

The Psalms

by Colin Anderson

The Psalms are a source of emotional expression and a guide for personal application, and our spiritual life is measured by what we say about the Lord Jesus.

Scripture: Psalm 16:1-2, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:1, Romans 3:24, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Psalms"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the shift in subject matter in the book of Romans, specifically in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. He explains that the earlier chapters focused on the condemnation of sin and the justification through Christ's redemption. However, in chapter 5, the focus shifts to the Christian's relationship with sin and the awareness of wrongdoing within oneself. The speaker shares personal experiences of struggling with temptation and the desire to indulge in worldly pleasures, but also emphasizes the importance of surrendering to Christ and finding freedom and joy in serving Him. He encourages spiritual growth through reading the Word of God and developing strong relationships with other believers in the assembly.

Transcript

This is the first time I've been in St. Louis. I don't often get down to the United States but we come from Canada, just about 200 miles north of Toronto, and you can tell by my accent, or some people call it an accent, that I really come from the old country, from England, but I can't help that. Don't hold that against me.

I was born that way. But I am delighted to be with you here. I love to meet the Lord's people all over the world, wherever we go.

We meet God's people and what a joy it is to meet those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. He is altogether lovely, and he rejoices our hearts, and because we love him, we love each other in the Lord. Don't need any introduction.

You just kind of get to know one another, don't you? That's lovely. I really rejoice in that. Well, let me share just a few meditations with you before we go to our discussion together.

I'm really looking forward to that panel discussion. I always learn a lot at panel discussions. Usually how much, I don't know.

Anyway, let's turn to the psalm, please. That's really the heart of our Bible. It's the heart of our Bible, in that when we open our Bible, if you open it in the middle, you inevitably open it to the psalm.

And it's the heart of our Bible, in that it gives us the heartbeat of the Bible. Here is a book that appeals to us, isn't it? And why does it appeal to us? Why do the psalms mean so much to us? Surely because there isn't an emotion, and by the way, emotions are not sad. You know, sometimes we're told that we shouldn't be emotional, that we should think sanely, and so on, and I believe that.

I believe we should think sanely, all right? I believe we should use our heads, but the Bible makes room for spirit-controlled emotions, and the psalms give expression to emotions in the best way possible. There isn't an emotion that a believer may experience, but he will find an echo in the psalm. Are you depressed? Oh, there's a psalm for you.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Yet hope thou in God. There's a psalm to meet that need. Do I feel forsaken? Do I feel as though God is not with me? If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the outermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me.

There isn't an experience that we can have, but there isn't a psalm to meet the need of that experience. But that isn't to say that the psalms are speaking directly about us. As a matter of fact, they're not.

They're somebody else's hymn books. You see, they're the hymn book. I believe that the psalms are the hymn books of the remnant.

By the remnant, I mean the nation of Israel is yet to be restored to the law. We see the the props going into place on the stage of human history to get ready for the, the, I was going to say the show, but that sounds exciting. It's a tragedy, really, in many ways.

I'm speaking of the great tribulation. The curtains are still down, but I can see through those flimsy curtains, can't you? And see the props. Don't worry about the baby, doesn't bother me a bit.

See the props getting into place for the great tribulation. But when that takes place, I'm going to be up in the balcony looking down at it all. But I can see all that getting ready, and you see, in that great tribulation period, I believe God's word teaches that he is going to pour out upon the nation of Israel the spirit of grace and supplication, and many are going to turn, many among the Jewish people are going to turn to the law, and there's going to be a restoration of God's ancient people to the inheritance that God promised them.

And in the process, and it's going to be a very hard disciplinary process, in the process of of experiencing being disciplined by God, being brought under his judgmental hands, and made to realize their sinfulness, until they can actually come to that place in their own spiritual history, individually, that they will look upon him whom they pierced and mourn for him. As a man mourns for his only son, and every one of them, heart separated, just by themselves, getting alone with God, and wrestling with this problem, and realizing that they belong to a nation that was supposed to accept their Messiah, and yet rejected him, and having deep spiritual exercise about what they've done with the Lord Jesus. They will repent and turn to the Lord, and these psalms so perfectly express what they will go through in those days, because I believe that we should look at the psalms, and this is not my own, so I can recommend it.

