp. For the Lord delights in His people. He crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in His honor and sing for joy even on their beds. May the praise of the Lord be in their mouths. This is the glory of all His saints. Praise the Lord.

So may I conclude with these words from Psalm 150. Praise the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary. Praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His acts of power. Praise Him for His surpassing greatness. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet. Praise Him with the harp and the leer. Praise Him with tambourine and dancing. Praise Him with strings and flute. Praise Him with the clash of symbols. Praise Him with resounding symbols and these precious words. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Amen.

[MUSIC]

Closing Prayer

Let's pray. Dearest Lord God, Your glory is exalted. God, we are so grateful. God, thank You so much for the Psalms. Thank You for their low points, for their high points, for reminding us that You are around us, surrounding us, and that You will never, ever leave us. Please help us to share our story, our story of Your love in our lives. God, with our children, our grandchildren, God, and with people that we come across, because You are indeed glorious. God, we love You. We thank You for everything. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.

[MUSIC]

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