

(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 6.

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

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Psalm 115, 119, 139, 141, 143, 145 and 146. Now we will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from these Psalms and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Psalm 115.

A Psalm seeking the glory of God in the face of idols. The context of this Psalm is probably that the people of God were suffering some kind of defeat caused by the Gentile nations. The people from these Gentile nations worshipped idols and believed that their victory over the people of God meant that their idols were stronger than the living God. The Gentile nations mocked the people of God by shouting, "Where is your God?" "Why does he not help you?" The people of God realised that this is not just a confrontation between a heathen Gentile nation and the people of God, but also a confrontation between the idols of the nations and the living God. The glory of the living God was at stake!

First. The people of God sing that only to the living God be all glory! The people of God want to be rescued from the oppression of the Gentile nation, but much more they want God to receive the glory due to his name. So they begin their song with the words, "Not to us, but to your name be the glory!" Even in very difficult times, God continues to love his people and remains faithful to them. Glory does not belong to the people of God. Glory does not belong to the Gentile nations. And glory certainly does not belong to idols! All glory belongs only to the living God!

The people of God answer the mocking of the nations by making another comparison: While the idols of the nations are only on earth, "Our God is in heaven!" Idols are limited to the earth, but the living God is not limited to any sphere! The living God is not merely powerful, he is almighty! The living God's will is not limited by anyone or anything! When the people of God suffered a defeat, it was not because the idols were more powerful than God, but because God was punishing his people for turning away from him. Nothing on earth happens without God's will or permission. On earth nothing happens by chance or by fate. Everything happens by decree of the living God. Only the living God rules in heaven and on earth. "He does whatever pleases him!"

Second. The people of God sing that the idols of the nations are nothing! Israel's defeat was the result of the living God's will. But the idols of the heathen nations *do not even have a will*. They cannot do anything. They are nothing. The idols have mouths, but cannot speak. They have eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear. They have noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel. They have feet, but cannot walk. The idols only look human, but they are not even human. They are nothing! They are products of human artisans. And the people of God warn the nations, that whoever makes idols will become like the idols, and whoever trusts in idols will become like the idols. The idols are nothing, they are dead. Likewise, people who make idols and trust in idols are nothing in the eyes of the living God. They are spiritually dead. In the real comparison, the idols have no glory. All glory belongs only to the living God!

Third. The people of God are called to trust only in the living God. The tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi and even the Gentiles who have become believers in the living God are called to trust only in the living God. And either a choir of Levitical singers or the congregation of believers respond to this call with the words, "The Lord is our help and shield." They are certain that those who belong to the living God will also be blessed by the living God. The living God not only created the heavens and the earth. He also *gave the earth for man to live and work on*. Therefore, people on earth are called to praise the living God. As long as they live, let them praise the living God. After they have died, they can no longer praise him on earth. Therefore, extol the greatness, love and faithfulness of the living God now and forevermore!

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 119.**

A Psalm singing the glory of God's Word. Throughout this Psalm, the poet is very much aware how wonderful God's Word is, but also how far he still falls short of living in accordance with God's Word. Therefore, throughout this song, he prays that God would enable him to live more in accordance with God's Word.

In verse 1-8, the Psalmist is deeply aware that the way he lives his life is far removed from the demands of God's Word. There are times in which he has not been steadfast. Afterwards he has to appear before God and in shame confess to God that he has gone astray from his Word. Nevertheless, he does not give up learning from God's Word and obeying it.

In verse 9-16, the Psalmist says that every teenager is usually threatened from all sides by temptations and can easily stray from God's pathways. But he also teaches that God's Word is the only means by which a teenager will not miss God's goal for his life (sin)! Therefore, he meditates, memorises God's Word and talks about it to other people.

In verse 17-24, the Psalmist realises his utter dependence on God for understanding the spiritual truths in life. The natural man cannot understand the supernatural and eternal truths of God, unless God opens his eyes to see them. Spiritual truth is grasped only by faith in God and his Word.

In verse 25-32, the Psalmist acknowledges that there are times in his life that he feels depressed and sad. He realises that when his feelings are low, he is more vulnerable to sin. Therefore, when he feels depressed, he prays and asks God to preserve his life according to his Word. And when he feels sad, he asks God to strengthen his life according to his Word.

In verse 33-40, the Psalmist desires that God himself be his Teacher and Guide, because otherwise he is in danger of losing the right way. He asks God to turn his heart towards his Word and turn his eyes away from every kind of worthless endeavour. He knows that before he had been involved in activities of selfish gain, like lying and cheating, stealing, robbery, extortion and violence. He knows that by nature his eyes always tend to turn to things that the world regards as valuable, but that God regards as worthless. The Psalmist realises that only God can cause him to walk according to his Word.