It's really good. Mr. A. G. Clark, in his book on the psalms, suggests that we look at the psalms at least three ways. That we should look at the psalms, first of all, historically.

That is, we look at the psalm, and we say, what was God saying to David at this time? Where was he? He was in the cave of Adullam, was he? He was being hounded, he was running from place to place. Well, that's why he writes the way he does. Now, that may not be happening to me at the time when I read the psalm for my morning meditation.

I may not feel like being in the cave of Adullam, so I find it hard for me to identify with that particular experience, maybe. But it's God's words, and I need to read it. There may be a time when I am facing that kind of experience, and I can identify with David.

So, I need to be familiar with that psalm, so I know where it is, so that when I read that psalm that speaks of David's faith in a time of great trial and turmoil, I can be encouraged, because I know where to find that psalm. I know where to get it. And you see, first of all, I need to think about the historical background of the psalm.

Sometimes it's very easy to get. You know, when Nathan came to David about his sin with Bathsheba, well, there it is over the top of Psalm 51. Be merciful unto me, O God.

Oh, we understand what he's talking about. We know the deep exercise that his soul has to go through, because he sinned against the Lord. So, we read the psalm from the historical perspective.

We seek to understand what God was saying to David at the time when David wrote the psalm, but that does not exhaust the meaning of the psalm, because we should also look at the psalm prophetically. That is, God had in mind not only David's experience, but someone else's experience. Now, it may be your experience to some degree, but that really comes under my third heading, which has to do with making a personal application of the psalm.

But, first of all, we look at the historical association. We find out what David was experiencing, and then the second thing we do is we say, what's the prophetic meaning of this psalm? What was God, the Holy Spirit, anticipating when this psalm was written? For example, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Now, David, what were you experiencing at the time when you wrote that psalm? Well, he may have been experiencing a time of sense of loss of God's presence, that may be so, but certainly the details of the psalm exceed anything David experienced. They have pierced my hands and my feet.

He describes, very graphically, crucifixion, thousands of years before it took place. So, if you see the Spirit of God is giving us something which is prophetic in character, we can identify with that, and you say, ah yes, he's speaking about my beloved Lord here, he's speaking about the Lord Jesus here when he says those things, or he's speaking about the remnants in their time of trial, or he's speaking about this, or that, or the other. Now, having said that, having understood the historical association, and then looked at the prophetic anticipation, and then I can make a personal application.

Say, what's it saying to me? All right, with that in mind, let's address ourselves to this psalm, Psalm 16. Lovely psalm, and as we do so, we shall note that this is indeed a psalm which is very heavily prophetic in character. Particularly, we know it is so because of what comes out in the last part of the psalm, verses 10 and 11, which speak about the experience of the Lord Jesus, and the faith of the Lord Jesus as he went into death, and the reward of the Lord Jesus having triumphed over death.

God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, and that's anticipated in verse 10 and 11. Now, it may well be that the whole of this psalm may be linked with the Lord Jesus, but you'll have some parts with

which you'll have difficulty, at least if you're anything like me. Some people, you know, can weave their way through these psalms, and they can say, yes this applies to the Lord, like this, and like this, and like this, and like this, and sometimes I scratch my head and I say, I wonder.

You know, it's wonderful what we can get out of the Bible sometimes, when we when we really want to. One Bible teacher said, wonderful things in the Bible I see, most of them put there by you and by me. We have to be careful that we don't do that.

Now, psalm 16. Let's read it and think about the words as we read. Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust.

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord. My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God.

Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot.

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord.

He has given me counsel. My reins, that is my inmost heart. My reins also instruct me in the night season.

I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices. My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou wilt show me the path of life in the presence's fullness of joy. Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." Can you apply some of that psalm to your experience? I'm sure you can, but let me ask you a question. We're going to look at this devotionally for a few moments, having said what we've said about the need to regard the historical association, to recognize the prophetic anticipation, we're going to make some personal applications.

Verse one "'Preserve me O God, for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul thou hast fed unto the law.' Now what is the Lord Jesus to you? That is extremely important. In fact, that is the measure of your spiritual life.

We've been talking about the marks of a mature man. The measure of my spiritual life, my spiritual temperature, is what I really say from my heart about the Lord Jesus. For, after all, the whole of Scripture is focused, is centered upon the person of the Son of God.

