**Autumn 2020: Time in the Psalms: Week 1: Psalms 1 & 2**

This autumn we are spending time looking at the Book of Psalms. Within the Psalms we find so much of life, faith, love, hope, fear, joy, anger and plenty more. Most of all, we find the key elements of worship & praise of God and trust in Him. Each week we will look at a different aspect of faith and Christian life through the lens of one or more Psalm.

**A Session Outline - 40 mins total, but can be longer or flexible if you wish**

**Introduction - 10 mins (longer if you’re in a group I suspect!)**

1. How are you?
2. What notable things have happened recently?
3. Is there anything distracting you from focusing on God today? If yes, think or talk about that and then pray and give it to God as you begin.

**Time With the Bible - 15-20 mins**

*What does this passage tell me abbot God?* To answer this question, you might want to think about whether the passage speaks about God directly or indirectly. Is there a prophecy quoted, or does the passage remind you of another part of scripture? If so, spend some time following the leads. How does the passage remind you of what you’ve known about God before? Does it make you think differently about God than you have done before?

*What does this passage tell me about myself?* To answer this question you might want to ask how you felt as you read the passage and how you feel as you reflect on it now. Do you identify with a particular character? Does it make you feel happy or sad, hopeful, excited, confused or any other emotions?

If you feel challenged, or as if something in the passage is really speaking to your or feels personal to you today, spend a few minutes thinking: what is it? What about it feels important to you?

*What is this passage inviting me to do differently?*

As Christians we are meant to live according to the truth that is in Jesus and to not be the same as before we knew him (Ephesians 4:20-24). As we learn the good news of Jesus and the truth about his love we are bound to change.

Spend time thinking about things in your life you might want to be or to do differently as a result of today’s study and pray about those things.

For each session, we will also provide a few questions to pick out the key elements of the passage and try and help you to be guided through the study.

**Time in Prayer - 10 mins**

Each time you meet or spend time reflecting alone, make sure you leave plenty of time to pray. You could pray about:

The Church and its leaders, both ours, Churches nearby and the worldwide Church

Situations locally or in the world around us

Things shared by people during your time together

Those who are afraid, sick or those who are bereaved

Committing to God that you will follow through on what you’ve been invited to do by today’s study.

Your neighbours and the street you live in.

Those who govern us locally, nationally and internationally.

**Study Questions**

**Psalm 1**

1. As you’ve read the two Psalms for this week, what were your instinctive responses? How did reading them make you feel? Are you familiar with them?
2. Why do you think this Psalm is first?
3. What do you think these Psalms teach us about why it is important to be thankful to God?
4. How do we avoid walking in the ways of the wicked? How can we be distinctive for God?
5. What do you think it means to stand firm for the truth? What would that look like in how you live your life from day to day?
6. What makes someone righteous, do you think? The psalmist makes it very clear what happens to the plans of people who are ‘righteous’ and people who are ‘wicked’. How do we make sure we are ‘righteous’? Can we be ‘righteous’ sometimes and not others?

**Psalm 2**

1. This Psalm can be split into sections, with the nations planning a rebellion first, then the Father speaking in vv4-6, the Son speaking in vv7-9 and the Spirit in vv10-12. Interesting that the three persons of the Trinity are all represented! Do you find that you prefer the section of any of them in particular?
2. Can you think of a time that you have decided to rebel against God and go your own way? It might even have happened quite recently. Did it go well?
3. Verses 11 and 12 give a powerful picture of some reasons we might choose to worship God. I wonder how often any of us tremble with reverence before God (as it says in the Passion translation), not just out of ‘fear’ but out of sheer wonder at the holiness of God and His goodness. Do you think anything is missing from the worship we share as a Church which might help us to connect with God’s holiness more?
4. The Psalm ends with listeners and readers being invited to ‘draw aside and hide themselves in Him’. What do you think this looks like for us? What would we start doing, stop doing, do more of if we hid drew aside and hid ourselves in God, individually and as a Church?

**Something To Do This Week**

If you have time, watch again Krissy’s introduction to journalling and the Psalms from the service on September 6th. You’ll find it on [www.emmgroup.org.uk](http://www.emmgroup.org.uk) in the post for the service for that day. Consider spending some time over the next three months journalling your responses to the Psalms and themes we encounter in whatever way suits you best. We’d love to see examples of your responses if you would be comfortable to share them.