



# *Summer* **PSALMS**

by  
Dr. Steven Wood



Church family:

Welcome to SUMMER PSALMS, a nine-week journey through selected Psalms during the remaining months of summer. I am excited to examine these nine Psalms with you in Sunday's sermons and these daily devotions. Of course, nine Psalms is a very small sample of the 150 Psalms that make up the Book of Psalms, but I hope it will be a blessing to you and motivate you to dive deeper into this amazing book on your own.

The Book of Psalms is a wonderful collection of prayers, poetry, songs, laments, and heartfelt reflections that express the full range of human emotion and our relationship with God. It is both liturgy and literature that has helped shape the theology, worship, and practice across Jewish and Christian traditions from the days of the Jewish Patriarchs to our time as modern Christians.

I hope you will take this little book and use it throughout our SUMMER PSALMS emphasis. Each Sunday's sermon in July and August will introduce a Psalm to be followed that week by daily devotions from that same Psalm. All the Scripture references are from the New International Version – the same version we use on Sundays. We will be on this journey together so we will be able to support each other and share our insights with each other all along the way. Each day's devotion is included in this SUMMER PSALMS book and will also be posted on Facebook, as well as our website: [www.durandchurch.com](http://www.durandchurch.com). In addition, I will be using each day's devotion on our Café Devo broadcasts on Facebook and YouTube.

I look forward to growing with you through SUMMER PSALMS!

God bless you.

Dr. Steven Wood, Pastor

First Congregational Church

Summer 2026



SUNDAY

July 5, 2026

<sup>1</sup>*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,  
<sup>2</sup>but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
<sup>3</sup>That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers.  
<sup>4</sup>Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.  
<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.  
<sup>6</sup>For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

(Psalm 1)



MONDAY

July 6, 2026

## The Blessed Life

*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2)*

Psalm 1 opens with the word, “*blessed*” which is translated from the Hebrew word, ‘*ešer*’ (blessed or happy) and used numerous times throughout the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Psalms (1:1; 2:12; 32:1; 32:2; 33:12; 34:9; 40:5; 41:2; 65:5; 84:5; 84:6; 89:16; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1; 119:2; 127:5; 128:1; 128:2; 137:8; 137:9; 144:15; 146:5). It is a word that is often misunderstood as many people define blessed in terms of wealth, popularity, success, or comfort. However, in biblical context blessed describes living in fellowship with God and walking according to his truth as recorded in Scripture.

Note the progression that takes place in today’s text. A person who walks “*in step with the wicked,*” then stands “*in the way that sinners take,*” and finally sits “*in the company of mockers,*” moves step-by-step away from God and is in danger of becoming like Samson who “*...did not know that the Lord had left him*” (Judges 16:20). This is not the path to blessing!

On the other hand, the person who is blessed *delights* in God’s Word and *meditates* on it. As David wrote, “*I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you*” (Psalm 119:10-11). This is not about duty, but *delight* as the person who follows Jesus takes joy in applying his teachings and example as described in Scripture. As Paul wrote, “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful*

*for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).* As followers of Jesus, we recognize the importance of reading, studying, and applying the Bible in daily life with the Holy Spirit as our guide. We treasure God’s word because it reveals his character and wisdom. That is the way to be *blessed*.



TUESDAY

July 7, 2026

## **Rooted Like a Tree**

*“That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers” (Psalm 1:3)*

The psalmist compares the righteous person to a healthy tree planted beside streams of water. This speaks of stability, nourishment, and fruitfulness. A tree does not survive by occasional rainfall alone. Its roots reach deeply into a constant source of water. The tree of Psalm 1 flourishes because of its location.

Jesus said, *“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:4-8).*

Followers of Jesus are blessed because of our relationship with him. We flourish by abiding in him and are continually nourished by his teachings as we become more deeply rooted in him. Notice that the tree yields *“its fruit in its season.”* Paul described spiritual fruit as, *“...love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”* (Galatians 5:22-23). This does not happen at all at once or overnight. Spiritual growth requires patience. We may not see immediate results from prayer, Bible study, or faithful obedience, but God is always working and, *“...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion*

*until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).*

Trust the process and the promises of God. There will be dry seasons and there will be trials. However, God's sustaining grace always nourishes us as our roots remain connected to Jesus. As the Prophet Jeremiah wrote, “...*blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.*”



WEDNESDAY

July 8, 2026

## The Empty Chaff

*"Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away" (Psalm 1:4).*

Where yesterday's text described followers of Jesus as, "...a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither..." (Psalm 1:3) today's verse offers a stark contrast comparing the *wicked* to *chaff that the wind blows away*. Chaff is the word that describes the lightweight husks that are separated from grain during harvesting. In ancient agriculture, farmers would toss harvested grain into the air. The valuable grain would fall back to the ground, while the worthless chaff would be blown away by the wind. Chaff had no weight, no nourishment, and no lasting value. This illustrates the emptiness of a life lived apart from God.

The world we live in often celebrates rugged individualism, self-sufficiency, and personal achievement. At times the wicked may seem to prosper because they have wealth, influence, or power, but their lives lack eternal substance because they are attempting to live without God.

Unlike the deeply rooted tree, chaff has no roots. It is carried wherever the wind blows. Many people drift through life following popular opinions, cultural trends, or personal desires. Without God's truth as an anchor, they are vulnerable to every changing circumstance. That is why Jesus asked, "*What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*" (Mark 8:36-37).

For followers of Jesus security is not found in personal strength but in God's faithfulness. That is why Paul wrote, "...I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults,

*in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong”* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

As a follower of Jesus, you are not *chaff*, but we must always carefully evaluate what we trust, what we believe in, what we are building on. While the wicked are driven by the winds of uncertainty, we are established by His promises. So, ask yourself where your security lies. Is it in possessions, achievements, or reputation? Or is it in Christ alone?



THURSDAY

July 9, 2026

## **Standing Before the Judge**

*“Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” (Psalm 1:5).*

Psalm 1 reminds us that every person will one day stand before God. Paul wrote, “...people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...” (Hebrews 9:27). This points beyond the present life to a future judgment when God will evaluate every heart and every deed. While many people avoid thinking about judgement before God, Scripture consistently teaches that judgment it will come for all of us. This truth can seem sobering, but it is also a reminder of God's justice. We live in a world where evil often appears to prosper and righteousness sometimes suffers. Psalm 1 assures us that God sees everything and that His judgment will be perfect and just. Nothing escapes His notice.

This becomes even more sobering when we read, “...*the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*” In other words, *the wicked* will so fearful before God’s judgement they will literally be unable to stand. There will be no justification, no excuses, and no way to escape as their rejection of Jesus Christ leaves forces them to endure judgement on their own merits. be unable to withstand God's righteous verdict. Their own works, excuses, and achievements will not justify them before a holy God. Jesus warned, “*Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment...*” (Matthew 25:41, 46).

The good news of the Gospel is that those who follow Jesus need not fear condemnation.

When our time before the judgement seat comes, we will not stand on our own, but in him. That is why Paul could write, " *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...*" (Romans 8:1). Followers of Jesus belong to "*the assembly of the righteous,*" the community of those who have trusted him, walk in him, and will one day be gathered to be with him forever. Have you trusted Jesus for salvation? Are you living like you're on your way to heaven?



FRIDAY

July 10, 2026

## **Known by the Lord**

*"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous" (Psalm 1:6a).*

Think about how well God knows you. David wrote, *"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise... you are familiar with all my ways... Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast... you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb... Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be"* (Psalm 139:1-16). God knows you better than you know yourself. He sees you. He is always with you. He is never surprised and he always *watches over* you.

Jesus said, *"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep"* (John 10:14-15). God knows his people intimately. He knows our joys, struggles, fears, failures, and hopes. Nothing is hidden from His sight. For those of us who follow Jesus that is a very good thing!

There is great comfort in this truth, especially during difficult seasons. Sometimes we feel misunderstood, overlooked, or forgotten. Friends may not fully understand our circumstances. Family members may not see the burdens we carry. But God knows. He not only knows who we are and where we are; he knows what he is doing and where he is leading us. The journey is not always easy and it may include trials, disappointments, and seasons of waiting, but God never loses track of his children, and he is with us every step of the way. So, rest my friend. Rest in

the assurance that you are fully known and fully loved by God through Christ. Whatever challenges you face, your heavenly Father has not lost sight of you. He knows your way and walks with you.



SATURDAY

July 11, 2026

## Two Roads, Two Destinies

*"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction" (Psalm 1:6).*

Psalm 1 concludes by presenting two ways – two roads. The entire psalm has been building toward this contrast. It recalls the words of Moses, *"I set before you today life and death, blessings and curses... love the Lord your God... walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands... then you will live... and the Lord your God will bless... But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed... I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life..."* (Deuteronomy 30:15-19).

It has been said, life is all about choices and I suppose that is partially true. Choices have consequences. The Bible frequently presents life as a choice between two paths – a choice that has consequences as Moses described. Jesus said, *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it"* (Matthew 7:13-14).

The *way of the righteous* is not the path of perfect people. It is the path of those who trust God, delight in His Word, and seek to live according to the teachings and example of Jesus. It is grounded in God's grace, as Paul wrote, *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

I know *the way of the wicked* can seem attractive at times with its promise of personal

freedom, pleasure, and self-determination, but it has consequences – it is the way to *destruction*. What is *the way of the righteous*? Jesus said, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6) and “*Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me*” (Matthew 16:24).