I look into the Old Testament prophet, and to him give all the prophets written. I turn to the gospel, there the history of his wonderful life here on earth in the days of his flesh. I turn to the book of Acts, and I find it is a continuation of his ministry on earth through the hearts and lives of his people.

For it begins, the book of Acts begins with this statement, the former treatise of Imado Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, meaning that in the book of Acts he's continuing to work, working through the lives of his children. And I turn to the epistles, and they're unfolding the naturalist glories, the unspeakable glories of the Lord Jesus. And when I turn to the book of Revelation, it is after all the consummation of his glory.

So, from Genesis to Revelation, the subject is Christ. Now, what do you think about Lord Jesus? What is your beloved more than another beloved? What does he really mean to you? That's the measure of your spiritual life, that's your spiritual temperature this morning. Notice what the psalmist said, I have said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.

That's very, very personal, isn't it? You know, we all begin our spiritual history by getting personal in the presence of the Lord. You see, I was brought up in an Anglican church school, and I'm so thankful that in that church school they taught me the creed. And I learned many things in that school that were good.

One of the things that I'll never forget, and I thank God for the discipline of being in that school, was that so often we heard repeated these words, whose service, speaking about the service of the Lord Jesus, whose service is perfect freedom. I didn't understand those words, but they puzzled me. And again and again in my life, after I was converted to Christ, those words would come back to me, whose service is perfect freedom.

And I learned that in submitting our lives to the Lord Jesus, and becoming bondslaves of Christ, the more I experience devotion to Him, and service to Him, the more I find myself, and find freedom, and the joy that God intends His creatures to find. So I learned many things in that school, but the trouble with me was, I don't about others, I can't speak for them, that I learned most of it in my head, and very little in my heart. And the day came when, out on board ships in the year 1943, and the British Navy, serving on a destroyer with no pastor, no one to turn to on the ship, but just with a little Bible that my father had given to me, I began to open it, and I began to read, and I began to get personal in the presence of God.

And I discovered that I didn't really know whether I was a believer or not, whether I was a Christian or not. And I got down on my knees, and I can remember praying a prayer very much like this, I can't remember the exact words, Lord I do not know whether I'm really a Christian. I may be saved, or I may not be, I don't know.

One thing I do know, I desperately want to be saved if I'm not. Oh right now Lord, I ask you, I ask you right now to become my Savior. Oh glory is there.

No bells ringing, no sudden lights, no sudden high emotion for me, I knew these truths you see. But gradually the light began to dawn from that day onward. I began to read the word of God, I began to grow spiritually.

Oh I had lots of struggles. I'm sympathetic with young men, young women that have real struggles in their spiritual life, I had them all. And I had no one to help me for two and a half years, very few to guide me, very few to help me in the spiritual life.

But you see, I became personal in the presence of God. And that's after all what really matters in your spiritual history, is where you are. Oh I believe that there's real importance in our relationship to other believers in the assembly.

I would advocate developing a strong assembly association, an identification with other believers in the fellowship, absolutely essential to spiritual growth. I believe that. But ultimately it boils down not to where the brethren are, not to where your assembly is, but where are you in relation to the Lord Jesus.

You see what the psalmist says here, Oh my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, thou art mine. That's a personal matter. You remember the Lord Jesus came to Peter, and Peter had been in the

school of God with the Lord Jesus.

And Jesus asked him and the other disciples, who do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they gave the stock answers, you know. Some say you're Jeremiah, some say you're Elijah, some say you're one of the prophets. And then that piercing, that searching question that got to the very root of Peter's thought life.

Peter, whom do you say that I am? Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That wasn't something taught by flesh and blood, wasn't something learned in seminary, wasn't something learned in the schools of men, it was something learned in the secret of Peter's own heart, as God revealed to Peter who the Lord Jesus really was. And the Lord Jesus knew that it was that strategic moment to draw that confession from Peter's heart, thou art the Son of the Living God.

And oh you see, what's so very important to us is what we say about the Lord Jesus, our estimate of Him. What do you say to Him in private? Oh I know brethren, if we've been schooled in assembly ways, we can come together at the breaking of bread, and we can pray like angels. Some of us anyway.

