

The Psalms: Singing Our Relationship with God

Series: God's Top Hits: A Study of the Psalms

Psalm 98

October 7, 2018

I want to take a survey. We all love each other, and its okay to be open and honest.

- How many of you love music?
- What genre of music do you like?
- How many of you have played an instrument?
- How many of you like to sing?
- How many of you sing in the shower?
- Sing in the car?
- How many of you think you can't sing a lick?

I came across this meme a few weeks ago.

SHOW AUTO-TUNE MEME.

Today, we begin a new series as we study the Psalms.

At the center of the Bible is the book of Psalms. This great collection of songs and prayers expresses the heart and soul of humanity. In them we find the whole range of human experiences expressed. This book holds no clichés. Instead, David and the other writers honestly poured out their true feelings, reflecting a dynamic, powerful, and life-changing friendship with God. The psalmists confess their sins, express their doubts and fears, ask God for help in times of trouble, and praise and worship Him. As we read and study the book of Psalms, we will hear believers crying out to God from the depths of despair, and hear them singing to Him in the heights of celebration. But whether the psalm writers are despairing or rejoicing, you will always hear them sharing honest feelings with their God. Because of the honesty expressed by these writers, men and women throughout history have come, again and again, to the book of Psalms for comfort during times of struggle and distress. And through the psalms, they have risen from the depths of despair to new heights of joy and praise as they also discovered the power of God's everlasting love and forgiveness.¹

We are going to look at the psalms as a guide into a deep and genuine relationship with God in this series, "God's Top Hits." Kind of like "America's Top 40."

I invite you to turn to page 5 in your bulletin as today we get an overview of the Psalms. You just can't say, "We're going to study the book" because there are 150 Psalms. The book of Psalms has the shortest chapter in the Bible: 2 verses long, and the longest chapter in the Bible: 176 verses. You just can't go chapter by chapter through the Psalms. So, we are going to do just an overview today, and I am using the Life Application Study Bible's Mega-themes as my outline today. These are the five major themes of the Psalms, and how they guide my relationship with God.

First, the Psalms allow me to Praise God.

Psalm 66:8 says:

*Let the whole world bless our God and loudly sing his praises.*²

¹ Life Application Study Bible.

² Psalm 66:8, NLT2

Psalms are songs of praise to God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. Praise is recognizing, appreciating, and expressing God's greatness. Focusing our thoughts on God moves us to praise Him. The more we know Him, the more we can appreciate what He has done for us.

Every single one of the 150 Psalms gives praise to God.

Second, the Psalms allow me to acknowledge God's power.

God is all-powerful; and He always acts at the right time. He is sovereign over every situation. God's power is shown by the ways He reveals himself in creation, history, and His Word. When we feel powerless, God can help us. His strength can overcome the despair of any pain or trial. We can always pray that He will deliver, protect, and sustain us.

Psalm 54:1-2 says:

*Come with great power, O God, and rescue me! Defend me with your might. Listen to my prayer, O God. Pay attention to my plea.*³

Third, the Psalms allow me to seek forgiveness.

Psalm 103:3-5 reads:

*He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's!*⁴

Many psalms are intense prayers asking God for forgiveness. God forgives us when we confess our sin and turn from it. Because God forgives us, we can pray to Him honestly and directly. When we receive His forgiveness, we move from alienation to intimacy, from guilt to love.

Fourth, the Psalms allow me to express thankfulness.

FRIEND WHO PLAYS BANJO. HE IS MOVING AND HE POSTED THIS ON FACEBOOK THIS WEEK: BANJO FOR SALE MEME.

The Psalms allow us to express thankfulness. We are grateful to God for His personal concern, help, and mercy. Not only does He protect, guide, and forgive us, but His creation provides everything we need. When we realize how we benefit from knowing God, we can fully express our thanks to Him. By thanking Him often, we develop spontaneity in our prayer life.

Psalm 100:4-5 says,

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.*⁵

MEME

Finally, the Psalms allow me to trust God is faithful and just.

I've always liked Psalm 37:3-5:

*Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.*⁶

³ Psalm 54:1-2, NLT2

⁴ Psalm 103:3-5, NLT2

⁵ Psalm 100:4-5, NLT2

⁶ Psalm 37:3-5, NLT2

When we put our trust in him, he quiets our hearts. Because he has been faithful throughout history, we can trust him in times of trouble. People can be unfair and friends may desert us. But we can trust God. Knowing God intimately drives away doubt, fear, and loneliness.

A pastor wrote about Gary, who was in his 50s, who was mentally disabled, and had the mental capacity of a six- or seven-year-old. He also had one of the worst singing voices he'd ever heard. His singing was slurred and never close to the right key. And he didn't have the social development to recognize his lack of singing ability. So he just sang loud. Very loud.

One Sunday, without thinking, the pastor sat down in front of Gary. When the opening hymn started, he realized his mistake. He settled into a spirit of annoyance instead of thanksgiving. And then he realized his bigger mistake. He realized what an asset Gary was to the worship, what a gift his voice was to their singing. Because Gary was singing not from his mouth or his vocal cords, but from his heart, and every word he sang was a word of sincere praise and thanksgiving. In his child-like innocence, Gary didn't care what he sounded like or what others thought of him. He only cared to let God know of his love and thankfulness in full voice. He was doing like Psalm 95 and 98 says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord". So, I say, "Sing, Gary! Sing loud enough for everyone to hear, let your voice carry to the heavens!"

Let the Psalms be your songs of praising God, acknowledge His power, seeking His forgiveness, expressing your thankfulness, and trust God who is faithful and just. Sing from your heart and let the Lord auto-tune it.