Choose life. Follow Jesus.



SUNDAY

July 12, 2025

*<sup>1</sup>Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory in the heavens.*

*<sup>2</sup>Through the praise of children and infants*

*you have established a stronghold against your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.*

*<sup>3</sup>When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,*

*the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,*

*<sup>4</sup>what is [humanity] that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?*

*<sup>5</sup>You have made them a little lower than the angels  
and crowned them with glory and honor.*

*<sup>6</sup>You made them rulers over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under their feet:*

*<sup>7</sup>all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,*

*<sup>8</sup>the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea,  
all that swim the paths of the seas.*

*<sup>9</sup>Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"*

(Psalm 8)



MONDAY

July 13, 2026

## **The Majesty of God's Name**

*"Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens" (Psalm 8:1).*

Psalm 8 begins and ends with the same statement, *"Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"* David, the shepherd-king, looked at creation and saw evidence of God's greatness everywhere. The mountains, oceans, stars, and skies all testify to the majesty of their Creator.

The phrase, *"your name"* refers to God's character, authority, reputation, and nature. Throughout the Bible men and women used the names of God to describe who he is. When God revealed Himself to Moses, He declared, *"I AM WHO I AM"* (Exodus 3:14). His name speaks of His eternal existence, holiness, faithfulness, and power.

Today, many people admire creation but fail to acknowledge the Creator. Paul wrote, *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools... They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator..."* (Romans 1:21-25). The beauty and wonder of creation is designed to focus our attention on God so that we can worship him, not the things he created. Every sunrise, every star-filled night, and every breath we take reminds us of His greatness.

In a world that often elevates human achievement, Psalm 8 directs our attention to God, the one who deserves all glory. When we face difficulties, remembering God's greatness

strengthens our faith. The God who created the galaxies also knows our names and cares for our lives. So, take time today to observe God's handiwork. Whether you see a flower blooming, hear birds singing, or gaze at the night sky, let creation lead you to worship. Allow your heart to join David in declaring that God's name is excellent throughout the earth.



TUESDAY

July 14, 2026

## **Strength from the Weak**

*"Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger" (Psalm 8:2).*

David marveled that God had chosen (and continues to choose) chooses the *children and infants* – small, weak, and seemingly insignificant to accomplish His purpose. God uses *children and infants* who possess no influence or power to demonstrates his strength through them. Paul wrote, *"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses... For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (Romans 12:10).

This principle runs throughout Scripture. God often works through unlikely people so that His glory becomes unmistakable. He chose young David to defeat Goliath (1 Samuel 17). He selected Gideon and a small army to overcome the Midianites (Judges 7). He called fishermen to become apostles and spread the gospel throughout the world (Matthew 4:18-22). Jesus quoted Psalm 8:2 when children praised Him in the temple (Matthew 21:15-16). Religious leaders were offended by the children's worship, but Jesus affirmed that God delights in receiving praise from humble hearts.

While our culture values influence, power, strength, status, and accomplishment, God values faith, humility, and dependence upon Him. Many Christians feel inadequate for the tasks God places before them. You may think you lack the talent, experience, education, or influence, but God's work depends on His power, not ours. Maybe that's what Jesus was getting at when he said, *"...unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 18:3). So, take comfort in knowing that God specializes in using ordinary

people like us. Weakness does not disqualify us – it makes room for God to work, for his strength to shine. So, instead of focusing on what you lack, focus on the God who empowers you. He delights in working through humble servants whose confidence rests in Him alone.



WEDNESDAY

July 15, 2026

## **The Wonder of God's Creation**

*"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is [humanity] that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:3-4)*

David often spent a lot of nights outdoors under the open sky while tending sheep. As he looked up at the sky, he saw countless stars and was overwhelmed by God's creative power – remember creation is supposed to turn our attention to the Creator! In the *heavens* David saw God's work, his wisdom and the order of all he had made.

Creation is not random. It is not the result of chance, but the work of an omniscient Creator. The Bible teaches us that God spoke the universe into existence (Genesis 1:1-31). The stars occupy their places because He established them. The moon follows its course because He ordained it. Modern science has revealed the immense scale of the universe with billions of galaxies stretching across unimaginable distances, but every scientific discovery only magnifies the wonder of God's work. What appears to be vast and incomprehensible to us is something David described as *"the work of Your fingers"* – something he fashioned with ease.

Creation not only reveals God's power to us but also His faithfulness. He is still at work! Every morning the sun rises according to His design. Seasons come and go because He sustains the world. The reliability of creation reflects the reliability of the Creator. Every star is a testimony to His power. Every sunrise is a reminder of His faithfulness.

Sometimes we become discouraged by life's challenges and lose sight of God's greatness and faithfulness, but Psalm 8 invites us to look upward. When we remember who created the

universe, our problems are placed in proper perspective. Nothing is too difficult for the God who spoke the stars into existence. So, take time today to observe the natural world around you. Let creation become a sanctuary that directs your thoughts toward God. Allow wonder to replace indifference and worship to replace distraction. The God who formed the heavens is not distant. He is present, active, and deeply involved in the lives of His people. The One who created the galaxies also guides your steps and hears your prayers.



THURSDAY

July 16, 2026

## Why Does God Care About Us?

*“...what is [humanity] that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:4)*

As David looked up into the vastness of the heavens full of stars that he could not count he was blown away. He asked who am I that God would even notice me? This question highlights one of the greatest wonders of Scripture - the Creator of the universe knows us individually and loves us perfectly.

God knows you, he loves you, and he is always with you. We will cover Psalm 139 more in depth later in SUMMER PSALMS, but read a little of it now, *“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise... you are familiar with all my ways... If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast... you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb... Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be... when I awake, I am still with you” (Psalm 139:1-18).*

The Bible teaches, *“...God created [humanity] in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).* That includes you! The image of God gives you intrinsic value that nothing can diminish even though, *“...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).* Remember what you already know, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).*

So, David's question, "*what is [humanity] that you are mindful of them*" is a humble response to the amazing love of God. Remember that when life gets hard and you wonder if he is with you. Remember, Jesus loves you.



FRIDAY

July 17, 2026

## **Crowned with Glory and Honor**

*"You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet..." (Psalm 8:5-6)*

Humanity holds a very special place above everything else in Creation in God's eyes. *"So, God created [humanity] in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground'" (Genesis 1:27-28). Then, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).*

The phrase *"crowned them with glory and honor"* reminds us that every person possesses inherent value. Human worth comes from being created by God. Every person bears God's image and deserves dignity and respect. This includes everyone.

The tragedy of sin is that it has distorted humanity, as well as creation. Instead of stewarding creation faithfully, people often exploit it. Instead of reflecting God's character, we pursue selfish desires. Still, God's love for us is not diminished and his purposes have not been abandoned. Paul quoted Psalm 8 and explained it when he wrote, *"'You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet.' In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death,*

*so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone*” (Hebrews 2:7-9). Jesus is the perfect human who fulfilled God's original design and through his life, death, and resurrection, he restored what sin damaged. So, those of us who follow Jesus are being transformed into his likeness and the glory lost through sin will be fully restored through Christ. Until then, we are called to care for creation, serve others, and use our gifts to glorify God.



SATURDAY

July 18, 2026

## **A Life of Worship**

*"Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:9).*

Psalm 8 brings us back where it began – with worship. After reflecting on God's majesty, creation, humanity, and divine care, David responded with praise. That is how worship usually works. It is our response to and expression of our gratitude for all God has done and appreciation for who he is. The more we know God's greatness, the more we desire to honor Him. Worship is not merely singing songs; it is a life oriented toward God's glory.

Throughout the Bible, God's people respond to him with worship. Moses worshiped after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-18). Isaiah worshiped after seeing God's holiness (Isaiah 6:1-8). The heavenly hosts continually worship before God's throne (Revelation 4:11).

Worship changes our perspective. It shifts our focus from ourselves to God. It reminds us that God is greater than every challenge we face. Worship is not confined only to church buildings. Every place becomes an opportunity to honor God. Whether we work, study, serve, or rest, we can worship Him (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Worship always involves gratitude. James wrote, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows"* (James 1:17). Recognizing God's blessings cultivates thankfulness and humility – it cultivates worship.

Worship also involves obedience. It extends beyond words into obedience through faithful living – following the teachings and example of Jesus in our daily lives. He taught us, *"...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength [and] Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Mark 12:29-31).

The day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11), but we do not have to wait. We get to do that now.



SUNDAY

July 19, 2026

*<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures,*

*he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup>he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.*

*<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the darkest valley,*

*I will fear no evil, for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*<sup>6</sup>Surely your goodness and love will follow me*

*all the days of my life,*

*and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

(Psalm 23)



MONDAY

July 20, 2026

## The Shepherd Who Provides

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing” (Psalm 23:1).*

Psalm 23 begins with one of the most comforting phrases in all the Bible, *“The Lord is my shepherd.”* David was once a shepherd himself, so he understood the relationship between a shepherd and the sheep. Sheep are completely dependent upon their shepherd for protection, guidance, nourishment, and care. That is one reason Jesus referred to himself as our shepherd when he said, *“...anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice... he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice... All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them... They will come in and go out, and find pasture... I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full... I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:1-18).*

David acknowledged his dependence upon God. The Shepherd is loving, wise, and attentive. He sees dangers before we do and provides what is best for us, even when we cannot understand His methods. Because Christ is our Good Shepherd, we can trust Him with every aspect of life.