How do you pray when you're on your own with the Lord? Do you really worship like that when you're on your own with the Lord? You see, there's no one here to hear your flowery language. Now there's no one listening to you to give you credit, brownie points for what you've done, you know. Nobody to do that now.

What do you say to the Lord when you're on your own? That's the measure of your spiritual life. It's the time you spend with Him. When you speak from your heart, you say Lord, you're my Lord, and you pour out your heart in worship to Him.

Well what was the Lord to to the psalmist? Well he was a number of things, but I want you to notice first of all that he was the psalmist's deliverer. Deliverer. He says, preserve me O God, for in thee do I put my trust.

I put my confidence in you, and it's the Lord, he says, who is my deliverer. You know that's what's needed so much is deliverance, not victory. You know people don't get victory over sin.

I've never met a mature Christian who got victory over sin. I've met lots of mature Christians who were delivered from sin. There's quite a difference, you know.

When we talk about getting victory over sin, we're talking about what we've accomplished, aren't we? I mean if we if we stick to what language is saying, and very often, you know, the language we use reveals the thought of our heart. Oh I'm struggling to get victory. Well never get it, thank God.

But there's deliverance in him, that's the thing. Deliverance is to be found in Christ, not victory in you. Deliverance in him.

Deliverance for you in the Lord Jesus. After all that's the way it was when you were saved, isn't that so? When you came to know the Lord Jesus, it wasn't by looking into yourself and saying, I want salvation in me. You didn't get salvation in in yourself by looking within yourself to try and improve yourself, make yourself more acceptable to God.

You say, well no, we all know that. Well as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. According to the same principle, looking off and away unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.

That's how we walk in the Christian life, and as we look to him, we find deliverance. You know, in Romans chapter five, the latter part, the apostle switches subjects to some degree. What he's said before is very necessary to what he's going to say in chapters five, six, seven and eight of the epistles of the Romans, but in chapters one to three, and the first, and chapter four, and the first part of chapter five, he's been dealing with the subject of our sins, and the fact that we are condemned because of our sin, and that we may, chapter three, be justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

And he's dealing with that subject in those early chapters as he unfolds the implications of the gospel for the Christians. Then when he comes to the fifth chapter, he switches subjects in a sense, though this subject flows out of the previous one, he's now dealing with what the Christian's relationship to sin is, if not to his sins which he has committed, but to the fact that he is in himself conscious of wrong within. You know, when you're first saved, you think everything's going to be wonderful, at least some of us do.

If we weren't taught too well before we were saved, if we hadn't been brought up in a good Sunday school where we learned these things, we kind of thought that when we got saved that's going to be the end of all our problems. Well, it isn't that way. It's the arising of new problems.

You know, I never realized how bad I was until I got saved. I didn't get convicted of sin before I was saved. You say, well then you aren't really saved brother, and I'll tell you in the process of getting saved, I got really convicted about sin.

I wasn't one of those who had a long struggle with the bad things that I'd done, and I'd done some bad things I suppose. I'm not going to tell you about them, you've got enough bad things of your own. You don't want to hear about mine.

I had done some bad things before I was saved, but now when I got saved, then I began to realize, and I began to say with the apostle Paul, oh wretched man that I am. That was after I was saved. I'll tell you, that didn't give me a lot of joy.

I became a very miserable Christian for quite a while, because I was struggling with the truths that are outlined for us in Romans chapter five, six, seven and eight. Now, what are those chapters dealing with? They're dealing with the believer's deliverance from sin. Oh, I wish more attention was paid by believers to those chapters.

There's a lot of error taught on those chapters, a lot of confusion about what those chapters teach, but they teach that the Lord Jesus, just as he himself with the answer to the sins that I had committed, he dealt with those sins, bearing those sins in his own body on the tree, they teach that when he died I went to the tree as well. That I was identified with him, and to summarize it all in the words of Galatians, I am crucified with Christ. I'm identified with the Lord Jesus, and I learned that his death was my death, and that by applying that death, that burial, that resurrection to my life, typically in baptism, and then practically in the secret of my own heart, as I realize that the Lord Jesus has done all this for me, and I begin to relate to him as he unfolds these truths to me, and I learn what deliverance is, how to be delivered from the sin that bothers me within.

