Psalms - Our Daily Bread 2

Psalms Resources

Psalms - Collection of Commentaries Part 1

Psalms - Collection of Commentaries Part 2

Psalms - Our Daily Bread - Over 400 devotional illustrations by Scripture

Psalms - Sermons and Devotionals by C H Spurgeon Indexed by Scripture

Psalms - Part 1 - Devotionals from Morning and Evening Indexed by Psalm

Psalms - Part 2 - Devotionals from Morning and Evening Indexed by Psalm

Psalms 1-31 - Devotional Illustrations - Today in the Word

Psalms 32-100 - Devotional Illustrations - Today in the Word

Psalms 102-150 - Devotional Illustrations - Today in the Word

DEVOTIONALS ON THE PSALMS

FROM

Our Daily Bread

Sound, conservative, evangelical
Sermon and teaching illustrations
from Radio Bible Class

Psalm 8:6,8 "Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet… 8 The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

“Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee” (Job 12:8).

Matthew Maury served as a U.S. naval officer before suffering an injury which forced his retirement. He was then placed in charge of the Depot of Charts and Instruments of the Hydrographic Office of the Navy from 1841 to 1861. He was a Christian who loved the Word of God. One day, reading Psalm 8, he was struck by an important truth in the 8th verse. There he read that God had given man dominion over “the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” He immediately saw the great practical significance of that verse, recognizing that there must be currents of waster in the oceans, just like vast rivers, as well as in the atmosphere (Ecclesiastes 1:6).

Maury, with confidence in the accuracy of the Bible, determined to discover the paths in the seas and the wind circuits, utilizing the charts and log books he had at his disposal. He did discover and plot many of the wind circuits and currents, such as the great Gulf Current, 40 miles wide and 2,000 feet deep that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic; the Japanese Current, the California Current, and others. Utilizing this information, the sailing ships of his day plied these currents and wind circuits, reducing by as much as three weeks, the time required to cross some oceans.

On a monument erected by the state of Virginia to his memory is found a plaque that reads as follows: “Matthew Fontaine Maury, Pathfinder of the Seas, the genius who first snatched from the oceans and atmosphere the secret of their laws. His inspiration, Holy Writ, Psalm 8:8, Ecclesiastes 1:6.” A genius? No. Just a simple Bible-believing Christian who trusted the inerrancy of the Word of God. - DTG.

Psalm 18:2 “The LORD is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in Whom I will trust; my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation, and my High Tower”

What a testimony given by David to his God! In this single verse, there is a seven-fold ascription of praise to the Lord for His great salvation. Each testimony can be appropriated also by all who trust Him.

1. “**My Rock**.” The word used here does not mean a stone or even a boulder, but a mighty monolith, immovable and impregnable.

2. “**My Fortress**.” This word refers to a great bulwark—a strong hold. The Hebrew word is essentially the same as Masada, the high butte where the Jews resisted the Roman armies after the destruction of Jerusalem.

3. “**My Deliverer**.” “Our God is able to deliver,” even from the fiery furnace, the den of lions, and from the armies of Saul.

4. “**My Strength**.” This is another word often translated “rock,” this time a rugged, craggy one, most appropriate a symbol of great strength.

5. “**My Buckler.**” The small movable shield used to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16).

6. **The Horn of my Salvation**.” This striking Old Testament symbol is even repeated in the New Testament (Luke 1:69), and applied to the coming Savior, referring either to the “horns of the altar,” where fleeing sinners could cling for refuge, or to the fighting horns of a strong beast.

7. “**My High Tower**.” Here the word is not for a man-made tower, but for a natural, high, topographic eminence suitable both for watching and for defense.

The great promises of salvation and security in Christ are timeless. The words that bought such hope to David are still a comfort to believers today. - HM Our Daily Bread, September 16, 1987

Psalm 19:12 "Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults."

In the Scottish highlands is an old bridge that spans a wild cataract. Its structure is so massive, and it rises so high above the gorge that it is known as “The High Bridge.” But something happened that made it necessary for officials to condemn it. A tiny birch seed, caught by a gust of wind, dropped into a small crevice above the keystone. It lodged unnoticed in the lime, and before long it germinated. Soon it was a young sapling, but still nobody saw it. As it grew into a tree, its roots went deep into the mortar. Eventually it began to loosen and crack the masonry so that the arch was severely damaged. The bridge that had defied violent storms and supported the weight of marching armies finally had to be closed to traffic. It had succumbed to a small seed.

