**Autumn 2020: Time in the Psalms**

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 about 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**

1. What role do you think anger plays in a healthily balanced life of faith? In Psalm 70, v1 David is seeking restoration from God, whilst in vv2-3 it seems clear that he expects God’s favour to extend to dealing severely with both God’s, and David’s opponents.
2. As we look at these readings around Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, we remember that people have sacrificed and suffered for the freedoms that we enjoy in our day. Reading Psalm 70, do you think David would have been able to control his anger and avoid falling into the trap of lashing out in seeking vengeance against those who he thought had wronged him and caused him to suffer?
3. What about seeking revenge, or asking God to avenge something wrong that has happened to us? How do you feel about that?
4. Is there anything we can learn from the way David’s anger sits alongside praise?
5. Do you think David would praise God if God chose not to do what he asked Him to? What about us, if that ever happens in our lives?
6. How do you think Jesus’s response to people inflicting pain and suffering on one another would be similar to David’s? Do you think it would differ at all and if so, in what ways?
7. There is a recurring theme in David’s Psalms of those who seek God passionately erupting with joy over who God is and what He does. What do you think erupting with joy and praise would look like for you, or for our Church?

**Something To Do This Week**

**What is making you angry at the moment? Bring it to God and ask Him if it is right and good that you are angry - it might well be - and ask Him how you might respond in a way which is God-honouring. Each situation is different, so if you are unsure after praying, perhaps share your situation with a trusted friend or member of your group and see if they can help you to a good next step.**