So, consider all the ways God has already provided for you. Reflect on answered prayers, unexpected blessings, and moments when He sustained you during hardship. Gratitude strengthens faith and reminds us that the Shepherd who cared for us yesterday will continue to care for us tomorrow.



TUESDAY

July 21, 2026

## Resting in Green Pastures

*“He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters”*  
(Psalm 23:2).

David’s words about *green pastures* and *quiet waters* paint a picture of peace, security, and refreshment. Sheep do not naturally lie down easily. They are skittish and must feel safe before they will lie down even in the best of places. David described a Shepherd who creates an environment where his sheep can feel safe and rest.

Modern life tends to leave little room for rest. Sometimes we refuse to rest even when the opportunity presents itself! Our schedules get crowded through our own choices (remember, no one controls your calendar but you) and the responsibilities we take on can be very demanding. Still, God knows our need for rest. He even established the principle of *sabbath* and set an example for us to follow when he rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). God did not need to rest, he was showing us how it is done.

Do you struggle with resting in Christ? Do you find yourself tired, even weary, vulnerable to stress, discouragement, or anger? Jesus taught, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”* (Matthew 11:28-30). He also said, *“...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear... the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about*

*tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”*

(Matthew 6:25-34).

Green pastures remind us of God’s generous provision and still waters remind us of his peace and refreshment in Christ. In other words, your Good Shepherd has got it covered – lie down and rest.



WEDNESDAY

July 22, 2026

## Restored and Guided

*“...he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake”*  
(Psalm 23:3).

If there is one thing I hear from my family, friends, folks in the church... and myself at times, it is how tired we are. Tired seems to be a universal condition. Most of the time it is not the physical kind of tired, which is easily corrected with a little rest or a good night’s sleep, it is a mental, emotional, or spiritual kind of tired – that is a little more difficult to remedy, probably impossible to remedy on our own.

The good news is we have a shepherd who specializes in restoration – *he refreshes my soul*. While I am convinced modern life is not any more difficult than the lives our ancestors lived, I know life in 2026 can leave you weary, discouraged, and spiritually drained. The phrase *he refreshes my soul* describes renewal, healing, and recovery. Sheep sometimes wander, get injured, or find themselves helplessly stuck. The good shepherd seeks them out, restores them to the protection of the flock, and leads them along the path of security, safe from predators and pitfalls.

In the same way, God pursues his people when we get off the path or find ourselves broken or weary. Are you weary, even broken? Restoration begins with God’s grace. Paul wrote, *“...if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). That is restoration. When Jesus, our Good Shepherd leads us, *along the right paths* he is not just helping us avoid trouble – he is shaping us into his likeness, leading us toward holiness, integrity, and obedience – he is refreshing us and restoring us *for his name’s*

*sake.*

That's what Solomon was getting at when he wrote, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight*" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Sometimes God's path is different than the one we want to take. Still, we must trust him because he loves us and knows what he is doing more than we do.



THURSDAY

July 23, 2026

## Courage in the Valley

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...”* (Psalm 23:4).

What are you afraid of? What fear cripples you, makes it impossible to keep your head, or makes you want to curl up in the corner? We all have them. In fact, this verse is translated, *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death”* in some translations – death is probably the ultimate fear for all of us, even if our faith in Jesus is strong. But there is more in *the darkest valley* than our fear of death – there is the grief of losing a loved one, chronic illness, worry over our children, financial uncertainty... the list goes on and on. We all encounter *the darkest valley*, don't we?

However, notice how David shifts his description of the Good Shepherd in this verse. Prior to this he said *he leads me, he refreshes my soul, and he guides me*. Now, when he is describing *the darkest valley*, he says *you are with me*. David's confidence in the Good Shepherd was not based on whether he would escape *the darkest valley*, but that God was with him. When life is giving us its worst, we must remember God is with us!

The Bible says, *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”* (Psalm 46:1). He promised to be with us again and again throughout Scripture (Joshua 1:5; Matthew 28:20). So when David wrote, *I will fear no evil* it was not false bravado and he was not saying he felt not fear – he was choosing to trust the Good Shepherd and rely on God's presence. Faith does not deny danger and faith can still feel fear. It simply trusts that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, a perfect in his love even in *the darkest valley*. Plus, he goes through *the darkest*

*valley* with us.

So, when you face *the darkest valley*, or especially if you are facing it right now, remember valleys represent places we pass through, not permanent or ultimate destinations. God has not abandoned you. He is walking with you every step of the way.



FRIDAY

July 24, 2026

## **A Table in the Presence of Enemies**

*“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (Psalm 23:5).*

Let me state something obvious – there was no fast-food during David’s time. Of course, you already knew that, but you might not know how important a meal, *a table* was in David’s day and throughout the Biblical era. Meals had to be prepared, and it was unthinkable for a good Jewish person to sit down with strangers, or sinners, or Gentiles, or especially Samaritans. That is why the Pharisees got so worked up about Jesus sitting down for a meal at Matthew’s house (Matthew 9:9-13).

With that in mind, it is a big deal when David says, *you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies*. Not only is this a table for a meal, but it is also a prepared table – a banquet table that shows God’s remarkable ability to bless His people even in difficult circumstances while enemies are at the door. David does not say God removes every enemy. Instead, God prepares a table in their presence. God welcomes his people into his presence and provides for them even when opposition surrounds them.

It is not common practice today, but in David’s day anointing oil was an important symbol of blessing, healing, or favor. Kings and priests were anointed with oil, and honored guests were anointed by the host when they arrived in someone’s home. Jesus was anointed twice – once by *“A woman in that town who lived a sinful life... [while] Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house...”* (Luke 7:36-50) and once by Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha when he was *“...in Bethany... in the home of Simon the Leper...”* (Mark 14:3-9).

David concluded this verse with, “*my cup overflows,*” speaking of the abundance of God’s blessings. His blessings flow from His grace. Thank God for his abundant grace! Today, think about all the ways he has blessed you spiritually, emotionally, and materially. Even in challenging circumstances, His grace is sufficient.



SATURDAY

July 25, 2026

## **Goodness, Mercy, and Forever Home**

*“Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6).*

David concluded Psalm 23 with a beautiful expression of his confidence in God, the Good Shepherd. He looked beyond whatever his present circumstances were and saw God’s faithfulness extending throughout his entire life and into eternity. David was convinced that God’s *goodness and love* would be with him (because God was with him) *all the days* of his life. God is always faithful.

Notice how David spoke about God’s following him. No matter the circumstances God’s blessings pursue us, they go with us, they *follow* us. So, instead of seeing ourselves as being pursued by fear, guilt, or despair, we can see ourselves being pursued by God’s *goodness and love*. Of course, this does not mean our lives will be free from trials. Hardship comes, but God is faithful in everything. That is why Paul could write, *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28).

David’s final phrase, *“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever,”* is a statement of the ultimate hope all of us can have. No matter what you face today choose to live like you’re on your way to heaven! Jesus said, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am”* (John 14:1-3). He also

promised, “...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

So, as you reflect on Psalm 23 remember you are held in the hand of your Good Shepherd. The promise of eternity with Christ rests in his faithfulness and can transform how we live today. He will guide us, protect us, provide for us, and ultimately welcome each one of us home. Thank God for the faithfulness of our Good Shepherd!



SUNDAY

July 26, 2026

*<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

*<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

*<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

*<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

*<sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.*

*<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*

*<sup>7</sup> The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

*<sup>8</sup> Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.*

*<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.*

*He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.*

*<sup>10</sup> He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."*

*<sup>11</sup> The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

(Psalm 46)



MONDAY

July 27, 2026

## God Our Refuge in Troubled Times

*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear..."* (Psalm 46:1-2a)

Life is... unpredictable. Circumstances change, relationships break, finances fluctuate, and health concerns emerge without warning. Because we are all human fear can easily take over. But Psalm 46 opens with a powerful declaration that can redirect our focus from our circumstances to God – his power, his love, his presence, and his character.

Notice the verse does not say God provides *refuge*, it says he *is our refuge*. That is an important distinction. A *refuge* is a place of safety, protection, and security. In the Bible God repeatedly revealed himself as the *refuge* of His people. Moses wrote, *"The eternal God is your refuge..."* (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Notice also that God is our *strength*. Our own strength has limits. We grow weary, discouraged, and overwhelmed, but God is omnipotent – his strength never diminishes or decreases. He told the Apostle Paul, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* and Paul responded in faith, *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me"* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Not only is God omnipotent (all powerful), but he is also omnipresent (everywhere, completely, transcendent of time or space). The psalmist described God as *"an ever-present help in trouble."* God is not far away from us, he is near. He is involved. He is paying attention. He is never surprised and he never fails. Paul wrote, *"...God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So, we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid...'"*

(Hebrews 13:5-6).

Because of who God is, we who follow Christ can face uncertainty in faith. We might get scared but we do not panic because, as Paul wrote, “...*I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day*” (2 Timothy 1:12). We can trust the words of Jesus, “*Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom*” (Luke 12:32).