In verse 41-48, the Psalmist prays and asks God to give him grace to courageously and boldly answer people who insult and scorn Christians. Christians trust and obey God's Word. The Psalmist determines to speak God's Word to kings.

In verse 49-56, the Psalmist shows indignation at wicked people and situations where God's Word has been forsaken. Although arrogant people mock him mercilessly, he decides not to turn away from God's Word. Instead, he uses the words in the Bible to make songs and he sings them wherever he lives!

(S) In verse 57-64, the Psalmist says that his greatest possession is to know God and to belong to him. The greatest possible meaning in his life is obeying God's Word. Therefore, he has committed himself to obey God's Word. The whole direction of his life is determined by gaining God's favour and living in God's grace. Therefore, he continually evaluates his life in the light of God's Word and lets God's Word determine how he lives.

In verse 65-72, the Psalmist acknowledges that afflictions and persecution has led him to read and obey God's Word. He has made a commitment that, although the arrogant smear his life with lies, he will continue to do God's Word. The school of suffering has taught him the value of God's Word. God's Word is more valuable than any amount of money on earth!

In verse 73-80, the Psalmist knows that because God created him, God is the only One who can give him understanding of his Word. He also knows that God has sovereignly led him into the school of suffering (75). God's promises of unfailing love and compassion in the Bible are his comfort.

In verse 81-88, the Psalmist experiences that suffering is not easy. But he also experiences that he cannot forget or forsake God's Word.

In verse 89-96, the Psalmist says that God uses his Word to preserve his people when they are persecuted. That is why they cannot and will not forget God's Word.

In verse 97-104, the Psalmist wants to continually meditate God's Word, because God's Word makes him wiser than his enemies, gives him more insight than all his teachers and gives him more understanding than all the leaders of his country!

In verse 105-112, the Psalmist says that he has submitted himself only to one guide in his life, and that is God's Word. He says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." He often experiences darkness on his life journey, and the danger of stumbling and falling lurks from every side. But if he walks by the light of God's Word, then he can see every danger and he can prepare himself for every difficult situation.

(T) In verse 113-120, the Psalmist makes up his mind not to have anything to do with people who resist God's Word, so that nothing would be able to hinder him from keeping God's commands. Soon the Final Judgement of God

will arrive and all the wicked on earth will be discarded like rubbish. Therefore, the Psalmist trembles in fear of God, because he does not want to be a part of these wicked people.

In verse 121-128, the Psalmist prays and asks God to act against all people who break his Word. He is truly sad and indignant when he notices how people ignore God and his Word.

In verse 129-136, the Psalmist experiences that the unfolding of God's Word gives light and understanding to the simple. When God's Word is correctly interpreted and explained, it teaches people the truth and the real nature of things and preserves them from being misled by mere appearances.

In verse 137-144, the Psalmist acknowledges that God rules all people and all things with righteousness through his commandments, which are completely right. He acknowledges that he has thoroughly tested God's promises and found all of them to be true! That is why he loves God's Word!

In verse 145-152, the Psalmist puts his hope in God's Word, especially in situations of persecution. Wicked people, who devise wicked schemes, are near to Christians, but they are far from God's Word. Moreover, God is also near to the Christians and whatever he has promised or commanded, will happen. God's word is true and it lasts forever!

In verse 153-160, the Psalmist prays to God to preserve his life according to his promises during the times he suffers. He makes up his mind not to turn away from God's Word when he is persecuted.

In verse 161-168, the Psalmist says that he does not tremble at the rulers who persecute him, but that he trembles at God's Word. However, his fear is accompanied by joy, because people who love God's Word have great peace and nothing can make them stumble. God's Word heals inward brokenness and outward broken relationships. And it preserves people from stumbling and falling.

In verse 169-176, the Psalmist realises that he has often strayed from God like a lost sheep and so he pleads with God to seek him and deliver him from sin, just as God has promised in his Word.

(S) Sharing quiet times from Psalm 139.

A prayer of examination. David has put his soul in the presence of God's Spirit. Thus he became very much aware that he faces the living and almighty God, who is all-knowing and present everywhere. This is a Psalm in which David experiences the reality and nearness of God and he feels how small and how limited he himself really is.

