

Psalms: The Cry of our Hearts

I'm trying something. In my personal study time, I'm going through the *Psalms*. I've read through it before, but I think it was just to check it off my list on the daily Bible reading plan. As I was reading some introductory material on the book, I really was taken back by how much the Psalms play into the history of Christ's Church. I began, as I read, to see why. The Psalms are the praises and cries from the heart of God's people. They are full of honest hearts pouring out their souls to God, praying for relief, praising Him for who He is, and that He will save them.

Also, to my surprise, Psalms aren't just limited to the book of Psalms. There are literally tons of them throughout the Old Testament and they are some heavy reading. There are also psalms in the New Testament (see Mary's Psalm and Zechariah's song in the Gospel of Luke) They are written to praise God in times of victory, in times of unfaithfulness of the people, in times of sadness, and in times of great joy. To me, the book comprises the whole of the human heart and existence being expressed in the only purpose of our lives: to worship and glorify our God and praise Him for the marvelous things He has done!

As I am reading through, I was reminded of my favorite Psalm: Psalm 27. This is an amazing call to God in times of great trouble. Because of time and limited space, I want to just introduce you to the first seven verses of the 27th Psalm: "*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. 4 One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. 5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. 6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. 7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!*" (ESV).

What I would do to have that kind of faith. I get doubtful of God's providence when I look at the bank account, let alone when I'm fleeing for my life! I wish I could say right now that "though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." I would love to have the kind of faith (and I'm working on it) to step out into the unknown, despite the outward appearances, and totally trust in God. I'm still leery of it. Maybe it comes with age.

This week, consider the greatness of God. Consider his provisions in your life. Consider how unfathomable His ways are. He is able to do all things! Consider Hannah, the mother of Samuel's Psalm: "*The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. 7 The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts. 8 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. 9 For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; on them he has set the world. 9 He will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness.*" (1 Sam. 2:6-9, NIV). The Psalms shoe us today, speak to us today, that when we view God, all we can do is worship—no matter the situation! How will you glorify Him this week? Just something to think about.

~ Scott Johnson