



Day 50

Psalm 123, 124, 125 It is easy for us to see the despair and brokenness of the world. (Vs. 3-4) How do we guard ourselves from being overtaken by it? The answer is in the first two verses of Psalm 123. We keep our eyes persistently fixated on God. Paul teaches us how to do this in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thanksgiving in our hearts to God." We must be in His word daily. We know from 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is "breathed out by God" and by it we are "equipped for every good work." We can trust His Word to guide us through His will for us, which ultimately is to bear His image to the world by becoming holy as He is holy (Lev 11:44-45, 1 Peter 1:15-16). Paul also commands us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray without ceasing." A life that is dwelling in the Word of God is continually speaking with Him throughout the day, and this focuses our eyes on Him. James tells us, when we lack wisdom, all we have to do is ask and God will give it to us liberally. As you read, humbly ask Him for wisdom today. Knowing and glorifying God by keeping our eyes focused on Him must be what fuels our life each day. Pray and ask God to help you keep your eyes fixed on the things of Him today. Psalm 124 reminds us that God is a covenant-keeping Father Who is always faithful. God remains endlessly committed to us as we seek to bear His image to the world. You can find much rest in His faithfulness. Take a moment and praise Him for His relentless, endless, loving faithfulness in your life. In Psalm 125, the psalmist declares that those who trust in the Lord will not be shaken. We know that in Christ, our suffering is only temporary and to the glory of God. Remain steadfast, persevere in faith because you have been made righteous by the grace of God. (Vs. 4) You can persevere in suffering knowing that the victory has already been won through Jesus. Today, keep your eyes fixed on Him, praise God for His faithfulness and know that you can persevere because God perseveres in victory.

Day 51

Psalm 126, 127, 128 These psalms are songs of ascents, or written prayers prayed during the psalmists' journeys to Zion and/or Jerusalem. The journeys were certainly physical (see Psalm 121:1), but also spiritual (see Psalm 123:1), given that Jerusalem was the place where Heaven met earth. As you read these psalms, imagine yourself taking the same journey, albeit through a different lens. Remind yourself that God has already descended to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for that fact before you begin.

Have you ever heard that the kingdom of God is both now and not yet? In 1 John 3:2, the apostle writes, "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Certainly this verse reflects the now-not yet reality. We are children of God, or kingdom people, living under the Kingship of Jesus here and now. Still, there is a 'not yet' aspect; God's kingdom has not yet come in full because Jesus has not yet returned. Like this verse, these psalms also reflect the now-not yet reality. In Psalm 126, the psalmist praises God for restoring his community and prays that God will bring the full realization of his community's restoration. We too can praise God for his work (Christ's finished work on the cross imparted to us by faith) and pray for God's work (the ushering in of His kingdom through Christ's return) to be completed. Praise and prayer, or tears and joy (Psalm 127:5), are not in conflict with one another for God's kingdom people. As we live in the now-not yet kingdom, wisdom (living life in obedience to God) is the way in which we should walk. Such a life is called "blessed" (Psalm 128:1), and Psalms 127 and 128 tell us what being blessed by God can look like (food, shelter, security, and family). Wisdom, however, does not promise us all of this, as it does not promise us a perfect life. For that, we must wait until Christ's return. Praise and pray, kingdom people, for we will one day see the King and become like Him when His kingdom comes in full.



Day 52

Psalm 129, 130, 131 Psalm 130 gives us insight and instruction for how we as believers should see our sin in light of who God is and what He has done and how we should respond to Him when sin is identified in our lives. It is not clear what circumstance led the psalmist to cry out to God, but a consciousness and sorrow over his sin is evident. We should take note that the psalmist is broken over his sin, but readily admits his trouble to God. He does not hide it. He knows that first and foremost, his sin is against God. We see this all throughout scripture. "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge." (Psalm 51:3-4) In light of this, trouble weighs heavily on his mind, takes him to the depths, keeps him awake at night; however, the second thing to notice is that it does not bring him to despair. As he pours out his grief to God in prayer He is encouraged as He remembers God's mercy for those who trust in Him alone for forgiveness. "If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared." (V.3) Later in verse 5 we see that the psalmist declares that it is in God's word that he will hope, which over and over again, promises that God will listen to and answer the lowly and humble of heart. He is confident that God is merciful and forgiving, that he will find grace in God's eyes. Why? It is a matter of faith; he trusts God. As "waiting" and "hoping" are inseparably linked, so are faith and hope. We believe God and therefore our hope make us not ashamed. It gives us that inner confidence to wait patiently and to trust God to deliver. This psalm provides insight and instruction for how we should see our sin and how we should rightly respond.

