

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are two teachers and every day during the past week we had a quiet time from 7 selected PSALMS in the Old Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned from our quiet times. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM THE PSALMS - part 2.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM THE PSALMS**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Psalm 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25 and 27. Now we will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from some of these Psalms and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Psalm 16.

A testimony of faith in God's present and future presence.

First. The present reality of the believer. King David experiences a very serious threat to his life. What kind of threat, is not described. He faces death. In this present real danger, he commits himself into the hands of the living God and takes refuge under his protection. King David was the greatest king of Israel, and yet he testifies that the God of the Bible is his Lord, his King, who would look after his own possessions on earth. And he testifies that in the face of death, nothing besides the God of the Bible is really worthwhile having! King David knows that God delights in those who live the holy and righteous life. He also knows that the sorrows of the godless and wicked will only increase, because they bring sacrifices to idols. In the face of grave danger and death, king David thinks of his future lot that is secure with God and of the delightful inheritance that God has given to him. Therefore, even in his present troubles he can praise God. *In all his present difficult circumstances, king David sets the Lord before his spiritual eyes.* Yes, his present problems and dangers are very real, but also God's presence and nearness is very real. Because king David believes firmly in the presence of God in his daily difficult circumstances, he is sure that he will not stumble and fall, and his real life will not be shaken. Because God Himself is standing at his right hand, he will be able to persevere and stand firm until the end (Mt 24:13).

Second. The future reality of the believer. King David rejoices, because the assurance of God's presence in his present life on earth is the guarantee of God's presence also in his future life after death. Even when his body is laid in the grave, God will not abandon him. He is even sure that his body will not be abandoned to decay in the grave forever. In this Psalm, king David looks forward to the resurrection of the body! And in verse 11 king David testifies that, although he faces death and the grave, he is very sure that he is on the way of eternal life. On the way of eternal life, God fills all people walking on it with joy in his presence and with eternal pleasures. After death, this eternal life, joy and pleasures will forever be his reality in the presence of God in heaven.

Third. The prophecy fulfilled. One thousand years later, in Acts 2:25-32 Luke applied Psalm 16:8-11 to the resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ. What king David firmly believed, was first fulfilled in the Messiah-King, Jesus Christ. God did not abandon his body to the grave, but resurrected him after three days. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the guarantee that the bodies of all believers in Christ will also be resurrected!

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 18.**

A song of praise to God, who responds to prayers of distress.

First. Verse 1-3 summarises God as Protector. King David was king from 1012-972 B.C. Before he became king, he was often persecuted, especially by king Saul. During those years, he narrowly escaped death several times. In many pictures of strength, David calls God his Rock, his Fortress and his Shield, who saved him from all his enemies.

Second. Verse 4-19 describes God as Rescuer. David's enemies often tried to catch him by setting traps for him. But in his distress, David called to God. And God heard his prayer in heaven. In poetic language, David describes how God came down from heaven to rescue him. Making use of what happens during an earthquake and violent rainstorm, David describes how God came down to rescue him from his enemies. God is pictured as a great giant, who snorts in anger and stamps with his feet on earth (7-8). He is pictured as being carried by the wind in swift flight, riding on a cherub, who is a bearer of the divine glory. He covers himself in the continually darker storm clouds (9-11). Then the storm breaks in all its violence. God responds to David's prayer by hurling bolts of lightning and hailstones onto the earth and thundering with his voice. Even the deepest places in the ocean experience the mighty deeds of God. God reaches down

from on high, takes hold of David in his distress and trouble, and draws him out of *the deep waters*, which represent his enemies.

Third. Verse 20-27 describes God as Responder. In David's mind, God acted to rescue him, because he lived according to God's law, in righteousness, purity and obedience. Of course, David does not take this in absolute sense, as if he is free from sin, because in the other Psalms he confesses his sins and receives God's forgiveness. But David believes that what God does to people is in some way a reflection of what people do towards God.

Fourth. Verse 28-45 describes God as Equipper. Only the God of the Bible is perfect. Only the Bible is flawless. That is why the God of the Bible is the only Helper of man. He equipped David with everything he needed as a warrior: power to jump over great obstacles, speed to outrun the enemy, training to use the weapons provided and space to fight the battles. Finally, God gave David the victory over his enemies and made him a great king, so that many foreigners came to make peace with him.

Fifth. Verse 46-50 is a closing song of praise. God had given him all these victories. Therefore, David will sing God's praises among the nations. He will tell the nations of God's unfailing kindness to him.

I too am learning to praise God among people for rescuing me and giving me victories.

(S) Sharing quiet times from Psalm 19.

A song about God's speaking through creation and through his Word. King David is aware that God reveals himself through both a general and a special revelation.

