

SITTING WITH THE PSALMS



“Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters – a pathway no one knew was there! You led your people along that road like a flock of sheep...” (Psalm 77:19,20a)

ALL SAINTS’ CHURCH, HOOLE

HOMEGROUP STUDIES

JANUARY – MARCH 2021

Sit with
these psalms
in the
presence of
God.

Wait for the
LORD.

Be strong.
Take heart.

Wait for the
LORD.



Then,
having
been
made
strong by
Him,

Rise up
and
follow
in the
footsteps
of
Jesus.

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Scripture marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation

Scripture marked NIV are from *Holy Bible*, New International Version (Anglicised Edition)

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INTRODUCTION

As we begin a new year and continue in pathways that seem uncharted (hence the cover photo), we can move forward with confidence because the Lord God Almighty is our Saviour.

This booklet contains 6 psalms and a Contemplative Reflection. These are for you to use with your homegroup, or for personal study.

Dates	Psalm	Page
First half of January - HG meets in 2 nd week (12 th /13 th /14 th)	Psalm 27	4
Second half of January - HG meets in 4 th week (26 th /27 th / 28 th)	Psalm 29	7
First half of February - HG meets in 2 nd week (9 th /10 th /11 th)	Psalm 32	9
Second half of February - HG meets in 4 th week (23 rd /24 th /25 th)	Psalm 77	11
First half of March - HG meets in 2 nd week (9 th /10 th / 11 th)	Psalm 92	14
Second half of March - HG meets in 4 th week (23 rd /24 th / 25 th)	Psalm 144	16

How to use this booklet

Step 1 : Read, and re-read the psalm. ‘Sit’ and stay with it, rather than rush through it. You may find the suggestions in the box (next page) helpful. (If possible, reflect on each psalm over 2 weeks, giving time for God’s truths to seep deep into your heart and mind.)

Step 2 :

- Use the brief questions at the top of each study as starting points to help you dig into the psalm.

- Use the space on the pages to scribble your thoughts and responses.
- Pick a favourite verse from the psalm to hold on to.

Step 3 : Use the 'Contemplative Reflection' [back cover] to bring each day's ups and downs into God's healing presence.

Getting the most out of reading the Psalms

- Read through the psalm - aloud, slowly, and then read it again.
- Take note of - any headings (*who wrote it; the background*)
 - repeated words or phrases
 - changes of mood
 - picture language/ images/ comparisons
- Ask yourself some questions -
 - what is the mood of this psalm?
 - what does this psalm teach about God?
 - what does it teach about human nature?
 - what problem(s) faced the psalmist?
 - what answer(s) did he find?
- You may find it helpful to mark, colour or underline different points that strike you.
- There may be a 'key verse' that stands out for you. If so, mark it; write it out and put it in a place where you will be reminded of its truth, and be encouraged.
- Pray it : turn the psalm into your own prayer of praise, confession, thanksgiving or petition. Allow God's Word to soak deep into your heart.

1. PSALM 27

THE CONFIDENT LIFE

Of David

1. How is God described in this psalm?
2. What troubles does David face?
3. What words are used to describe God's 'home'?
4. What sorts of 'enemies' (vs 1-3,11-12) do you most fear in your life?
5. David actually asks for more than 'one thing'. What does he want?
6. Which is the key verse in the psalm for you?

1 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 the wicked advance against me to devour me,
it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

3 Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

4 One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

5 For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.

- 6 Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
- 7 Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.
- 8 My heart says of you, 'Seek his face!'
Your face, LORD, I will seek.
- 9 Do not hid your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Saviour.
- 10 Though my father and mother forsake me,
The LORD will receive me.
- 11 Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.
- 12 Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.
- 13 I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
- 14 Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD. (NIV)

What has been impressed upon you as you “sat” with this psalm?

Pray the Psalm : Turn all that you are learning about God into prayers of praise. Ask God to help you make the central focus of your life more like that of David in verse 4.

Teach me
your way,
LORD;
lead me in a
straight path
because of
my
oppressors
(v11)



2. PSALM 29

A Psalm of David

THE STORM & THE GLORY

1. What is emphasized about God here? How?
2. Which image do you like best?
3. What are the implications of knowing such a God as our Father?
4. Do you find the final verse unexpected?
5. Look for photographs or pictures that would illustrate this psalm.
6. What is your own experience of hearing the voice of the Lord?