TUESDAY

July 28, 2026

## The River of God's Presence

*"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells" (Psalm 46:4).*

While people in the Old Testament thought of Jerusalem as *the city of God*, Jerusalem did not have a river flowing through it, so this *river* would seem to be a spiritual metaphor the described God's sustaining presence among His people. Beyond the *river* metaphor, water often represented life and blessing in the Bible. The best example of this is in the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well, *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life"* (John 4:13-14).

Notice this *city of God* is not secure because of walls, weapons, or military power, but because it is *the holy place where the Most high dwells*. The presence of God changes everything. This recalls the words John wrote about his vision of eternity, *"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'"* (Revelation 21:1-4).

Many people seek joy in temporary things – possessions, approval, success,

entertainment. But those things will never satisfy the soul. Joy flows from the presence of God, fellowship with him. As Jeremiah wrote, *“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him’”* (Lamentations 3:22-24). We can rejoice that God's presence remains with us every day.



WEDNESDAY

July 29, 2026

## **God Reigns Over the Nations**

*"Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (Psalm 46:6-7).*

The world we live in often seems to be out of control. Political conflicts, wars, economic uncertainty, and social unrest create anxiety and confusion for all of us. However, Psalm 46 reminds us, *the Lord almighty is with us.* God is omnipotent, unchallenged above every earthly power.

Human history is filled with examples of powerful empires rising and falling. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans all seemed indestructible in their time, but every one of them eventually fell to the next one. Every kingdom of the earth falls ...except God's kingdom. King Nebuchadnezzar said, *"I [praise] the Most High; I [honor] and [glorify] him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation... He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand..."* (Daniel 4:34-35).

God is God. Notice *he lifts his voice, the earth melts.* God is so powerful he only has to speak, and things happen according to his will. He did not lift a finger during creation but simply spoke (Genesis 1). Jesus spoke and ended a terrible storm and his disciples said in awe, *"Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"* (Mark 4:41).

Not only is God omnipotent, but the Psalmist also wrote, *the Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.* Those of who follow Christ are never alone and never outside of his protection. Paul wrote, *"If God is for us who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31). God is

with us and our hope rests in him. It is interesting that the Psalmist referred to him as *the God of Jacob*, because Jacob was a bit of a scoundrel. Still, God was faithful, present, *our fortress*. God's faithfulness does not depend on our perfection but on his unchanging character. Remember who sits on the throne. Remember he loves you. No crisis is beyond His control. God reigns forever.



THURSDAY

July 30, 2026

## **Be Still and Know**

*"Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10a).*

It is not the whole text of Psalm 46:10, but these words are among the most beloved in all of Scripture. *"Be still"* carries the idea of ceasing activity, letting go, relaxing your grip. That is easy to say, but hard to do, isn't it? As we go through our day we tend to do so according to our own plans, thoughts, experience, and strength. When difficulties arise, we try harder, worry more, and attempt to control outcomes. But God says *be still*.

*To be still* is not necessarily inactivity and it is certainly not laziness. It is trust. It is faith that acknowledges God's power, authority, and intelligence. It is surrendering our plans to his, placing our faith above our fears, and recognizing that God is at work, and he knows what he is doing even when we cannot see it.

*To be still* is not natural for us and it is not easy. Sometimes it requires stubborn faith – choosing to *be still* even though we want to be in control and do something, anything. That's why the Psalmist did not just write *be still*, but added, *know that I am God*. The only way we can choose to *be still* is through faith – *know[ing] that [he] is God*. Solomon wrote, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight"* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Have you ever noticed how God never needed anyone to help him? All through the Bible he did amazing things and all anyone ever had to do was trust him. He parted the Red Sea, destroyed Jericho's walls, brought down Goliath, delivered Daniel from lions, and even raised the dead and all anyone had to do was trust him and follow his plan. God specializes in situations beyond our ability.

So, when life feels overwhelming, stop, *be still*. Trust him. Spend time with him. Pray in faith. Read the Bible and reflect on His promises. When you and I choose to *be still* he will renew hope, strengthen faith, and shift perspective so that we can *know [he] is God*.



FRIDAY

July 31, 2026

## **The God Who Defends His People**

*"Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire" (Psalm 46:8-9).*

One of the core messages woven throughout all the Bible is *come and see what the Lord has done*. The entire collection of these sacred texts is a record of the things God has done from creation to redemption, to the things that are yet to come. With that phrase the Psalmist invites us to consider God's mighty works.

Throughout history, God has demonstrated His power to accomplish his will and acted on behalf of his people. When the Israelites found themselves between the proverbial rock and hard place with the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh's army bearing down behind them, Moses told them, *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today... The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still"* (Exodus 14:13-14). God delivered his people then and he will deliver his followers today in ways that are just as miraculous.

Rather than using this passage as poor justification for the tragedy and destruction of war, those of us who follow Jesus must remember the Psalmist's phrase, *He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire*. War has occurred throughout human history and has even been necessary at times, but it always comes at a terrible price paid in human life and awful destruction that only illustrates the terrible effect of human sin that has left us incapable at times of finding peaceful solutions to

our differences. There will come a time when God will put an end to all wars and their terrible consequences.

In the meantime, we should be reminded of the words of Paul, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”* (Ephesians 6:12). Our battle is a spiritual one, but God will fight it for us and it, too will come to an end.



SATURDAY

August 1, 2026

## **Our Unchanging Refuge**

*"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (Psalm 46:11).*

The Psalmist concludes Psalm 46 by repeating the same phrase used in verse 7, *the Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress*. Anytime the Bible repeats itself we do well to pay particular attention. Repetition in Scripture emphasizes importance. In this case, God seems to make the point that he is always with us, and he is our refuge.

God's presence is one of his greatest gifts to His people. He promised again and again to be with us. He promised it to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, the Apostles and countless others... and he promised it to us. He will be with us, providing courage, guidance, and comfort. Of course, this promise reaches its fullest expression in Jesus Christ as John wrote, *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).

A *fortress* or refuge as some translations render this verse, is only valuable only when we enter it. A shelter provides no protection if we remain outside. While David wrote, *"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold"* (Psalm 18:2) the book of Psalms also reminded us, *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty"* (Psalm 91:1). Therefore, those of us who follow Christ must seek his presence, follow his teachings and example, and  *dwell in the shelter of the Most High* so that we live in the protection of his will.

One reason God's shelter is so valuable to us is his unchanging nature. He told the Prophet Malachi, *"I the Lord do not change. So, you... are not destroyed"* (Malachi 3:6) and

Paul wrote, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8). Because God never changes, his promises remain, his love never fails, his power never weakens, his wisdom never falters. He is our *fortress* and we can live with courage, peace, and hope in the faithful presence of God Himself.



SUNDAY

August 2, 2026

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.*
- 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*
- 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.*
- 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.*
- 5 Surely, I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
- 6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;  
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.*
- 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*
- 9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.*
- 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.*
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.*

*14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

*15 Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.*

*16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

*17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.*

*18 May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem.*

*19 Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,  
in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

**(Psalm 51)**



MONDAY

August 3, 2026

## **The Cry of a Repentant Heart**

*"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1-2)*

2 Samuel 11-12 records the story of David and Bathsheba, a sordid tale of adultery, murder, and a political coverup that might sound more like 2026 than the Old Testament era. I encourage you to read those two chapters sometime this week as background for Psalm 51. David had an adulterous affair, set up a murder, and tried to cover it all up before being confronted by the Prophet Nathan. *"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?'" (2 Samuel 12:7-9)*

Of course, it would have been slightly better if David had confessed his sin without the dramatic confrontation – it would have been even better if he had not sinned in the first place! Ultimately however, it is not as important how a person comes to repentance as it is that they do. David was guilty and he knew it. He was busted and his sin was going to be exposed and result in terrible consequences. He said simply, *"I have sinned against the Lord"* (2 Samuel 12:13). Sometime later, he wrote down Psalm 51, a beautiful, painful, gut-wrenching expression of repentance.

Conviction always follows sin. Sometimes it brings us to repentance all on our own, other times we must be caught and confronted. Either way conviction always comes, and it brings a

choice with it – We can resist and deny, attempting to justify ourselves, or we can repent like David did. Remember, *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:8-9).



TUESDAY

August 4, 2026

## God Sees the Heart

*"For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so, you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge" (Psalm 51:3-4).*

One of the more difficult truths for many of us to accept is our loving God hates sin, judges sin – and he has every right to do so. We deserve his judgement. At first that may seem incredibly harsh. How can a loving God judge us and condemn us? However, it is only when we accept that God's judgement is right and just that we can better understand the perfection and abundance of love. Paul wrote, *"...the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23).

David was guilty and he knew it. He knew he was guilty in the eyes of God, that God was justified in judging him, and that he deserved God's punishment. He confessed, *"I know my transgressions"* – in other words, I know what I have done, I admit it. Repentance begins when we stop trying to hide or cover up sins and confess them to God. God already knows about our sin! Doesn't it seem foolish when we try hiding our sins from God who knows everything?

The Apostle John wrote, *"If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:6-9). The Holy Spirit lovingly convicts us, not to condemn us, but to draw us back into

fellowship with God. When we ignore conviction, our hearts become hardened. When we respond with humility, we experience the cleansing grace of God. The same God who forgave David offers grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Confession is the way to restoration, hope, and spiritual renewal.