First. Verse 1-4 speaks of God's omniscience: God knows everything. God has searched him and knows everything about him. It is as if God has turned his whole personality inside out and has brought everything that still wanted to remain in darkness into the light. God is familiar with whatever man does: whether he sits down, stands up, walks away or lies down. There is nothing that man does that God does not know! God knows his deepest thoughts and before he even speaks a word, God already knows what he is going to say. It is as if God has removed the outward casing and has brought the real and inner kernel of his personality into the open. Nothing escapes God's eyes or knowledge!

Second. Verse 5-12 speaks of God's omnipresence: God is present everywhere. God has hemmed David in from all sides. God is behind him and in front of him. And God has laid his hands upon him, so that he is completely surrounded by God. God is behind him, that is, *God stands between him and his past*. No matter how dark his past may have been, God has brought it into the open and has forgiven him. God is before him, that is, *God stands between him and his future*. No matter what may happen in his future, God will be there first and still keep him in his almighty hands! (5) When David tries to fathom this wonderful reality, it is too lofty to grasp. His brain reels when he tries to fathom God's omni-presence. God's Spirit is everywhere. Man can simply not escape from God's presence (7). God is present even in the furthest thinkable regions of the stars in the universe. God is present even where the departed people lie in rows in their graves on earth (8). God catches up with man, even if he tries to flee God's presence with the speed of light, described as flying on the wings of the rising sun speeding from the far east to the far west (9). Everywhere on earth, God's hand will guide and hold David (10). Man cannot escape God's presence even with the speed of light, but neither can he escape God's presence in any kind of darkness (11-12). There is no place where man can escape from God!

Third. Verse 13-22 speaks of David's hatred of people who hate God. This is a prayer calling down God's righteous judgement on the wicked. Although God is everywhere and knows everything, not all people acknowledge or experience this. There are people who speak against God and rise in rebellion against God. As a person belonging to God, David feels that he cannot belong to those wicked people. Those who hate God cannot be his friends. Those who do wickedness, must be punished. Therefore David prays that God slay the wicked.

Fourth. Verse 23-24 speaks of David's prayer of examination. Although David feels hatred towards those who hate God, he is not sure that hatred is the right attitude towards his enemies. So he throws open his soul before God's all-

seeing eyes and prays that God searches the deepest recesses of his heart and tests the most hidden thoughts of his mind. He prays that God tests his feelings against his enemies. He prays that God examines every part of his human personality and see if there is anything that offends God's holiness, righteousness and love. David desires to be completely blameless in God's sight. He prays that God leads him in the only way that is the right way, and that is the way of God that leads to everlasting life.

When I know or feel that my life is not right, then I pray a prayer of examination. I use this prayer in Psalm 139 to ask God to search my hidden motives and to test my deepest feelings. I ask God to uncover my fears, my hurts and my offensive behaviour. God already knows what is hidden in my mind and heart, but he wants me to ask him to show it to me.

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Psalm 143.**

A prayer of guidance. David's enemies are pursuing him. They are crushing him to the ground and they make him feel as if he has already died. His spirit is growing weaker and his courage is failing (3-4). In his agony and suffering, David goes to God in prayer and prays for God's guidance right through this difficult trial or period of his life.

First. In verse 1-6, David meditates on God's goodness in the past. When Christians suffer, they often begin to think of God and his goodness in the past of their lives. David too considers not only God's works in creation, but especially God's works in his personal life in the past (5). God has been faithful to him and God has acted in righteousness towards him. God has not held his past sins against him, and David pleads that he will also not hold his present sins against him. No human being is righteous before God. They all need God's mercy and help (1-2). The more he considers God's goodness in the past, the more dark does his present trials seem. And his soul thirst for God, that God would come quickly to help him (6).

Second. In verse 7-12, David prays for God's guidance in the present. He asks God to meet him every morning during his quiet time, when he listens to God's Word and prays in response to God. He asks God to encourage him every morning with his unfailing love. Like all people suffering, David needs reassurance that God loves him also when he goes through trials! David has put his trust, not in his own cleverness, position or power, but only in God. He asks God to show him the way through his trials and out of his trials. Only God knows the way when it is dark in and around his life (8). David *not only prays* to God to rescue him from his enemies, but he *also hides* himself in God, who is like a strong fortress on a high rock protecting him (9). He asks God to teach him to do his will and that God's Spirit leads him on a way, where all kinds of obstacles and traps have been sovereignly removed (10)(Num 9:20). He prays that God preserves his life, but also that God destroys his enemies, because he realises that as long as his enemies are alive, they will seek to kill him. (11-12). However, in the New Testament God has revealed more clearly what Christians must do to their enemies. In Luke 6:27-28, Jesus Christ says, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Proverbs. The selected chapters from Proverbs are Proverbs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. 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".