First. God speaks through creation. This is *God's general revelation*. The heavens with its sun, moon and stars declare the glory of God and proclaim the work of his hands. Their greatness in numbers, distance and size and their wonderful beauty speaks to man on earth. They do not use words that people can hear with their ears, but they speak irresistibly and without ceasing words about God that are heard by spiritual ears. God speaks through his created works everywhere on earth and can be understood by people of every language. The sun is pictured as living in the universe as his tent. From the perspective of man the sun makes its daily journey from the one end of the earth to the other. It throws its light on everything so that all people may be able to see how wonderful God had created everything on earth. And it spreads out its heat to all living things, so that they can produce life.

Second. God speaks through his Word that is recorded in the Bible. This is *Gods' special revelation*. The law of the Lord is the whole Old Testament Bible as king David knew it. In the Bible, God reveals not only what he has done in creation, but also who he is, what he has spoken and what he has done. *People need God's special revelation in order to be saved.* David mentions six of the Bible's most important characteristics. As *instruction*, the Bible is perfect, reviving the soul. It can bring a complete change in man and bring him eternal life. As *a witness*, the Bible is trustworthy, making wise the simple. It can lead people who know nothing about God to the wisdom of knowing God and God's ways. As *guidelines*, the Bible is right, giving joy to the heart. It directs the steps of his servants in the right way and keeps them from walking on the wrong way. As *commands*, the Bible is radiant, giving light to the eyes. When its commands are obeyed, it gives people real understanding, insight and wisdom. As *the fear of the Lord*, the Bible is pure, enduring forever. In all its teachings it reveals how people can trust, revere and serve God in a way that pleases him. As *ordinances*, the Bible is sure and altogether righteous. It gives all the norms by which God will judge everyone and by which the people of God may live in righteousness. That is why the Bible is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey.

Third. The writer's response to God's speaking. Because God speaks of his might and beauty and wisdom through creation, and he speaks so clearly of his will and deeds in the Bible, the writer becomes aware of his own limitations even to know himself well. He prays and asks God to forgive the sins of which he is not yet aware, and to keep him from committing deliberate sins. Only in this way can he attain his life-goal, and that is to live a righteous life before God. He prays that even his meditation on God's revelation through creation and the Bible may be pleasing in God's sight.

(T) Sharing quiet times from Psalm 22.

A complaint about feeling forsaken and a declaration of faith in ultimate salvation.

First. In verse 1-21, David complains bitterly that he feels forsaken by God. For many days and nights, David has been struggling in his prayers to God (2). He is facing terrible enemies, whom he describes as strong bulls that encircle him, as lions that want to tear him to pieces, and as wild dogs that devour others who are too weak to move (12-13,16). He describes his enemies as a band of evil robbers who beat him half dead and plunder his clothes (16-18). David complains that trouble is near and there is no one to help (11). On the contrary, he has even become the object of their

mockery and insults. His enemies mock him when he prays to God for help and they mock God (6-8). David agonizes. His body and soul suffers. His strength feels like water being poured out. His heart, which is the centre of his being, feels like melting wax. The fever in his body makes his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth. He does not feel human anymore. He is like a worm that is trampled to death (6,15).

In this state of agony, David cries, “My God, why have you forsaken me?” He does not pour out his complaint to any God, but to *his* God. Although he *feels* forsaken by God, he still clings to God in the most difficult moments of his struggle. In the darkness of his suffering, David cannot see God’s presence anymore. And yet, he does not let go of God and also does not want God to let go of him (1-3)! David wrestles with the reason of his suffering. “Why” does he suffer, while in the past, his ancestors, the Israelites, cried to God and were saved? Why is his present situation such a flagrant contradiction of his past history (4-5)? “Why” does he suffer, when he belongs to God already from his birth? Why does his suffering look as if God has rejected him (9-10)?

Second. In verse 22-31, David declares by faith that God will surely rescue him. While David struggles in prayer and opens his heart to God, a miracle takes place in his body and soul. After he has experienced all the bitterness, which the testing of his faith brought, he begins to experience the sweetness, which the triumph of his faith brings! Although he still faces his bitter enemies and he is still threatened from all sides, his eyes are lifted away from his present earthly difficulties up to his ultimate salvation. *His agonising questioning of the reason of his suffering is turned into a strong declaration of his faith in God that is completely sure of his future ultimate salvation.* By faith, he sees himself rescued out of all his troubles, standing amidst his brothers in the congregation and praising God for his deliverance. He urges all his brothers to praise God together with him for hearing his cries for help and for delivering him (22-23). As was the custom in Israel, he brings a thank offering to God and holds a thanksgiving meal together with the poor. These poor people are other people who are still crying for help in their suffering, so that they may be encouraged by God’s deliverance of David (24-26).

