

15. Psalm 62-66

June 28, 2013

Whenever we finish one of the 66 Books of the Bible, we always stop at the Book of Psalm to study a few chapters before we start to study another Book. Many years ago a friend of mine, pastor Pat Lazovich of Calvary Chapel Sierra Vista advised me that I should not teach the entire Book of Psalms in the same manner as I teach other Books of the Bible – starting from v1 all the way through.

I agree with him. Because first of all, there are 150 chapters in this Book. If we do that, we will be in the Book of Psalms either until Jesus comes or all of us go six feet under. Secondly, these chapters are not necessarily in the order of topical manner. In other words, it is rather hard to teach this Book with the idea of any consistent topic. So, whatever each chapter speaks to us, we will study and move on to the next.

Last time when we finished the Book of Galatians in our Midweek Bible Study, we covered Psalm 53-61. So we will start from chapter 62.

Psalm 62

Psalm 62:5-6 My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.

While I was reading these two verses, the Holy Spirit pointed out these three words to me. He reminded me of some of my ideas of “waiting upon the Lord” – like a little child standing in front of his daddy, begging, even trying to manipulate his daddy to do what he wanted; or not waiting upon Him at all and ran ahead of Him assuming that the Lord would do what I wanted Him to do.

Let’s take a closer look on these three words:

1) Wait – “Waiting upon the Lord” is probably the single most difficult thing we can do as Christians. Because the most of us want the results the way we want immediately. But as we listen to God in His Word and obey Him, we’ll discover His goodness and power as we wait. Time spent “waiting on God” is never wasted.

2) Silently – Without rattling our cage, without squirming within our spirits, but rather with confidence and trust in the Lord.

One of the marks of faith is willingness to wait patiently and silently for the Lord to work. Whenever we run ahead of God, we get ourselves into trouble. In quietness and confidence of God, faith becomes our strength.

3) Alone – This is a very difficult thing for any “Type A” people. In case you don’t know what “Type A” people means, let me give you a short definition. They are often high-achieving “workaholics” who multi-task, push themselves with deadlines, and hate both delays and ambiguity. And you are looking at one of them.

Somehow we tend to think that God needs our support, help, and advice. He really doesn’t need our help. He works better alone. It is our job to get out of His way and simply trust Him and His will for us. He is our Defense and Shelter.

Psalm 63

Psalm 63:3-4 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.

I read an article by a hospital chaplain who kept a record of 2,000 patients who were apparently in a dying condition and showed signs of repentance. But he noted that of those who were restored to health, only two showed a marked change in their spiritual lives after their recovery. In other words, when people thought they were dying, they remembered God, but when they recovered, they promptly forgot about Him.

Maybe you have had a crisis recently, and it got your attention. You remembered to call upon God; remembered to put your trust in Him. But far too often we ask God for help quickly, but we don't give Him anything in return. Do you know someone who always asks for resources and favors from you, but never takes time to thank you? What is your feeling toward that person?

It is one thing to give thanks when things are going well. But we can also give thanks when things are not going so well.

Some Bible commentators say that this psalm was written by David while he was chased by king Saul in the Judean wilderness. And the other group of biblical scholars would say that this was written when he was in exile in the wilderness, running from his son, Absalom, who wanted to take over his throne. Either way, David was in a bad situation in the wilderness.

The west of Jerusalem expands out with the coastal plains, fertile valleys, beautiful lush orange groves, and apricot and pear and peach orchards, and all. But the east of Jerusalem contains the Judean wilderness, just outside of Jerusalem. Just beyond Bethany you begin to drop down into the area of the Dead Sea 1,388 feet below sea level at its surface. And that area from Jerusalem east gets very little rain. Maybe about an inch a year, and so it is the literal sense of wilderness. If you are looking for a bone dry place to hang around, this is it.

If you have to live in that kind of wilderness day in and day out, not knowing how long, without the luxury of electricity, plumbing, and Fry's and Safeway nearby, and being chased by someone who wants to kill you, you can be seriously discouraged.

Sometimes you might be discouraged so much due to your emotional stresses, financial difficulties, relationship troubles, and/or physical illness, that you even wonder if God can handle your seemingly-dead-end situation.

Here is the assurance we get from the Lord:

Psalm 63:8 My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.

God's right hand upholds us. How big is His right hand?

Isaiah 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?

Did you hear that? God can measure the universe with a span of His hand that is the distance between your thumb and pinky finger. There are so many different opinions regarding the size of the entire universe. No one knows the exact size because they cannot see the end of the universe.

