

(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 3.

(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 31.

A prayer about the defeat of falling and the triumph of faith.

First. The defeat caused by falling into a trap. The sufferings of David are not uncommon to the people of God. Also the prophet Jeremiah experienced similar sufferings. Compare verse 12, "I am *forgotten* by them as though I were dead; I have become like *broken pottery*" with Jeremiah 22:28, "Is this man ... a *despised, broken pot, an object no one wants?*" And compare verse 13, "I hear the slander of many; *there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life*" with Jeremiah 20:10, "I hear many whispering, "*Terror on every side! Report him! Let's report him!* All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying, "Perhaps he will be deceived; then we will prevail over him and take out revenge on him." And compare verse 17, "*Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave*" with Jeremiah 17:18, "*Let my persecutors be put to shame, but keep me from shame; let them be terrified, but keep me from terror. Bring on them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction.*"

David's enemies had set a trap for him, and according to verse 4-5, he had apparently fallen into it. Christians must be very watchful, because their enemies often set traps for them. *The purpose of their enemies is to discredit influential Christians in the presence of their followers.* Especially Christian leaders must be watchful never to get into situations that might compromise them. Such compromising situations may be a moral matter, such as committing adultery. Another compromising situation could be a financial matter, such as taking a bribe. Another compromising situation could be a political matter, such as being tempted to say things against certain government leaders. Christians must be very watchful, because the purpose of their enemies is to break their influence on their followers. And their methods are evil, such as deliberately setting traps for Christians to fall into.

The consequences of David falling into this trap were very damaging. According to verse 11-12, his neighbours despised him and even his friends feared him and acted as if they had forgotten him. According to verse 13, his enemies were not satisfied with bringing David to fall. They continued their persecution and plotted to kill him. They would not be satisfied until they had completely destroyed him. David became anxious and suspicious: He saw enemies all around him (15b). According to verse 9-10, he grew weak in body and spirit: His life was consumed by anguish and his strength failed. The worst was that he began to believe that God had really forsaken him: According to verse 22, in his alarm he thought that he was cut off from God and from God's sight. He feared that God did not even look at his difficulties anymore.

Second. The triumph of faith in God. Out of his misery David called to God for help. In verse 2-3, he called God his rock of refuge and a strong fortress, where he had taken his refuge. Therefore, *his enemies would first have to overcome God, before they would be able to attack him!* This thought that God is my strong fortress, built on a high and unassailable rock is very comforting to me. As long as I shelter in God, all my enemies would first have to attack God and overcome God, before they could attack me. And because no one can overcome God, I am really safe with God! In verse 5, David says that he had committed his spirit into God's hands. The meaning is here that he had committed the care of his life on earth to God. In verse 15, David says that his times were in the hands of God. The meaning is that the length of his life on earth was not determined by his enemies, but by the living God! David therefore put his hope in God's righteousness (1) and unfailing love (16). He dared to ask God for help and deliverance out of the trap and shame it brought, and he dared to ask God to put his evil enemies to shame. He prayed, "Let the wicked be put to shame and let their lying lips be silenced" (17-18)! Although David experienced such humiliation and shame, *he chose, not to be defeated by his defeat, but to triumph by faith in the living God, who can change every difficult situation.* In verse 14 he says, "You are my God! In you I trust!" And so his faith turned his anguish into praise. In verse 7 and 21-24 he says that he rejoiced in the fact that God saw his affliction and knew his anguish. God heard his cry for mercy and showed his wonderful love to him when he felt trapped as in a besieged city. He praised God for preserving him against his proud

enemies. Also my fear for my enemies can be turned into a triumph of faith, because God is a strong fortress when I shelter with him!

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 32.**

A Psalm of penitence.

First. David suffered because he refused to confess his sins. In Psalm 19:12-13, David had a very different attitude: There he prayed, “Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me.” There in Psalm 19, he was no longer aware of any sins that stood between him and God. But here in Psalm 32:3-4, David was very much aware of sins that stood between him and God. And he thought back of the time he refused to acknowledge and confess these sins to God. He describes the terrible struggle of his soul against God during the time he kept silent about his sins. We do not know which sin he had committed. It could have been his adultery with Batsheba and murder of her husband Uriah. What is important is that deep in his heart and conscience, David knew that particular sins in his life had not been confessed to God or had not been confessed to those against whom he had sinned. As long as he refused to acknowledge and confess his sin, he suffered. When God through his Holy Spirit pressed him to confess his sin and he resisted, he felt the torments of his conscience. His *conscience* called loudly to confess his sin, but his *will* forced him to keep silence. Thus, it became a struggle between God and his soul. The more he persisted in keeping silence, the louder the voice of his conscience protested. And as long as he kept silent about his sin, God also kept silent and his cries for deliverance remained unheard. Without stopping, God’s punishing hand rested heavily on David’s body and soul. Unconfessed sin causes suffering of the body as well as anguish of the soul. His body wasted away and he groaned all day long. His awareness that God was rightfully angry with him did not give him any rest or peace. It was like a fire within him, threatening to consume him. David became like a broken man, whose power was sapped by the heat of the tropical sun. He had no strength or motivation to do anything.