- 1 Give honour to the LORD, you angels;
Give honour to the LORD for his glory and strength.
- 2 Give honour to the LORD for the glory of his name.
Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord echoes above the sea.
The God of glory thunders.
The LORD thunders over the mighty sea.
- 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful;
The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.
- 5 The voice of the LORD splits the mighty cedars;
The LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He makes Lebanon's mountains skip like a calf
and Mount Hermon to leap like a young bull.
- 7 The voice of the LORD strikes with lightning bolts.
- 8 The voice of the LORD makes the desert quake;
The LORD shakes the desert of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD twists mighty oaks
and strips the forests bare.

In his Temple everyone shouts, "Glory!"

10 The LORD rules over the floodwaters.
The LORD reigns as king forever.

11 The LORD gives his people strength.
The LORD blesses them with peace. (NLT)

God's voice: Compare this with His voice in 1 Kings 19:12-13

What has helped you most as you "sat" with this psalm?

Pray this Psalm : "Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness" (v2b, also Psalm 96:9)

3. PSALM 32

COVERED & PROTECTED

Of David. A maskil

1. How is the seriousness of sin conveyed?
2. Which of the images here can you most identify with?
3. What is fearful about 'rising waters'?
4. What attitudes and responses lead to true blessedness?

- 1 Blessed is the one
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered.
- 2 Blessed is the one
 whose sin the LORD does not count against them
 and in whose spirit is no deceit.
- 3 When I kept silent,
 my bones wasted away
 through my groaning all day long.
- 4 For day and night
 your hand was heavy on me;
 my strength was sapped
 as in the heat of summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
 and did not cover up my iniquity.
 I said, 'I will confess
 my transgressions to the LORD.'
 And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
- 6 Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
 while you may be found;
 surely the rising of the mighty waters
 will not reach them.
- 7 You are my hiding place;
 you will protect me from trouble
 and surround me with songs of deliverance.

- 8 I will instruct you and teach you
in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.
- 9 Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.
- 10 Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts him.
- 11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart! (NIV)

What has helped you most as you "sat" with this psalm?

Pray this Psalm:

- Acknowledge God's goodness and your sinfulness.
- Ask for receptivity to His leading and counsel.



4. PSALM 77

I AM TROUBLED

For Jeduthun, the choir director: A psalm of Asaph.

1. How does Asaph express how he is feeling?
2. What happens when focuses on God's character?
3. What does he remind himself of (vs 15-19)?
4. Do I need to cry out? To question? Or to remember?
5. Which is the key verse in this psalm for you?

1 I cry out to God without holding back.

Oh, that God would listen to me!

2 When I was in deep trouble,

I searched for the Lord.

All night long I pray, with hands lifted

towards heaven, pleading.

There can be no joy for me until he acts.

3 I think of God, and I moan,

overwhelmed with longing for his help.

Interlude

4 You don't let me sleep.

I am too distressed even to pray!

5 I think of the good old days,

long since ended,

6 when my nights were filled with joyful songs.

I search my soul and think about

the difference now.

7 Has the Lord rejected me forever?

Will he ever again show me favour?

8 Is his unfailing love gone forever?

Have his promises permanently failed?

9 Has God forgotten to be kind?

Has he slammed the door on his compassion?

Interlude

- 10 And I said, "This is my fate,
that the blessings of the Most High
have changed to hatred."
11 I recall all you have done, O LORD;
I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.
12 They are constantly in my thoughts.
I cannot stop thinking about them.
- 13 O God, your ways are holy.
Is there any god as mighty as you?
14 You are the God of miracles and wonders!
You demonstrate your awesome power
among the nations.
15 You have redeemed your people by your strength,
the descendants of Jacob and of Joseph
by your might.

Interlude

- 16 When the Red Sea saw you, O God,
its waters looked and trembled!
The sea quaked to its very depths.
17 The clouds poured down their rain;
the thunder rolled and crackled in the sky.
Your arrows of lightning flashed.
18 Your thunder roared from the whirlwind;
the lightning lit up the world!
The earth trembled and shook.
19 Your road led through the sea.
your pathway through the mighty waters –
a pathway no one knew was there!
20 You led your people along that road
like a flock of sheep,
with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds. (NLT)

Which truth or image has struck you most as you have pondered this psalm? Why?

(NB v19 – see cover photo)

Pray this Psalm:

- praise God for all He has done for you.
- be honest before God - like Asaph, pour out your confusion, questions or anguish to God.
(Or store this psalm up for the day when you need to do so.)



5. PSALM 92

A PERMANENT HOME

A psalm to be sung on the LORD's day. A song

1. Why is it fitting ('good' v1,2) to sing to God?
2. What is said about the foolish and wicked?
3. What points are all the plant pictures making?
4. What reasons for confidence are mentioned?