Day 53

Proverbs 25, 26, 27 The key of wisdom that unlocks the door to humility is forged through the willingness to see clearly and live out vividly God's desire that we serve. We were created to serve the Lord through worship of Him and honoring His Creation by filling the Earth with His glory. We cannot do either of those when we put ourselves before others, most especially God. That is why Proverbs tells our ears to love reproof, to give our enemy bread, to not let our tongues praise ourselves. Proverbs 27:21 says "a man is tested by his praise." That is because we become what we worship! If we praise ourselves, we worship ourselves; if we worship ourselves, we are incapable of praising God or truly loving others. The root of Adam and Eve's sin was not to taste a forbidden fruit, but to be equal to God. If God's answer to that sin was to send Christ "to serve, not to be served" by dying on the Cross, how much more should our response be to die to ourselves and surrender our lives to God with a servant's devotion and a child's adoration for their loving Father? And the power of the Cross frees us up to forget ourselves, set Christ as the beacon for our lives and steer a course of service to God through loving our neighbor. That's how we fill the Earth with God's glory!



Day 54

Psalm 132, 133, 134 God is perfect. God is righteous. God is holy. So when God makes a promise, we can trust it. This is the essence of faith: believing that God is Who He says He is. This is the source of hope: trusting that God will do what He has vowed to do. Our response in faith is to rest in His promises. We trust in His Word. We cling to Jesus. We obey the Spirit. We know the infinite depth of God's devotion, first to His glory and then to us as a recipient of that glory, because it was borne out plainly on the Cross. Our duty in hope is to have a trust that can sustain any wind because it is woven through the fire of our faith. We are not to simply just hope for Heaven, but we live out the reality of that hope through relationship with Jesus right now. Our hope rests secure in the promised Holy Spirit bearing fruit in our lives. One day we will see Jesus in full, but right now His promise is not void. He is with us, leading us, anchoring our faith and providing hope to us. Therefore, rest in His promises and echo His praises, for that is God's will for our lives.

Day 55

Psalm 135, 136 Who is like our Lord? None! Psalm 135 reminds us of the greatness of God, and also does a breathtaking job of placing the reality of our Maker in comparison of the objects that so often receive our praise. The author makes it clear that these inanimate things in our life that receive our trust, attention, and time clearly don't compare to the glory of our God, and they also have none of the relational attributes that belong to God. They do not speak, see, hear, or breathe, and they are made of human hands. As such, they should not receive our affection, simply because we are giving our affection to an empty thing. Now, it's easy to think, "Well hey, I don't have any gods in my life from other religions." But it's also easy to miss what objects or idols you have placed like a god in your life. In our culture, we have idols that we pursue that take form in obsessions like having the next best thing, needing to constantly entertained, and needing to be perceived in a certain way. As you examine your idols, pray that you allow your experience of God to overshadow those empty pursuits and that God gives you the security in Him that redeems your idols and allows you to place God above creation in your heart, your behavior, and in your actions.

Day 56

Psalm 137, 138, 139 One of today's Psalms invites us to consider a thought that seems to float around in Christianity, but does not necessarily take root. This thought (really, this reality) is God's temple. We see the author of Psalm 138 gives honor the holy Temple of God, which was a structure erected for the purpose of worship, sacrifice, and ultimately being a dwelling place for the Spirit of the Lord. Modern-day believers may readily assent to the truth of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 3:16, that through Christ we are now God's temple and God's Spirit lives in us; but it is curious how deeply and consistently we as believers may or may not grasp this new reality. Take time today to mediate on the implications of the impact on you when you consider that the temple is no longer a structure - the temple of God is you. You are quite literally where the Spirit of God lives. How does this knowledge impact you?