WEDNESDAY

August 5, 2026

## The Joy of Forgiveness

*"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice" (Psalm 51:7-8).*

Relief is the greatest feeling in the world. When you're driving down the road and narrowly miss a collision – phew (that's relief)! When you wait days for the results of a medical test and find out everything is ok – phew (that's relief)! When a small child wanders off in the store and you can't see them, but there they are in the next aisle – phew (that's relief)! When you confess your sins to God and the burden of guilt is lifted so that you actually feel lighter – phew (that's relief)!

Joy comes with relief and sin steals joy. David probably endured months of inner turmoil when he was trying to hide his sin. He wrote about it, *"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long... my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer"* (Psalm 32:3). His lingering guilt sapped his joy and left him with the spiritual heaviness of conviction.

Notice David's words in today's passage that followed his confession in Psalm 51, *"cleanse me... wash me... let me hear joy and gladness."* He did not ask for anything temporal, he asked for *joy and gladness*. He wanted his relationship with God and his joy in that relationship to be restored.

Confession brings the joy of relief through peace with God as Paul wrote, *"...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..."* (Romans 8:1). Jesus said, *"Peace I*

*leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27) and, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11).*

It is all so simple. If your heart feels heavy, bring your burdens to Christ. Confess your sins and receive His mercy. The joy you may have lost can be renewed through repentance and faith. Phew (that’s relief)!



THURSDAY

August 6, 2026

## A Pure Heart

*“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).*

Purity is precious and so easily lost. David described purity with the phrase, *“a pure heart.”* You and I are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), an intrinsic purity that comes because there is something in each of us that looks like God. However, *“...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”* (Romans 3:23). Purity has been lost because of sin. That’s why David prayed, *create in me a pure heart.* This is the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 1:1, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* David understood that only God can restore purity and he must *create* it in us through redemption.

Even the best human effort cannot produce *a pure heart* on its own. We can have the best of intentions – change our habits, improve self-discipline, and alter our behavior, but only God can transform the heart. Only God can create *a pure heart*. God told the Prophet Ezekiel, *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you...”* (Ezekiel 36:26). Jesus described the process to Nicodemus, *“Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again”* (John 3:3). Christianity is not merely self-improvement; it is new life through the power of God.

The *steadfast spirit* David asked for shows his understanding that the *pure heart* God gives us through salvation must then be maintained through obedience in the power of the Holy Spirit. Transformation is a lifelong process. Theologians refer to this as sanctification – the process that begins with salvation and continues through the rest of our life until we are

perfected in eternity. Though we are not yet perfect, we can trust God to maintain the *pure heart* he created in us as Paul wrote, “...*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 1:6).



FRIDAY

August 7, 2026

## The Presence of God

*"Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).*

Theologically we believe God is omnipresent – everywhere, completely, transcendent of time or space. In fact, David wrote, *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast"* (Psalm 139:7-10). However, there is a difference between a belief in God's omnipresence and a sense that he is with you personally. As followers of Jesus, we crave a sense of his presence – we crave fellowship with God. We treasure those times when we feel his presence.

That craving is what David expressed when he wrote, *"do not cast me away from your presence."* He knew God is omnipresent and he knew the words of Moses, *"...the Lord your God... will be with you"* (Deuteronomy 20:1), but he wanted that personal, intimate *presence* of God in his life, just like all of us.

Our relationship with the triune God is secured through the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross. However, our sense of God's presence is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, *"...When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit..."* (Hebrews 10:19-22) and Jesus said, *"...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you... the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"* (John 14:16-26).

The trinitarian nature of God teaches us *the presence* David spoke of is God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit – one God revealed in three ways, each one completely God. So, interacting with the Holy Spirit is interacting with God. We can do this through prayer, worship, reading Scripture among other things. As James wrote, “*Come near to God and he will come near to you*” (James 4:8).



SATURDAY

August 8, 2026

## **An Evangelical Life**

*" Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you"*  
(Psalm 51:13).

I would very much like the Church to reclaim the term, "evangelical." It grieves me personally that the word has been co-opted and redefined for political purposes so much so that many now see it as a partisan term or even a negative label. Historically the term was used to describe a person who has accepted Jesus as their savior, is attempting to follow his teachings and example, and is conscious of their privilege and obligation to share the Gospel – to evangelize others for Jesus. It used to be a beautiful, descriptive term that simply and accurately described a follower of Jesus. Then some of our more conservative brothers and sisters made it a denominational label before making it a political label and the actual meaning was lost.

I think David was an evangelical in the classic sense. He said so when he wrote, *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you"* (Psalm 51:12-13). Even though he lived centuries before Jesus came to earth, David captured the essence of the Great Commission of Christ, *"...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20). The *joy of... salvation* is what motivates those of us who follow Jesus to carry out the Great Commission – to share the Good News.

David was not perfect, but he knew he was forgiven and *the joy of... salvation* motivated him to *teach transgressors God's way of life so that sinners will turn back to you*. David was

not advocating judgementalism or some misguided attempt to force people who do not yet know Jesus to follow a 'Christian lifestyle.' He was acknowledging the grace God showed him and choosing to show it to others. Like David, you have a story of God's grace to tell – tell it by sharing his love with others. Be an evangelical.



SUNDAY

August 9, 2026

<sup>1</sup> *The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty;  
the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength;  
indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.*

<sup>2</sup> *Your throne was established long ago;  
you are from all eternity.*

<sup>3</sup> *The seas have lifted up, Lord,  
the seas have lifted up their voice;  
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.*

<sup>4</sup> *Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,  
mightier than the breakers of the sea —  
the Lord on high is mighty.*

<sup>5</sup> *Your statutes, Lord, stand firm;  
holiness adorns your house for endless days.*

(Psalm 93)



MONDAY

August 10, 2026

## The Lord Reigns

*"The Lord reigns..."* (Psalm 93:1a).

This week's Psalm opens with a simple, but profound declaration, *"The Lord reigns..."* God is God – he is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), and omnipresent (everywhere completely, independent of time and space). Our lives often feel unstable – circumstances change unexpectedly, health declines, finances become uncertain, relationships suffer, and the future is unclear. Still, the Psalmist says, *"the Lord reigns"* – not will reign, not might reign, not could reign – *"the Lord reigns."*

God's reign – his omnipotence, authority, and position – does not depend on whether you and I believe in him or even acknowledge his existence. God is God whether you know it or not. He *reigns* whether you believe it or not. God does not need me, depend on me, or ask for my opinions. His existence does not depend on my belief, and his power does not depend on my submission. He is God and I am not.

Moses, who knew God better than any of us, wrote, *"...from everlasting to everlasting you are God"* (Psalm 90:2). When Moses asked God what his name was, God answered, *"I am... This is my name forever..."* (Exodus 3:14-15). No beginning, no end, simply *"I am."* As today's passage says, *"you are from all eternity."*

Like most people I have a hard time getting my brain around God's infinite, eternal nature. I can't really grasp someone who was never born, never created, and who will never die. I have a hard time comprehending God who is everywhere and not at all limited by time and space. I have great difficulty conceiving of God outside human terms and characteristics. That is

one of the reasons Jesus came. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made... In him was life... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:1-4, 14).



TUESDAY

August 11, 2026

## God, Our Majestic King

*"...he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength..."*  
(Psalm 93:1b).

The Book of Psalms is ultimately a book of worship. Many of the Psalms were set to music and used in temple worship as the people of God gathered on the Sabbath Day. In today's passage the psalmist declared, *"the Lord is robed in majesty."* That is a statement of reverence, respect, and awe. That is where worship begins. As we consider God's *majesty* – his greatness, glory, and splendor – how can we keep from worshiping him?

Creation itself reveals God's *majesty*. David put it this way, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech; they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun"* (Psalm 19:1-4).

Of course, God's *majesty* is best revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, *"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word"* (Hebrews 1:1-3).

When we begin to grasp a little of God's *majesty* our priorities change. Paul described this when he wrote, *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper*

*worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will*" (Romans 12:1-2). So, embrace the privilege of worshiping God – he is certainly worthy of it. Take time today to focus on God's *majesty*. Reflect on His greatness. Thank Him for salvation. Worship Him not only with your words but with your life.



WEDNESDAY

August 12, 2026

## God is Eternal

*"Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity" (Psalm 93:2).*

It is fitting that the very first words of the Bible are, *"In the beginning God..."* (Genesis 1:1). God is eternal. The Psalmist wrote in today's passage, *"...you are from all eternity."* God is – he has always been and he will always be. Rather than twisting ourselves in knots trying to make sense of that truth, it might be better to allow it to simply strengthen our faith in God, especially with the always changing nature of the world in which we live. God is – everything he is he has always been and he will never change or leave us.

God's reign has no beginning and no end. He has always been omnipotent – he has always been in change and he always will be. Human history is full of powerful kings and dominant kingdoms, but they all eventually disappeared. Empires that were considered invincible now exist only in history books. Only God's kingdom is eternal.

Perhaps the best thing we can draw God's eternal nature is security. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, *"...The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint"* (Isaiah 40:28-31).