You see the psalmist was saying here, I'm putting my trust in you. Now he was a believer already, but he was putting his confidence, his trust in the Lord, and you'll notice that the Lord, the term the Lord is used here so many times. Thou art my Lord, you notice.

Verse two there, and then again you'll notice it in verse five, the Lord is my portion. Again in verse seven, I will bless the Lord. Verse eight, I set the Lord always before me.

You know, when you turn to those chapters in Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8, it's so interesting to me that at the end of each one of those chapters, Paul gives thanks, and he gives thanks like this, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Is he your Lord? Of course he is. If you're saved, he's your Lord.

You might not act like it sometimes. You really can't make Christ your Lord, though I understand what's meant by that, and I've used the term myself sometimes. But he is Lord.

That's a fact of history. When you received Jesus Christ into your life, you received a Lord who saves, and a Saviour who lords. May I say that again? When you received Jesus Christ into your life, you received a Lord who saves, and a Saviour who lords.

You can't receive half of him. Today I'll receive Christ the Saviour, tomorrow I'll think about whether I'll receive him as Lord. That's nonsense.

That might be human experience, but it's not biblical truth. We'd better stick to what the Bible says. You receive Christ as he is.

He's a Lord who saves, and the Saviour who lords. Is he your Lord? Of course he is. He's your Lord.

Whether you own him as that, whether you live in the light of that, is another question. But you see, in those chapters, the Apostle keeps saying, through Jesus Christ our Lord. All these things come to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If he's not there, then there's no deliverance for you. If he's there and alive, there is deliverance for you. Let me close with a little experience.

When I was on board ship, I was struggling with some of these truths, and I remember I stood at the bottom of the companionway. You know, that's the ladder that leads up to, leads into another area on board the ship, and up in that area I could go, and I could be alone with my Bible, have a time of prayer with the Lord. That was one thing I could be doing, and the other way, I could go to the folks full of the boat and share in the theater program that was being put on.

Now I knew where I belonged as a Christian, but I didn't know how to lift my heavy feet up that companionway, and to open my Bible, which I knew would be very hard to read because my mind would be in the theater, and to pray would be very difficult when I could hear the music of the theater, perhaps permeating the air and filling my mind and heart with wrong thoughts and wrong ideas. What was I going to do? Well, I've been through this many, many times before, and I knew that the Lord Jesus Christ was my Savior. I knew that he was the Lord and Master of my life, but it hadn't really come through to me in that particular area of my life, and I remember as I stood at that companionway, I thought again as I'd thought many times before, which way do I go? And it always seemed that the flesh won out, and I ended up watching the theater program.

What was I going to do? Was I going to go through that again? I'd said so many times, I would never do that again, Lord. I'd made up my mind that's the last time, and then back I would go again the next opportunity I had, because I loved the theater. Before I was converted, I just lived in the theater.

Loved those things. Loved acting and all the rest. That's why I cut up on the platform sometimes.

Natural to me. I stood at the bottom of the companionway, and I remember this was a young lad. God was very merciful to me, and he reminded me of things that I'd forgotten in his word, as I stood there and I said, oh Lord, I'm through.

I can't live the Christian life. You know, I tried. I tried so very hard, but I just haven't got what it takes.

I think that was what the Lord was waiting for. A little thought came into my mind, where is Jesus Christ? And I answered my own question. Father, he's in heaven.

Father, if he's in heaven, he's alive, and he can help you now. And I looked up, and I said, Lord Jesus Christ, and I went up the companionway. Now, you say, you had victory ever since? No, no, no, no, no, no.

Many times have I fallen. In other areas, you see. But I always have to go back to that lesson.

It's a lesson that's taught in God's word. Who's in control of my life? To whom do I belong? Is he alive? Then he's my life now. I don't need to live the old life.

I can live a new life by submission to Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us pray. Our Father, we thank you that each one of us can say, O Lord, in thee do I trust.

Preserve me, O God. And we thank you for the experiences of saints of old who learn to put their trust in the Lord. And today, afresh today, we lift up our eyes to that one who is seated in glory, Christ who is our life.

We thank you for him. We thank you that he is not only our our Savior from sin, but he is our deliverer from sin itself. He is the great and mighty victor.

And in his name we commend ourselves to you, and pray that as we go into this panel discussion, that it might be mutually profitable and helpful to us. In our Savior's worthy name. Amen.

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