

A Book for Our Times: the Psalms
Christ and the Psalms and Praying the Psalms
Christ Covenant Church ~ Sunday School
July 5, 2020

I. Introduction and Review

II. Christ and the Psalms

- A. Christ is in all Scripture (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46; Acts 2:29-32; 1 Corinthians 10:1-3, 15:3; 1 Peter 1:10-12)
- B. Strong emphasis on Davidic kingship within the Psalms of which Christ is its fulfillment
- C. Typology:

D. Messianic Psalms

E. Most quoted book from Old Testament in New Testament

The main subject of these songs is the glorious things of the gospel, as is evident by the interpretation often put upon them, and the use that is made of them in the New Testament. For there is no other book of the Old Testament that is so often quoted in the New Testament as the book of Psalms. Here Christ is spoken of in multitudes of songs. Jonathan Edwards in *A History of the Work of Redemption*

- F. Jesus, as Lord, is the object of worship in the Psalms but he also prayed the Psalms himself. They are prayers *to* Jesus and prayers *of* Jesus.

III. Praying the Psalms

A. Reasons for using forms in prayer

- 1. We are often speechless.
- 2. We are often distracted.
- 3. We are often aimless.

B. Practical guidance on praying the Psalms – partly taken from TM Moore's *The Psalms for Prayer*

1. *Verbatim praying*- taking the words that are there and praying them back.
 - a. Hymns are especially suited to this approach.
 - b. Sometimes this might require a little reflection when praying, when there are unfamiliar allusions, historical referents, or doctrinal challenges.
 - c. You can do this for the whole or part.
 - d. Best place to start: Psalms 8, 38, 44, 51, 56, 57, and 80
2. *Paraphrase praying*- look over and then pray back a paraphrase as it would be most appropriate to your life.
 - a. Wording might not fit your situation perfectly, but brings to mind something similar. Read over and form own words that reflect the heart of the verses in the Psalm.
 - b. You may become very familiar with a Psalm and summarize large sections to fit your own concerns.
 - c. Example: when David refers to his enemies lying in wait (59:1-4), but we have spiritual enemies and need protection.
3. *Responsive praying*- though not a prayer, the psalm presents a theme, an idea, or a situation that can be responded to in prayer.
 - a. Responsive praying establishes a dialogue with God as He speaks in His Word in which we can respond appropriate to our circumstances or needs.
 - b. Example: Psalm 1
4. *Guided praying*- letting the Psalm guide you into prayers for yourself or others whose situations closely parallel the Psalm.
 - a. This allows the Psalm to be a guide which may lead to prayers far from the direct concerns of the Psalm.
 - b. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word as a spark to pray toward the pressing concerns in your life.
 - c. Example: Psalm 67 (persecution)
5. *Combination praying*- as you "master" these approaches, you will be able to move from one to the other as you make your way through a particular Psalm.

C. Different Genres of Psalms for Prayer

1. Laments – i.e. 3, 12, 22, 51
 - Structure – Prayed while in the midst of suffering
 - i. Address to the Lord
 - ii. Complaint about the suffering
 - iii. Trust, an expression of trust in the Lord
 - iv. Deliverance plea
 - v. Assurance
 - vi. Praise

2. Thanksgiving Psalms – i.e. 30, 34, 92, 107
 - Structure – Prayed after having been delivered from misery
 - i. Introduction to prayer
 - ii. Misery that you were previously in
 - iii. Appeal that you gave in the past
 - iv. Rescue that took place
 - v. Testimonial of praise
3. Hymns – i.e. 8, 10, 103, 104, 114, 145-150
 - Structure – Unmitigated praise
 - i. Summons – “Let us praise the Lord”
 - ii. Reasons given to praise God
 - iii. Further exhortations to praise God
4. Enthronement Psalms – i.e. 47, 95, 97
 - Distinguishing element – Emphasizing God as King
5. Royal Psalms – i.e. 2, 72, 89, 110, 132
 - Distinguishing elements – Very similar to enthronement psalms but with more of an emphasis on the relationship of the earthly king to God
 - i. King of Kings
 - ii. Often Messianic
6. Zion Psalms – i.e. 46, 84, 122
 - Distinguishing elements
 - i. Celebrating God’s presence among His people
 - ii. Temple language
7. Wisdom Psalms – i.e. 1, 37, 49, 73, 127-128
 - Distinguishing element – Comparison and contrast between wisdom and folly or righteous and unrighteous.
8. Trust Psalms – i.e. 23, 62, 91
 - Distinguishing element – Prayer of trust in the midst of trials (similar to laments)
9. Torah Psalms – i.e. 19, 119
 - Distinguishing element – Reflection on or praise for God’s Law