Life can be uncertain, but God is. His kingdom is without end and those who trust in Christ will share in it with him. He said so, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have*

*told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:1-3).*



THURSDAY

August 13, 2026

## **Stronger Than the Floods**

*"The seas have lifted up, Lord, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves. Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea — the Lord on high is mighty" (Psalm 93:3).*

Throughout the Bible floods metaphorically represented trouble, destruction, and chaos. If you have ever lived through a flood or even seen one on the evening news you know the power they have to do damage. Of course, the narrative of Noah and the Great Flood was the ultimate example (Genesis 6-8). However, the Psalmist in today's passage reminded us, *"Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea — the Lord on high is mighty."*

Job wrote, *"Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble"* (Job 14:1) and Solomon wrote, *"Meaningless! Meaningless! ...Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless"* (Ecclesiastes 1:2). I know that is not a happy outlook, but when the storms come and the flood crashes through our lives, we are tempted to lose hope, aren't we? I can't help but think of the story of Jesus and his disciples on the Sea of Galilee:

*That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and*

*it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”* (Mark 4:35-41)

Are you facing a flood today? Remember, *the Lord on high is mighty*. The waves may rise, but they cannot reach higher than God's throne. He controls it all – and he loves you.



FRIDAY

August 14, 2026

## **The Reliability of God's Word**

*"Your statutes, Lord, stand firm..."* (Psalm 93:5a)

In a concise, bold, and powerful statement the Psalmist declared, *"your statutes, Lord, stand firm."* The word *statutes* is translated from the Hebrew word, *‘ēdā*, which can also be translated testimony or word, as in a statement or promise. We could also translate the statement, *your word, Lord, stands firm*. God’s word, both in terms of keeping his promises, and as revealed in the Bible is true, relevant, and reliable because it comes from him and, *"God... does not lie"* (Titus 1:2). Even though the Bible existed originally as separate books written over a span of about 1,000 years by over 100 different authors it reads essentially as one book because it came from God. Even though it has been translated into over 100 different languages and many of those translations have been revised several times as scholars uncovered more manuscripts and learned to translate the original Hebrew and Greek text more effectively, it has maintained the integrity of its original meaning because it came from God.

No other book in the history of the world can hold the place the Bible holds. It stands alone. As Paul wrote, *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible is reliable because God is reliable. Human opinions change, cultural values shift and promises made by men and women are often broken, but God’s Word is completely trustworthy. Every promise He makes is dependable. Every command He gives is wise. Every truth He reveals is eternal.

Jesus emphasized the truth and reliability of Scripture when he taught, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"* (Matthew 24:35). You and I will

never grow in our faith or learn to walk according to the teachings and example of Jesus until we make reading and studying the Bible a priority. So, prayerfully read the Bible, learn it, obey it. As the Psalmist wrote, “*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path*” (Psalm 119:105).



SATURDAY

August 15, 2026

## **Holiness Decorates God's House**

*"...holiness adorns your house for endless days" (Psalm 93:5b).*

Over the years I have grown very fond of the building my church gathers in here in downtown Durand, Michigan. It was built in 1898, and it is beautiful because the people of the church have maintained it with great love for over a century. It is fitting for local churches to have buildings for worship and ministry and it is fitting God's people to *adorn* those buildings – church buildings should represent the faith and love God's people have for him.

However, when the Psalmist wrote, *"holiness adorns your house for endless days,"* he was talking about something much bigger and more important than any church building on earth. He was talking about God's *house* – his people. Paul wrote, *"...you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:19-22). Therefore, you and I are God's *house* that is *adorned* with *holiness*.

The Church, the Body of Christ, must be holy. Peter wrote, *"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:14-16). Of course, holiness does not come from any of us, it comes from God himself. Paul wrote, *"...we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus..."* (Ephesians 2:10) and *"...if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So, in Christ you are holy – you are God’s *house* and his *holiness* is the decoration that makes you beautiful in him. Holiness is not about perfectionism but devotion. It is the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ. As that happens, we look more like him and *holiness adorns [God’s] house*.



SUNDAY

August 16, 2026

<sup>1</sup>*I lift up my eyes to the mountains —*

*where does my help come from?*

<sup>2</sup>*My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

<sup>3</sup>*He will not let your foot slip —*

*he who watches over you will not slumber;*

<sup>4</sup>*indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither*

*slumber nor sleep.*

<sup>5</sup>*The Lord watches over you —*

*the Lord is your shade at your right hand;*

<sup>6</sup>*the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.*

<sup>7</sup>*The Lord will keep you from all harm —*

*he will watch over your life;*

<sup>8</sup>*the Lord will watch over your coming and going*

*both now and forevermore.*

(Psalm 121)



MONDAY

August 17, 2026

## Looking Up in Times of Trouble

*"I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1-2)*

It is quite possible the Psalmist was dealing with some kind of difficulty while writing Psalm 121. The nature of life is such that you might be dealing with some kind of difficulty right now – financial pressure, health concerns, family struggles, an uncertain future – all these things can leave us asking, *"where does my help come from?"* for help. This passage reminds us to look up because, *"...help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth."*

When we face difficulties, our first instinct is often to look horizontally for solutions. We may seek advice, resources, or human assistance. While God often uses these means, our ultimate source of help must always be Him. Human strength is limited, but God is omnipotent – his power is infinite. He is fully capable of caring for us. Nothing surprises Him. Nothing overwhelms Him. The God who spoke galaxies into existence is attentive to every detail of your circumstances.

This truth echoes through Scripture. Moses wrote, *"The eternal God is your refuge..."* (Deuteronomy 33:27). The Prophet Jeremiah wrote, *"...Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you"* (Jeremiah 32:17). Then Jesus taught us, *"...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear... Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ...But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about*

*itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:25-34).*

Are you facing difficulty today? Where are you looking for help? Are you relying on your own wisdom, strength, or resources? Look up! Take your difficulties and concerns to the Lord. When we bring our needs before God, we acknowledge that our help comes from Him and shifts our focus from the size of our problems to the greatness of our God.



TUESDAY

August 18, 2026

## **The God Who Never Slumbers or Sleeps**

*"He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:3-4).*

If you have ever fallen asleep in church, you know what it is to *slumber*; to doze off. I haven't done that in several years because I am usually the one standing in the pulpit! The fact is we all get tired. Sometimes we doze off and other times we lay down and sleep. God never does any of that. He never gets tired; he never dozes off – he is vigilant. He is always watching over us.

In addition, *he will not let your foot slip*. Travelers in biblical times faced many dangers. Uneven roads, steep paths, and unexpected obstacles made slipping a real threat. The psalmist assured us that God is always active – he is always guiding our steps. Even when we face difficulties in life, he is there. This reminds me of the words of Paul, *"...If God is for us, who can be against us? ...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:31-39).

I know sometimes you might feel like God is not paying attention but remember your feelings do not necessarily determine reality. God is diligent. His watchful care is constant even when we cannot see him at work. We do not need to lie awake worrying about tomorrow

because God is already there. We do not need to carry every burden ourselves because God is always at work. His attention never wanders. He sees your struggles, hears your prayers, and knows your needs. His care is not occasional but constant.



WEDNESDAY

August 19, 2026

## **The Lord Is Your Shade**

*"The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night" (Psalm 121:5-6).*

The story is told about a burglar who broke into a house one night. As he crept around, shining his flashlight here and there, he heard a voice, "Jesus is watching you." The burglar froze and turned off the flashlight. After a long minute of total silence, he turned the flashlight back on and resumed his search for valuables. He heard the voice again, "Jesus is watching you." At this point his flashlight fell on a parrot sitting in a cage. "Did you say that?" the burglar asked. "Yes," the parrot squawked. "I'm just trying to warn you." The burglar laughed, "Warn me? You're just a parrot! What's your name anyway?" The parrot replied, "Moses." The burglar scoffed. "What kind of person would name a parrot Moses?" The parrot responded, "The same kind of person who named the Rottweiler Jesus."

Ok, I know that's a corny joke, but it reminds me of the truth of today's passage, *the Lord watches over you.* He is present and active in your life. Not only that, but he also offers protection, relief, and refreshment. In the Middle East shade was and is extremely important. When the Psalmist wrote, *the Lord is your shade at your right hand*, he described God's presence and care. He is not far away. He is close enough to provide protection, comfort, and shelter.

God's protection is available where we most need it – everyday, right in the middle of all the responsibilities, challenges, and battles we face. His care is not limited to certain seasons or situations. His protection extends around the clock - *the sun will not harm you by day, nor the*

*moon by night.*

Jesus offered similar assurance when He promised, “...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). He is always with us. He is always watching. He is always at work. His presence not only protects us but refreshes us like the shade on a hot summer day. So, as you go through today, remember that God is close. He is not just watching, he is with you offering protection, comfort, and strength.



THURSDAY

August 20, 2026

## Protected from Harm

*"The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life..."*

(Psalm 121:7).

Every Sunday at our church we pray the Lord's prayer which includes the phrase, *deliver us from evil*. The Psalmist uses similar words in today's passage, "*the Lord will keep you from all harm*." However, this might be difficult to understand because followers of Jesus experience the suffering, illness, and hardship everyone else does. Why doesn't God keep us *from all harm*?!

Actually, he does.