Let's think about it in a smaller scale. Today, with the help of powerful telescopes and modern satellite photographs, scientists estimate the universe contains approximately 100 billion galaxies containing approximately 200 billion stars each. If you are wondering about the size of the galaxy we are in, it will take 150 million light years to go from one end to the other.

We cannot wrap our minds around the numbers we just learned. By the way, this is the only observable and acknowledged portion of the universe, not the complete universe. Our great God measured the entire universe with His hand. Do you think that He can handle your problem and mine? What a mighty God we serve!

Psalm 65

Psalm 65:4 Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Of Your holy temple.

This verse would be the main verse for people who believe in Calvinism who tend to embrace the doctrine of eternal security – God chooses people who are going to spend eternity in heaven. The rest will end up in hell whether they like it or not.

It sounds very callous and uncaring. Actually, God's intention is anything but callous and uncaring. Remember John 3:16 "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"? You cannot top that kind of love.

So what does this v4 mean? Just about all the unbelievers have a problem with this concept that God has the final choice to choose who get to be in heaven and who will be thrown into hell. Whether they like it or not, God has every right to do anything He wants. He owns the entire universe and heaven and all of our lives. He can do whatever He chooses to do with what He created and owns.

Unbelievers have a couple of major problems with this concept:

1) They don't like the idea that they cannot call the shot over God.

They want to live however they want to live and expect that God to say, "Welcome to heaven," and everything to be hunky-dory without any consequences of their sins. Simply, they want to have control over God which make themselves gods. Not gonna happen.

2) They think that it is not fair that God can choose, not them.

It shows the biblical ignorance of the unbelievers who have this concept. Our God sees and knows how everything will turn out. He knows that what kind of choices every single unbeliever will make. If a current unbeliever changes his mind and decides to follow Jesus with all of his heart and mind and soul, He knows that, too. It means that this unbeliever was already chosen before the creation of the universe through our God's infinite wisdom and sovereignty.

Then, someone else would say, "What if I choose not to follow Jesus until I die?" The answer is very simple, "You ain't chosen because of your own choice."

God hands out the invitation for salvation to everyone as he or she takes the first breath on earth. Accepting Him to one's heart proves that he or she was chosen by the Lord. Rejecting Him will confirm that you are not chosen because of your own choice.

Within the Bible, sovereignty of God and responsibility of human work beautifully in harmony. Only the self-absorbed theologians cannot figure out how they work together.

Psalm 66

There are two things I want all of you to pay attention in this chapter 66.

1) Refined by fire

Psalm 66:10 For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

The refining process may be very painful, but it will not destroy us, because the Refiner sits by the furnace tending the flame. He will not allow us to be tried beyond our endurance; it is for our good against our common logic.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

You might be going through temptation to quit being a Christian because of the sufferings you are enduring. We may not understand why we have to endure such misery year after year. The ordeal seems endless and pointless. Our days are wasted, or so it appears. We feel as if we are doing nothing of lasting significance.

One of our church families seems to go through never -ending sufferings week after week, month after month, and year after year. Sometimes as we pray for them, I say to one of our elders, "How much can they take this?" Each time there is no place to turn to, the Lord comes through for them and for His glory. I don't know about them, but it strengthens my faith in the Lord.

God is doing what matters in our lives – we are being refined. He is placing us into a crucible in which we acquire patience, meekness, humility, compassion, and the other "quiet" virtues our souls naturally lack. There is no other way to achieve these virtues – no textbook, no second-hand experience, but only through the Refiner 's fire.

So don't be afraid and don't fret. Your present trial, as painful as it may be, has been screened through God's wisdom and love. The Refiner sits beside the crucible tempering the flames, monitoring the process, waiting patiently until His face is mirrored in the surface.

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

The fires of testing can produce a shining testimony in our lives.

2) How to destroy our prayer connection with God

Psalm 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

The entire purpose of our prayer is for our God to hear us. But there is one sure way to destroy our prayer connection with Him – our hidden sins.

Not only does praying with a selfish motive hinder our prayers, but unconfessed sin can disconnect them from the Lord as well.

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated

you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

We can pray with passion. We can pray with total faith. We can pray with all of the gusto we have. But if there is an area in our lives that is not right before God, then our prayers will not be heard.

When we come to God with sin in our lives, God effectively says, "If you want fellowship with Me, if you want to have communion with Me, then you need to repent of that sin. You can't live in that life and then live My life."

In his book, "How to Pray", 19th Century evangelist and pastor R. A. Torrey said, "Anyone who finds his prayers ineffective should not conclude that the thing he asks of God is not according to His will, but should go alone with God with the psalmist 's prayer, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me.'"

Do you have one of those hidden sins that no one knows? Make it right with the Lord by confessing it today.