Second. David rejoiced because with God is much forgiveness. Then, after a long struggle against God, God’s will broke his resistance. What he had kept secret in his heart now poured out of his mouth. He no longer tried to cover up his sin, but he acknowledged and confessed it to God. He was convinced and convicted that what he had kept hidden so long was sin, iniquity and transgression in God’s eyes. He realised that if he did not acknowledge and confess what he had thought and done, he would *miss God’s goal* for his life. What he had thought and done in secret had been iniquity, that is, *a twisted and crooked road*. His sin had been a deliberate transgression of God’s law, that is, *rebellion against God’s rule* in his life (5).

But now that he had acknowledged and confessed his sin, God was quick to forgive him! God is not like us. We may take a long time to acknowledge and confess our sins, but God is quick to forgive! To forgive means that God took the guilt of his sin away. His sin was blotted out in heaven and could no more be found anywhere (5). Forgiveness is never outside a Christian’s consciousness. When we are forgiven, our soul will experience the peace of God and it will be the source of much joy! That is why David says, “Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven, whose sin the Lord does not count against him!” But he also does not forget to say, “Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no deceit”, that is, who does not keep any sin hidden or who does not try to justify his sin (1-2)!

Third. David instructed people to yield to God. David’s own experience had taught him how deceitful the heart of man was. He exhorted everyone who was godly not to keep silent, but to pray to God. People must pray to God, while he may still be found and before the mighty waters burst loose and sweep him away. From his own experience, David instructed and taught people in the way they should go (8).

On the one hand, *people must learn to pray to God*. They must pray even when the torments of their conscience and the agonies of their mind burst loose over them, like a waterfall from a high mountain. When a person prays, then God’s protecting hand will not allow him to be swept away, but instead will surround him from all sides. And he will be able to sing songs of deliverance (6-7)!

On the other hand, *people must learn to yield and submit to God*. People should not become like animals, which have to be forced to do the will of their masters by fear of punishment. People must not do what David did, who, only after much suffering in body and soul, yielded and submitted himself to God and was brought to his senses (9). Whoever does not yield or submit to God, will certainly experience many woes. But whoever yields and submits to God, will certainly experience God’s unfailing love (10).

Fourth. David exhorted people whose sins had also been forgiven to rejoice in the Lord. By their joy and singing, they manifest that they have been forgiven, that they are walking according to God’s righteous requirements and that there is no hidden sin or deceit in their heart.

(S) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 33.**

A new song of faith and hope. The writer of this Psalm does not specify any special event in history as the reason why he sings. This Psalm is rather *a powerful confession of faith* in both God's general providence towards all the nations in the world and his special care for his own people, the believers in the living God during the Old Testament period. It is a Psalm about the triumph of faith in God's almighty power over all of creation, over all people on earth, and over all the plans, strategies and armies of the nations who oppose his people. The writer exhorts people to sing and praise, to make music and joyfully proclaim God's greatness, not only in the old songs they already know, but in new songs, which they compose to honour God. God's people are described as *the righteous* who walk according to God's righteous requirements, and as *the upright*, who harbour no secret sins and deceit in their hearts. It is their duty to sing and praise God with music instruments and new songs (1-3). The writer gives three reasons why God's people should sing and praise and make music to honour the Lord:

First. In verse 4-5, he describes God as the loving and righteous God. God's people should sing and praise God with musical instruments and new songs, because God's words are right and true and God's actions are faithful. God has revealed himself, his words and his deeds as being righteous, just and full of love. Therefore, people can trust him and should depend on him. The people who walk in God's righteousness and justice certainly experience God's unfailing love. That is why it is fitting that they sing and praise God with music and new songs.