I know we all face difficulties and the Bible repeatedly shows faithful servants of God enduring persecution, suffering, and trials. However, the Psalmist is speaking of God's ultimate purposes for those who belong to Him. Paul wrote, "*...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*" (Romans 8:28), but even he endured his "*thorn in my flesh*" (2 Corinthians 12:7) and prayed three times for God to remove it – God told him, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Even as Paul suffered, God kept him from the ultimate harm. You see, the greatest harm we could ever face is not physical suffering but separation from God. Paul understood this and near the end of his life he wrote, "*He has saved us and called us to a holy life... This grace was given us in Christ Jesus... who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel... That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am*

*convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day” (2 Timothy 1:9-12).*

No matter what occurs you are safe and secure in Christ. You are ultimately protected. God's watchful care extends beyond physical protection to encompass our entire existence. He is shaping us into the image of Jesus. Trust him and rest in faith that he is protecting you from ultimate harm.



FRIDAY

August 21, 2026

## **The Lord of the Journey**

*"...the Lord will watch over your coming and going..." (Psalm 121:8).*

Life is filled with movement. We go to work, school, church, the market, and countless other places. We are a mobile culture. Then we go back home seeking rest. Have you ever considered the idea that God goes with you? In fact, he watches *over your coming and your going*.

This reminds me of David's words in the Psalm we will consider next week, *"You know when I sit and when I rise... You discern my going out and my lying down... Where can I go from your Spirit? ...If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast"* (Psalm 139:2-10). Think about it, no matter where you go today God is already there.

This promise would have been especially meaningful to pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem. The roads were often dangerous, and travelers faced uncertainty along the way. Still, they could go with confidence, knowing God was watching over them. In fact, many people in Scripture experienced God's guidance and protection as they traveled – Abraham followed God even though he did not know where he was going. Moses led Israel through the wilderness. Paul traveled extensively to spread the gospel. In each case, God directed and sustained His servants.

Solomon wrote, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight"* (Proverbs 3:5–6). When we submit our travels to God, he goes with us and will direct our steps. His care extends to both major decisions and ordinary routines. He is concerned about our careers,

families, ministries, and daily responsibilities. No detail is too small for His attention. He is our faithful guide.

Today, invite God into every step of your journey. Seek His wisdom for decisions. Trust His guidance. Remember, he watches over *your coming and going*.



SATURDAY

August 22, 2026

## **Always Under God's Care**

*"...the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore"*  
(Psalm 121:8).

Because God is eternal his watchful protection over us is not limited to a season, a circumstance, or even our earthly lives. It extends to *"both now and forevermore."* Things change – some of our relationships come and go, we move from one house to the next, things break, money is earned and lost, even our physical lives are, *"...a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes"* (James 4:14). But God is eternal and his faithfulness never ends.

The word *"forevermore"* takes our attention beyond the present and reminds us God's purposes extend into infinite eternity. His love is perfect and everlasting. He does not change (James 1:17). Moses wrote, *"...from everlasting to everlasting you are God"* (Psalm 90:2). That means God's love and care for us extends even beyond death itself. That is why David could write, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me..."* (Psalm 23:4).

The promise of God's care is perhaps best captured in the words of the Apostle John as described the vision Jesus showed him, *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

*There will be no more death ' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' "* (Revelation 21:1-4). An eternal perspective can give us hope and courage even when facing difficulty. God is faithful. His faithfulness Extends beyond this life into eternity. His love never expires. His promises never fail.



SUNDAY

August 23, 2026

- 1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.*
- 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*
- 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.*
- 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.*
- 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.*
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*
- 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*
- 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;*  
*if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*
- 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,*
- 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me*  
*and the light become night around me,"*
- 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;*  
*the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*
- 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;*  
*your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

*15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.*

*17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!*

*18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand —  
when I awake, I am still with you.*

*19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!  
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!*

*20 They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name.*

*21 Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,  
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?*

*22 I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.*

*23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

(Psalm 139)



MONDAY

August 24, 2026

## **Known Completely by God**

*“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain” (Psalm 139:1–6).*

David begins Psalm 139 with a profound truth: God knows you. He knows everything about you. There is no part of your life hidden from him. He knows when you sit, he knows when you sleep, he knows when you get up, he knows everything you say, he knows everything you are dealing with. God knows each of us perfectly. He understands our joys, fears, disappointments, struggles, and hopes. Nothing surprises Him. He sees the entirety of our lives. What an amazing thought! We can all probably echo David’s statement, *“Such knowledge is to wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”*

This thought can be a great comfort because God understands us better than we understand ourselves. When we struggle to express our pain in prayer, He already knows. When we feel isolated or misunderstood, we can rest in the fact that God sees and understands completely. However, God's complete knowledge also challenges us to be honest with him. We may hide our motives from others, but not from Him. We can hide our secret thoughts, hidden sins, and private struggles from others, but they are all fully known by God. The good news is God is trustworthy and loves us perfectly – it is ok that he knows everything about us. It is a

good thing.

As followers of Jesus, we can find peace and comfort in God's intimate knowledge of each of us and our lives. We do not need to pretend with Him! We can come to him honestly, confessing our weaknesses, expressing our doubts, sharing our struggles, and trusting him because he knows us completely and loves us perfectly.



TUESDAY

August 25, 2026

## Never Outside God's Presence

*“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Psalm 139:7–12).*

David begins our passage today with a rhetorical question, *“Where can I go from your Spirit?”* Of course, the answer is nowhere because God is omnipresent – everywhere completely transcendent of time or space. God's presence and power are everywhere, so no matter where David goes, God is already there. The same is true of each one of us.

For those of us who follow Christ the idea of God's omnipresence can be a source of great comfort. You are never alone! Whether in seasons of joy or sorrow, prosperity or hardship, God's presence is constant. Jesus promised this when he said, *“...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20). Sometimes this life brings loneliness, feelings of abandonment, or isolation as circumstances separate us from family or friends, but even in those dark times we are never be separated from God. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:38–39).

God is not just present, he is active – he offers his guidance, protection, and comfort even in the darkest times. He is not just watching from a distance or sitting around doing nothing. He is actively involved in the lives of His children. Whatever circumstances you face today, remember that God is with you. You are never beyond His reach, His care, or His love.



WEDNESDAY

August 26, 2026

## **Fearfully and Wonderfully Made**

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13–16).*

The Bible teaches that each one of us is created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27). That tells us two important things: First, there is something within each of us that looks like God – we are not God and we will never be God, but we bear his image, a family resemblance. Second, every human being that has ever lived and will ever live has an intrinsic value because of God’s image.

David expressed his gratitude for being, *fearfully and wonderfully made.*” When God made you, he did not just throw you together with space parts! He did not rush, he did not skimp, and he did not mass produce on an assembly line. He made you *fearfully* – carefully, according to a well-thought-out plan. He made you *wonderfully* – extravagantly, using only the best material, and leaving nothing out. You are God’s masterpiece!

All of this teaches us the value God places on every human being. Many people struggle with feelings of inadequacy or insignificance. Society often measures value by external standards, but God sees each person as His unique creation. You are not an accident! You are part of God's purposeful design. Paul wrote, *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ*

*Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”* (Ephesians 2:10). Not only did God create you carefully and extravagantly, but he also created you with a purpose and a plan. Your talents, abilities, and opportunities are gifts from Him. Every individual is precious because God is our creator. So, celebrate the unique way God made you. Trust that His design is wise, loving, and purposeful.



THURSDAY

August 27, 2026

## **The Precious Thoughts of God**

*“How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand — when I awake, I am still with you” (Psalm 139:17–18).*

Have you ever wondered what God is thinking? What do you suppose he is thinking about right now? As David pondered that thought he was overwhelmed by the realization that God continually thinks about His people. He is thinking about you right now – planning, preparing you, providing for you. He told the Prophet Jeremiah, *“I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart”* (Jeremiah 29:11-13). God is thinking about you and his plans for you are rooted in His goodness and love.

Because we are human, we often have thoughts and emotions of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. We wonder whether anyone truly cares about us, our struggles, our fears, the things we are going through. Psalm 139 reminds us that the Creator of the universe is mindful of us. The God who governs galaxies also knows our personal needs. God is constantly thinking about us. His thoughts about us are not shaped by impatience or frustration but by his perfect love.

As he pondered God’s thoughts David's response was worship. He was amazed that God noticed him, even more amazed that God’s attention to him was so personal and constant. He wrote, *“when I am awake, I am still with you.”* Even when we are not thinking about God he is thinking about us. Therefore, Jesus taught, *“...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or*

*drink; or about your body, what you will wear... For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”*  
(Matthew 6:25-34).

God is thinking about you right now.



FRIDAY

August 28, 2026

### **A Heart Aligned with God**

*“If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies” (Psalm 139:19–22).*

One of the things I love about the Bible is how authentic it is – there are times when the emotions expressed are so real and raw that they almost seem inappropriate. Even though David was described by God himself as, “...*a man after my own heart,*” (Acts 13:22) he was a real guy with real passion, emotions, even anger. He used some strong language to express his feelings of frustration over sin and anger toward the wicked. David was passionate about his desire for God’s righteousness, so much so that he wanted it for everyone.

Of course, this passage should not be used to justify hatred or any misguided attempts to force others to behave the way we think they should. Remember, we follow Jesus and he taught us, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven... If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48). Furthermore, Paul wrote, “...*our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). So, our anger must never**

be directed toward people, but toward sin and the terrible damage it causes. In all things we must remain faithful to God while demonstrating love, grace, and respect as we remember our own need for grace. Before judging others, we must examine our own hearts for we were once separated from God, too (Ephesians 2:1–5).