So too in the Christian life, one little hidden sin can weaken the foundation of a person’s character and be the cause of his downfall. I think David must have sensed this when he cried out, “Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.” Such a prayer does not open the door to morbid introspection. Rather, it expresses a desire that the soul-searching work of God’s convicting power will reveal to us our spiritual defects. To ask for less is to run the risk of allowing some evil, though it be ever so small, to take root in our hearts. Soon the seed becomes a sapling; and the sapling becomes a full-grown tree, dislodging the spiritual masonry of our lives.

Recognizing that our iniquities and secret sins are all known by God (Psalm 90:8), let us daily seek His cleansing. -P.R.V.

Psalm 23 - **Peace Amid Turmoil** - read a devotional illustration here.

Psalm 33:12-22

A Shield: Believers in Christ have God as a shield between them and the world's threatening dangers. No harm can come to them unless the Lord permits it for their own good or the good of others. Many Christians testify that they have been providentially protected in unusual ways.

Paul Tan, in his Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, says that on the evening of March 1, 1950, choir practice was scheduled in a local church in Beatrice, Nebraska. When the pastor and his wife and daughter were ready to leave for the 7:30 meeting, they discovered that the little girl had soiled her dress and needed to be changed. So they had to come late. A high school sophomore named Ladona had trouble with her geometry problems and stayed to finish her work, even though she usually got there early. Two sisters were delayed because their car wouldn't start. Mrs. Schuster normally arrived at 7:20, but that night her mother needed her, so she had to stop there first. One man took a nap and overslept. And so, one after another, the members were detained for various reasons. At 7:25, due to leaking gas, the church blew up! When everyone arrived a short time later, they were amazed to see how their lives had been spared. The fact that all of them failed to come on time—something that had never happened before—had to be more than coincidence. As far as they were concerned, the Lord had been their shield and protector.

Admittedly, this was an unusual occurrence. But it does comfort us to know that whatever happens, we are secure in the protective arms of God's providence. -H.G.B.

Psalm 37:1 (A Psalm of David.) "Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers."

Many years ago George Gardiner was holding evangelistic meetings in a community, and God was blessing. At that time his only income was from his speaking engagements. With a wife and two children to support, and several unpaid bills, Mr. Gardiner was trusting God to meet his needs. At the final service the leader announced that the entire offering would be given to the guest as a love gift. The plates were passed, and the people gave generously. After the meeting one of the ushers enthusiastically showed the speaker the total on the adding machine tape. But when the man in charge handed the guest preacher a check, it was for one-half of the offering.

Back at the motel, sleep eluded the evangelist's eyes. The hours passed—12 … 1 … 2 a.m. Exasperated, he finally reached for the Gideon Bible by his bedside and began reading where it fell open. These words of Psalm 37 struck him with full force: "Fret not thyself. Trust in the Lord. Evildoers shall be cut off." Putting the Bible down, he prayed, "Lord, what a fool I've been! Forgive me. Keep the other fellow awake—I'm going to get some sleep!" Victory came, and in the weeks that followed, God provided the needed finances.

Are you fussing and fuming because someone has wronged you? Has resentment or some little irritation been rankling within your soul? Tell God about it. Admit your foolish fretting, and ask Him to help you stop. Don't let the other person rob you of your peace. After all, he's the one who has reason to be tossing and turning!

Psalm 37:23 "The steps of a man are established by the LORD and He delights in his way."

Why the Carriage Got Stuck. The truth of this text was deeply impressed on John Wesley one day. Traveling along a road filled with ruts, his carriage became stuck in the mud. The delay disturbed him because he was eager to get the next town where he was scheduled to preach. While some helpers tried to get the vehicle moving, another Christian came by. Wesley talked with him a moment and recognized that he was deeply troubled. Asking why he was so distressed, he learned that a crop failure had made the man almost destitute.

> "I haven't been able to get the money together to pay the rent," he said despairingly.
>
> "The landlord is ready to turn us out, and I don't know where to go with my wife and children."
>
> "How much do you owe?" Wesley inquired.

He was told that 20 shillings is what he needed.

> "Well," said Wesley, "I believe we can supply that. The Lord evidently wanted me to meet you."

Taking the money from his wallet, he handed it to the man and said,

> "Here, go and be happy!"

Then turning to his companions, he exclaimed,

> "Now I see why our carriage got stuck in the mud. Our steps were halted so that we might help that needy family."

Psalm 39:4 "LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the extent of my days, Let me know how transient I am."

Rearranging Priorities. A life-threatening experience has a way of rearranging one's priorities. That was true in the lives of former Texas Governor John Connally and his wife after he was wounded by the assassin who took the life of President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

In an interview, Connally explained,

> "As far as Nellie and I are concerned,…it inevitably brought into sharper focus what's really important in life… We try not to participate in things that are shallow or in the long run meaningless."

Psalm 42:8 "The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, A prayer to the God of my life."