- 1 It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to the Most High.
- 2 It is good to proclaim your unfailing love
in the morning,
your faithfulness in the evening,
- 3 accompanied by the harp and lute
and the harmony of the lyre.
- 4 You thrill me, LORD, with all you have
done for me!
I sing for joy because of what you have done.
- 5 O LORD, what great miracles you do!
And how deep are your thoughts.
- 6 Only an ignorant person would not know this!
Only a fool would not understand it.
- 7 Although the wicked flourish like weeds,
and evildoers blossom with success,
there is only eternal destruction ahead of them.
- 8 But you are exalted in the heavens.
You, O LORD, continue forever.
- 9 Your enemies, LORD, will surely perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.
- 10 But you have made me as strong as a wild bull.
How refreshed I am by your power!

11 With my own eyes I have seen
the downfall of my enemies;
with my own ears I have heard
the defeat of my wicked opponents.

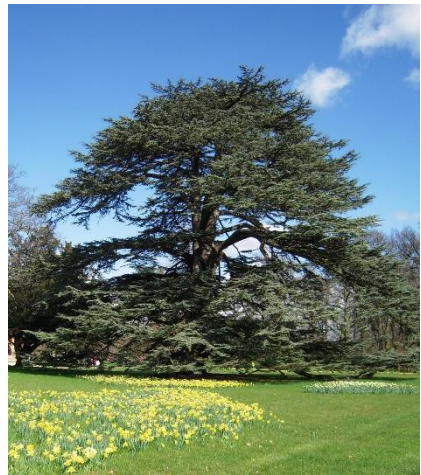
12 But the godly will flourish
like palm trees,
and grow strong like
the cedars of Lebanon;
13 For they are transplanted
into the LORD's own house,
They flourish
in the courts of our God.



14 Even in old age,
they will still produce fruit;
they will remain vital
and green.

15 They will declare,
"The LORD is just!
He is my Rock!
There is nothing but
goodness in him!"

(NLT)



Which truth or image in this psalm have you found most meaningful?

Pray this Psalm: praise and exalt God; sing a song.

6. PSALM 144

KNOWING GOD; FACING LIFE

Of David

1. What is God like? What has God done?
2. What contrasts are mentioned?
3. What does the psalmist need rescuing from? What do I?
4. What 7 aspects of blessedness are described?
5. How does David show his confidence in God?

- 1 Praise be to the LORD my Rock,
 who trains my hands for war,
 my fingers for battle.
- 2 He is my loving God and my fortress,
 my stronghold and my deliverer,
 my shield, in whom I take refuge,
 who subdues peoples under me.
- 3 LORD, what are human beings that you care for them,
 mere mortals that you think of them?
- 4 They are like a breath;
 their days are like a fleeting shadow.

- 5 Part your heavens, LORD, and come down;
 touch the mountains, so that they smoke.
- 6 Send forth lightning and scatter the enemy;
 Shoot your arrows and rout them.
- 7 Reach down your hand from on high;
 deliver me and rescue me
 from the mighty waters,
 from the hands of foreigners
- 8 whose mouths are full of lies,
 whose right hands are deceitful.

- 9 I will sing a new song to you, my God;
 on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you,

- 10 to the One who gives victory to kings,
 who delivers his servant David.
 From the deadly sword
- 11 deliver me;
 rescue me from the hands of foreigners
 whose mouths are full of lies,
 whose right hands are deceitful.
- 12 Then our sons in their youth
 will be like well-nurtured plants,
 and our daughters will be like pillars
 carved to adorn a palace.
- 13 Our barns will be filled
 with every kind of provision.
 Our sheep will increase by thousands,
 by tens of thousands in our fields;
- 14 our oxen will draw heavy loads.
 There will be no breaching of walls,
 no going into captivity,
 no cry of distress in our streets.
- 15 Blessed is the people of whom this is true;
 Blessed is the people whose God is the LORD. (NIV)

Which truth or image has resonated most as you have sat and pondered this psalm? Why?

Pray the psalm –

- thank God for how He has blessed you in the past,
- pray about your present struggles,
- praise Him for your sure hope of eternal life through Jesus.



My rock ... my fortress ... my stronghold ... my refuge

Finally

What has been the most precious insight you have received over the past months as you have let the message of these psalms soak into your heart?

Contemplative Reflection

As I approach God in gratitude for the last 24 hours,
God is glad that I have chosen to spend this moment
in His presence.

I recall -

1. What was the high point in the last 24 hours –
that moment when I felt the most consolation?
What made it the high point?
How was God present there?
2. And what was the low point of my day?
What made it so low?

I stay with the contrast of the high and the low for a
moment.

I feel its tension.

As I go about the next 24 hours, I let myself continue
to reflect on the highs and lows.

I ask God to teach me,
to be present with me,
and to lead me through it all.