SATURDAY

August 29, 2026

## Search Me, O God

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting”*

(Psalm 139:23–24).

David had a knack for heartfelt prayer and expressing his deep relationship with God. He closed Psalm 139 with one of the most powerful prayers in Scripture, *“Search me, God and know my heart...”* David invited God to examine him completely – a beautiful expression of humility and spiritual maturity. David did not assume everything in his heart was right but invited God to reveal anything that was displeasing to Him.

Self-examination is important, but it has limits. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9). The truth is, we often cut ourselves a fair amount of slack in self-examination. We tend to grade ourselves on a curve with the idea that we might not be as bad as someone else, or we choose to overlook our own faults and justify sinful attitudes. We do not like looking at our dark side, so we need God's perspective.

Paul wrote, *“...the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account”* (Hebrews 4:12-13). In this there are times when the Bible is hard to read – as we prayerfully study God's word with the Holy Spirit as our guide it often *penetrates... and judges our thoughts and attitudes* as

*everything is ...laid bare before the eyes of God.* This can be painful, but it is essential to our growth in Christ. Inviting God to search your heart requires courage and humility because he will be thorough for our ultimate good. Revelation leads to realization and conviction, but confession leads to forgiveness, restoration, and renewed fellowship with Jesus. If you are ready, ask God to reveal anything that is hindering your relationship with Him. The God who searches your heart is also the God who lovingly guides you in the everlasting way.



SUNDAY

August 30, 2026

*<sup>1</sup>Praise the Lord.*

*Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.*

*<sup>2</sup>Praise him for his acts of power;*

*praise him for his surpassing greatness.*

*<sup>3</sup>Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,*

*praise him with the harp and lyre,*

*<sup>4</sup>praise him with timbrel and dancing,*

*praise him with the strings and pipe,*

*<sup>5</sup>praise him with the clash of cymbals,*

*praise him with resounding cymbals.*

*<sup>6</sup>Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*

*Praise the Lord.*

(Psalm 150)



MONDAY

August 31, 2026

## **Praise Is Our Highest Calling**

*“Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness”*  
(Psalm 150:1-2).

It is fitting that Psalm 150 concludes the book of Psalms because it is all about praising God, who is worthy of our praise. Today’s passage begins with a concise, but powerful statement, *“praise the Lord.”* Short, simple, to the point, maybe a little convicting for some. The psalmist did not present praise to God as an optional activity reserved for special occasions, but as the central purpose of God's people.

The psalmist goes on to tell us where God should be praised — *in his sanctuary* and *in his mighty heavens*. This leaves lots of room for those of us who follow Jesus in terms of where we worship, so the person who claims they can worship God on the lake, at the campground, or anywhere else as well as they can worship him in church is partly right – but only partly because the psalmist also said to worship him *in his sanctuary*. It is a ‘both and,’ kind of thing, not an ‘either or.’ So, since it is Monday, I must ask, did you worship God *in his sanctuary* with your local church yesterday? Ok, that’s all I will say about that.

The psalmist wrote, *“praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.”* Therefore, worship involves two things – we thank God for all he has done and we praise him for who he is. What has he done? A partial list might include creation, redemption, provision, protection, and salvation. Who is he? He is holy, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, transcendent, and perfect in love, just to name a few.

Jesus said, “*God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth*” (John 4:26). So, our worship must be authentic and enabled by the Holy Spirit. When we praise God, we align our hearts with reality. We acknowledge that He is the Creator and we are His creation. Praise is not merely something believers do; it is what believers were created to do.



TUESDAY

September 1, 2026

## **Worship With Everything You Have**

*“Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals”*

(Psalm 150:3-5).

Psalm 150 is probably going to be frustrating for folks who think the local church can only worship a certain way in a certain style. For as long as there has been an organized church there have been those who have tried to limit worship in terms of liturgy, style, instruments, volume, rhythm – you name it. Perhaps we should all just admit we worship the way we worship because of our personal tastes – we like it the way we like it, and we are very fortunate that God loves us enough to allow us to worship him as we choose. In this we all must admit our personal preference is not sacred. Some prefer formal liturgy while others find that too stuffy. Some want to worship quietly while others want to blow the doors off. Some want hymns with an organ while others want modern songs with electric guitars. Some stand still while others wave their hands and dance. The point of Psalm 150 is not the style of our praise, but the wholehearted nature of our worship.

Authentic worship engages the whole person. God created us with emotions, intellect, creativity, and physical abilities. Worship is not merely a mental exercise; it involves our entire being. Paul wrote, *“I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship”*

(Romans 12:1). Therefore, worship even extends beyond our Sunday gathering with a local

church into every aspect of life - work, relationships, service, generosity, and obedience all become acts of worship.

Psalm 150 teaches us worship flows in part from gratitude. As we understand God's love and grace, worship is our natural response. As we remember that Christ died for our sins, rose again, and gave us the hope of eternity compels us to worship with joy. So, consider worship a privilege – an expression of your love of Jesus and gratitude for all he has done for you... then worship however you choose.



WEDNESDAY

September 2, 2026

## **The Joy of Loud Praise**

*“...praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals”*  
(Psalm 150:5).

I am blessed with three wonderful children and four perfect grandchildren. One of my wonderful children played the drums, so I can tell you from experience that cymbals are never quiet. Whether in a drum set like my son played, or alone like in a marching band, cymbals are unmistakable in their sound – they are never quiet. So, it is interesting that the psalmist encouraged *“the clash of cymbals.”*

Sometimes quiet just won't do. When David chose his son Solomon to succeed him as king, *“Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ And all the people went up after him, playing pipes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound”* (1 Kings 1:38-40). When the people dedicated Solomon's Temple to the Lord, *“The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: ‘He is good; his love endures forever.’ Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God”* (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). Worship is not always quiet and reserved or even dignified, sometimes it erupts with overwhelming joy – that can get loud.

Of course, there are those who are simply unable to express themselves loudly in worship or any other way. If that is how you are made, then trust your Creator's wisdom and be who you

are because loud worship must never be about emotional display for its own sake. Sometimes worship is quiet and reflective, at other times it is jubilant and celebratory. Authenticity is always the key. We have abundant reason for worship – we are forgiven in Christ (Ephesians 1:7), we have been given eternal life (John 3:16), we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11), and we have the hope and promise of Christ's return and an eternal inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4). Worship loudly or softly but worship.



THURSDAY

September 3, 2026

## **Let Everything That Has Breath Praise the Lord**

*“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6).*

Are you breathing right now? I hope so – in fact, if you are not, please get some help! Breath is a gift from God. Many times, in the Bible it symbolized the life force created in every living thing by God himself. The Bible says, *“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being”* (Genesis 2:7).

The psalmist concludes Psalm 150, as well as the entire Book of Psalms with a universal invitation, *“let everything that has breath praise the Lord.”* Since God is the creator and sustainer of life, it is fitting that everything living should praise Him. Birds sing, oceans roar, and mountains stand as silent witnesses to God’s majesty.

But what about us? Certainly, we are among those who *have breath* so worship is not only something we get to do, but also something we are supposed to do because God is worthy. Every believer has the privilege and responsibility of praising God. Young and old, rich and poor, strong and weak — all are invited and expected to worship God.

This expectation carries some urgency because we do not know how many breaths we have left. Today is the day to worship God, to *praise the Lord*. Our worship today anticipates eternal worship as described in John’s vision, *“...there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb’ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders*

*and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!'"* (Revelation 7:9-12).



FRIDAY

September 4, 2026

## **Praise in Every Season**

*“Praise the Lord”* (Psalm 150:6b).

I find it interesting that Psalm 150 does not contain any mention or description of circumstances. There is no time or situation when *“everything that has breath”* is not supposed to *“praise the Lord.”* Likewise, there are no circumstances more or less suited for praising God. We are not told to praise God only when life is easy, or we feel blessed, or we are enjoying ourselves. Our admonition is simply, *“Praise the Lord.”*

Consistency of praise reflects our belief that God is faithful. Of course, life comes with seasons of joy and sorrow, victory and struggle, success and failure, but God remains – he is present and he is faithful through it all. David wrote, *“I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips”* (Psalm 34:1). Even after suffering devastating loss, Job declared, *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised”* (Job 1:20-21). Likewise, Habakkuk wrote, *“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior”* (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Praise does not deny our pain. It recognizes God's presence within it. When we praise God during consistently, regardless of circumstances, our faith grows stronger. Our focus shifts from temporary troubles to eternal realities. Praise becomes an act of trust that God is working even when we cannot see the outcome.

Psalm 150 encourages us to develop a lifestyle of praise that transcends circumstances

and is rooted in God's greatness rather than our comfort. So, regardless of your current circumstances, choose praise. Thank God for His faithfulness in the past, his presence in the present, and his hope for the future.



SATURDAY

September 5, 2026

## **The Eternal Song of Worship**

*“Praise the Lord... Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord”*  
(Psalm 150:1-6)

There will come a time when the redeemed with worship God forever. John wrote about it, *“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders... He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb... And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.’ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’ The four living creatures said, ‘Amen,’ and the elders fell down and worshiped... After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in*

*a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'”*

(Revelation 5:6-14; 7:9-10).

I can think of no better way than this to end our summer journey together. God bless you!