Every Christian should have a song in his heart. In Ephesians 5:19 the apostle Paul speaks of "singing and making melody" in our hearts to the Lord. This verse should encourage everyone who finds it difficult to carry a tune that's suitable for listening ears. Whether with the lips or in the heart only, singing can characterize our lives, even under the worst of circumstances. Many times that is precisely when God gives us a song to sing.

American pastor and author James H. Brookes told of visiting a friend's house and hearing the music of a bird singing. It was not the ordinary sound of chirping; instead it resembled the strains of a lovely melody. At first Brookes didn't know where it was coming from; but when he glanced around the room, he saw a beautiful bullfinch in a birdcage. The lady of the house explained that it had been taught to sing that way at night. The teacher would repeat the notes time and again until the bird was able to mimic them. But this was possible only because it was dark and the bird's attention would not be diverted.

How often we learn our sweetest songs when the blackness of trial closes in around us. This was David's experience. Cast down and almost despairing of life, he said,"… in the night His song shall be with me." Elihu spoke of God giving "songs in the night" (Job 35:10).

Oh, friend, let's not despair when the darkness of trouble descends upon us. God is with us; God will help us; God will give us a song.

Psalm 46:10 "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

God sometimes allows us to enter into discouraging situations for the primary purpose of testing our faith. At such times we must refuse to give up in despair. Like Jonah in the belly of the great fish, we must turn to the Lord when our soul is fainting within us, trusting Him completely.

James H. McConkey wrote,

> "What can you do when you are about to faint physically? You can't DO anything! In your weakness you just fall upon the shoulders of some strong loved one, lean hard, and rest until your strength returns. The same is true when you are tempted to faint under adversity. The Lord's message to us is
>
> 'Be still, and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10).
>
> Hudson Taylor was so feeble in the closing months of his life that he said to a dear friend,
>
> > 'I'm so weak that I can't work or read my Bible, and I can hardly pray. I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child and trust.'
>
> And that is all the Heavenly Father asks of you when you grow weary in the fierce fires of affliction."

Psalm 55:22 "Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."

The hymn writer Georg Neumark was a dedicated Christian who was afflicted with blindness in his later years. This infirmity was just one more trial in a life already filled with heartache. While still a young man, he had been reduced to poverty and was down to his last penny. Yet his trust in God did not fail, for he found great strength in the promise,

"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you."

He prayed earnestly for God's help. The answer came in the form of an unexpected appointment as tutor for the family of a rich judge. Relieved and delighted, he was prompted to compose one of his best-known hymns, "If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee," to thank the Lord for His sustaining grace. Later Johann Sebastian Bach saw such beauty in the hymn that he used it as the basis for a cantata, and Mendelssohn included it in his oratorio Saint Paul.

In her poem "The Parable of Tomorrow," Ruth Gibbs Zwall offers this description of the Savior's leading:

> "I looked at the mountain.
>
> 'It is too hard, Lord,' I said;
>
> 'I cannot climb.'
>
> 'Take My hand,' He whispered;
>
> 'I will be your strength.'
>
> I saw the road,
>
> 'It is too long, Lord,' I said;
>
> 'so rough and long.'
>
> 'Take My love,' He answered;
>
> 'I will guard your feet.'
>
> I looked at the sky.
>
> 'The sun is gone,' I said;
>
> 'already the way grows dark.'
>
> 'Take the lantern of My Word,' He whispered;
>
> 'that will be light enough.'
>
> We climbed.
>
> The road was narrow and steep,
>
> but the way was bright.

And when the thorns reached out,

they found His hand before they touched my own.

And when my path grew rough,

I knew it was His love that kept my feet from stumbling.

Then I grew very tired.

'I can go no farther, Lord,' I said.

He answered, 'Night is gone. Look up, My child.'

I looked and it was dawn.

Green valleys stretched below.

'I can go on alone now,' I said

—and then I saw the marks.

'Lord, Thou art wounded.

Thy hands are bleeding.

Thy feet are bruised. Was it for me?'

He whispered, 'I did it gladly.'

Then I fell at His feet.

'Lord, lead me on,' I cried.

'No road too long, no valley too deep,

if Thou art with me.'

We walk together now and shall forever!"

In the book Streams in the Desert, Mrs. Lettie B. Cowman tells of a minister who was heavily burdened under a load of anxiety and care. After carrying this weight for quite some time, he one day imagined that he could place his burden on the ground and stand back a pace or two. Then he could look at it and analyze it. When he did, he discovered that it was made up almost entirely of borrowed things. A good portion of it belonged to tomorrow. An even larger amount of it belonged to the week to come. And a sizable percentage was a carryover from his yesterdays.