Second. In verse 6-9, he describes God as the almighty Creator of everything and everyone. God's people should sing and praise God with musical instruments and new songs, because God revealed his almighty power in creating the universe with its uncountable stars. He created all this without any effort. He just spoke a word and they were created! He revealed his might by gathering the waters of the formless earth into mighty oceans and into clouds in the air as if they were his storehouses (Gen 1:6-10). Therefore, all the people on earth should submit themselves to the living God and fear and revere him.

Third. In verse 10-19, he describes God as the sovereign Ruler and Controller of all the events in history. God's people should sing and praise God with musical instruments and new songs, because God is the irresistible Lord of the history of every nation on earth. Although the nations make plans against the people of God, God foils their plans and thwarts their purposes to destroy. Instead, it is not what the nations plan, but what God plans that will certainly happen! The plans of the Lord stand firm forever and the purposes of his heart will be carried out in every generation of people in history (10-11)! Although there are millions and millions of individuals doing their own things on earth, God looks down from heaven and sees everything everyone does. There is nothing that escapes his all-seeing eyes. He considers everything they think and do (13-15). Although the kings of the nations build up large armies with many soldiers and horses, or as we would say, with great arsenals of weapons and military machines, not one of them can or will escape when God acts against them. Their great armies cannot save them from God's wrath (16-17). While the nations who do not submit to God and do not fear or revere him, have no hope of deliverance, the nation of people whom God has chosen to be his possession and whose people fear and revere him, have hope! They hope in God, that is, they expect everything from God. They hope in God's unfailing love and his deliverance from disasters like famine and death on earth. And they are convinced that God uses every event in history to accomplish his plan and purpose, in particular to accomplish his plan and purpose to save his own people. Although the people who fear God might suffer famine or even death on earth, they have the unshakeable conviction that these things cannot separate them from God's unfailing love for them and cannot thwart God's perfect plan for their eternal lives (12,18-19)(Rom 8:31-39)! Because of these three reasons, the people of God trust in God and hope in God. And they lift up their voices and sing and praise God with new songs of faith and hope (20-22).

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 34.**

A song of deliverance.

First. In verse 1-6, David praises God for his deliverance. His soul had experienced how God had delivered him. Therefore, he exhorts all other people who have experienced God's deliverance to join him in praising God. God delivers from many things: Because they seek God, God delivers his people from all their fears of their enemies. Because they look to God and trust him, God delivers them from shame, from losing face before their opponents. Because they call in prayer to God, God delivers them from all the troubles they experience from those who hate them.

Second. In verse 7-10, David exhorts people to taste and see God's deliverance. They must first taste and then they will see, that is, they must first have *the spiritual experience* that God delivers before they can have *the spiritual knowledge* and assurance that God really delivers! Tasting and seeing is again the ground for fearing God. Whoever has experienced the deliverance of God, will begin to accept God's revelation of himself through his words and deeds and will begin to trust and revere God.

Many people have experienced that the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear the Lord and delivers them. The angel of the Lord is often the visible revelation of the invisible God, the One through whom God speaks to his own people, through whom he has fellowship with his own people and through whom he protects his own people. Therefore, David exhorts other people to taste and see that God is good. God's *goodness* consists of his acts of deliverance and care for his own people, for those who fear him and take their refuge in him. Like lions, the mighty kings and warriors in the world may grow weak and hungry. But the people, who fear God and seek him, will not lack a single good thing!

Third. In verse 11-22, David teaches people what is the fear of God that leads to deliverance. He calls the people *children*, not because they are young, but because they are in need of instruction about the way to fear God. In order to enjoy those things that make life worthwhile living, a person must *avoid doing certain things* and *do certain things*. He must keep his tongue from evil and also turn away from doing evil. And he must pursue peace and righteousness. For God keeps his eyes on the righteous, but turns his face against the wicked (11-16).

Although the people of God are righteous, they nevertheless suffer the hatred and persecution of the wicked. When they are broken-hearted and their spirits are crushed because of what the wicked do to them, God is nevertheless near to them and will in his own good time deliver them from all their troubles. No matter how much they have to suffer, God's deliverance will certainly not stay away. Because they are protected by God, they are safeguarded from being totally broken and crushed to death (17-20)!

But while *the evil happening to the righteous* becomes God's means to demonstrate his deliverance, *the evil happening to the wicked* becomes the means by which they are totally condemned and ultimately destroyed (21). Everyone who takes his refuge with God need not fear, because they will never be condemned (22)!

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one Psalm. The selected Psalms are Psalm 50, 51, 62, 71, 73, 78, and 82. 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".