But David’s deliverance, which by faith he sees as already accomplished, will have even greater results: All the nations in the world will turn to the living God and worship him. All the rich and important people in the world will also bow down before God. Even all the people who have ever lived and are in the graves, will be resurrected and kneel before God (27-29).

And finally, all the coming generations of people must be told about the living God and his righteousness. They must hear the news of what God has done in the past (30-31). Thus, David’s Psalm, which began as a bitter complaint about his suffering, in the end turned to become a declaration of faith in God’s ultimate victory over enemies, over the important people in the world, over the future generations and over all people who are already dead.

Third. Psalm 22 is a Messianic Psalm. What David said about his own suffering, actually happened in reality with Jesus Christ. In Matthew chapter 27 and Luke chapter 23 we read that more than 1000 years later, Jesus Christ was literally crucified. Long iron nails pierced his hands and his feet to the cross. The soldiers literally divided his clothes and cast lots for his under garment. He was literally surrounded by his most bitter enemies from among both the Jews and the Gentile Romans who sought to destroy him. He was mocked and insulted. People mocked God and challenged God to rescue him from the cross. His body was feverish, so that his tongue cleaved to his mouth. And after his body was pierced with a spear, water and blood came out of his side, which is a sign that his heart had broken.

But also what David said about the enfolding of God’s kingdom as a result of his deliverance, was literally fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the gospel has been preached to all nations, and people from every nation are turning to the God of the Bible and are worshipping him. Thus, what David sang of himself in Psalm 22, God used as a part of his prophecy about the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

(S) Sharing quiet times from Psalm 23.

A song about who the Lord is. David uses three pictures to tell us who the Lord is.

First. The Lord is our Shepherd. An ordinary shepherd in Israel led his sheep to the best places to graze and rest. These were not easy to find and often a shepherd had to fight against bears and lions to protect his sheep, protect them against poachers and guide them over mountains and cliffs. In the same way, the Lord shepherds his own people to the best places where they can feed and rest spiritually. The Lord is such a Good Shepherd, that those who follow him will never lack any good thing.

Second. The Lord is our Guide. As a Guide, the Lord leads his own people in the right way. The right way is God’s goal, revealed in the Bible. The Lord does this for his own name’s sake. This is a part of his covenant promise to his people. He will certainly guide them through the deep and dark valleys of this present life, but also through the deep and dark valley of death. There is simply no place where the Lord will not protect and guide his people!

Third. The Lord is his Host. As people living in the East know, a host has great responsibilities towards his guests. Who could be a better Host than the Lord himself? According to eastern custom, the host pours oil over the heads of his special guests and he feasts with them at a rich table. This all happens, while David's enemies watch. The Lord as Host will show everyone whom he has favoured and whom he wants to honour.

In verse 6, David ends his Psalm with the assurance that God's goodness and love for him in the future is very sure. In childlike faith, David says that he will dwell in God's presence all the days of his life on earth, but also in the future for ever.

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 25.**

A struggle between feelings of fear and knowledge of hope.

First. David struggles between his feelings and his knowledge. On the one hand, David *fears*. He fears that he may fail, that he will be put to shame when his enemies triumph over him. The number of his enemies have increased and they hate him fiercely (2,19). This situation also multiplied the troubles of his heart and increased his anguish (17). He *feels* lonely and miserable (16).

On the other hand, David *hopes*. His hope is that the living God will save him from his enemies. He *knows* that no one who hopes in the Lord will ever be put to shame. Thus, *David has a real struggle between his feelings and his knowledge*. Therefore, he prays and asks God to teach him his ways. Because he does not understand why he has to go through all these troubles, he asks God to teach him. The reason why David is bold to ask God to teach him his ways is because God is great in mercy and love. God is good and upright. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way (4-6,8-9). David realises that if he wants God to teach him his ways, he must first humble himself and allow God to take away whatever is standing between them. So David confesses the sins and rebellious ways of his youth and asks God to forgive his great iniquity (7,9). David *knows* that all the ways of God are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of God's covenant. He *knows* that God will instruct him in the way God has chosen for him. That is why he keeps his eyes always on God. Only God *can* and *will* release his feet from the snare.

Second. David prays for integrity and uprightness. David's struggle between his fear and hope, between his feelings and his knowledge does not end quickly. On the one hand, he takes his refuge in God and shelters under God's protection. On the other hand, he knows his own sinful heart, which so quickly can pull him away from God. Therefore, he prays and asks God to give him integrity and uprightness in his inner being to protect him against his own sinful nature.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one Psalm. The selected Psalms are Psalm 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 40 and 49. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".