Mrs. Cowman indicated that this pastor was guilty of "a very stupid but a very ancient blunder." He had made the mistake of burdening himself in the "now" with things that belonged to "yesterday and tomorrow." "Never yield to gloomy anticipations," she concluded. "Who told you that the night would never end in day? Who told you that the winter of your discontent should proceed from frost to frost, from snow and hail and ice to deeper snow? Do you not know that day follows night, … that spring and summer succeed winter? Place your hope and confidence in God. He has no record of failure."

Psalm 63:1 (A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.) O God, Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly; My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.

God sometimes allows us to enter into discouraging situations for the primary purpose of testing our faith. At such times we must refuse to give up in despair. Like Jonah in the belly of the great fish, we must turn to the Lord when our soul is fainting within us, trusting Him completely. James H. McConkey wrote, "What can you do when you are about to faint physically? You can't DO anything! In your weakness you just fall upon the shoulders of some strong loved one, lean hard, and rest until your strength returns. The same is true when you are tempted to faint under adversity. The Lord's message to us is 'Be still, and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10). Hudson Taylor was so feeble in the closing months of his life that he said to a dear friend, 'I'm so weak that I can't work or read my Bible, and I can hardly pray. I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child and trust.' And that is all the Heavenly Father asks of you when you grow weary in the fierce fires of affliction."

Psalm 90:10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away.

70-Year Life Span: Someone has calculated how a typical life span of 70 years is spent. Here is his estimate:

Sleep	23 years	32.9%
Work	16 years	22.8%
TV	8 years	11.4%
Eating	6 years	8.6%
Travel	6 years	8.6%
Leisure	4-1/2 years	6.5%
Illness	4 years	5.7%
Dressing	2 years	2.8%
Religion	*1/2 year*	*0.7%*
TOTAL	**70 years**	**100%**

Psalm 90:12 "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom."

Consider this:

“If we had to buy time, would there be any difference in how we would spend it? Would the days of our lives be used more wisely?”

That’s what time management consultant Antonio Herrera asked the participants in a seminar he conducted on the subject. Then Dr. Herrera became more specific. He asked,

“What if you had to pay in advance $100 an hour for the time allotted to you? Would you waste it?”

The answer should be obvious.

Of course, we can’t put a price tag on the minutes and hours we possess. They are given to us freely. But that doesn’t excuse us from using them conscientiously, carefully, and wisely. The giver of time is God Himself, and that places a far greater value upon it than any monetary figure could suggest. We must therefore use our time intelligently, taking advantage of opportunities it provides for us to serve the Lord and to do His will. - R.W.D.

Psalm 103:1-2 (A Psalm of David.) Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits;

As a minister was addressing a group of men, he took a large piece of paper and made a black dot in the center of it with a marking pen. Then he held the paper up before the group and asked them what they saw. One person quickly replied, “I see a black mark.” “Right,” the preacher replied. “What else do you see?” Complete silence prevailed. “Don’t you see anything other than the dot?” he asked. A chorus of noes came from the audience. “I’m really surprised,” the speaker commented. “You have completely overlooked the most important thing of all—the sheet of paper.” Then he made the application. He said that in life we are often distracted by small, dot-like disappointments or painful experiences, and we are prone to forget the innumerable blessings we receive from the hand of the Lord. But like the sheet of paper, the good things are far more important than the adversities that monopolize our attention.

This reminds me of a bit of verse which, though I admit is somewhat trite, does express good practical advice. Someone has written: “As you travel down life’s pathway, may this ever be your goal:/ Keep your eye upon the doughnut, and not upon the hole!”

Yes, rather than concentrating on the trials of life, we should fix our attention upon is blessings. Let us say with the psalmist, “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits” (Psalm 68:19). - R.W.D.

Psalm 119:71 - It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Thy statutes.

Shortly before Scottish missionary John G. Paton died, a friend said to him, “I am sorry to see you lying on your back.” Smiling, Paton asked, “Do you know why God puts us on our backs?” After his friend answered no, the missionary replied, “In order that we may look upward!”

Another Christian who viewed suffering from the right perspective was songwriter Eugene Clark. Afflicted with severe rheumatoid arthritis and glaucoma, Clark spent the last 10 years of his life bedridden. Yet he continued composing songs and writing articles to the glory of God. His music continued to enrich the lives of countless thousands through his ministry on Back to the Bible. Though down physically, he learned to keep looking up.

Sunny skies, worry-free days, and calm nights are not always the best environment for developing spiritual stamina. It is often in the hour of affliction that we draw close to our loving Heavenly Father. Commenting on this, James H. Brookes said, “Sickness is a rough but thorough teacher of experimental theology, and it almost compels the soul of the believer to stay itself upon God.”

… Being down teaches us to look up. - P.R.V.