

Today we conclude a brief journey into the Psalms. I trust you have enjoyed a glimpse of the depth and breadth of spiritual, emotional and worship resources in the Psalms, and now bold enough to use it in personal worship. Ted mentioned in *Grapevine*, someone said to him, I was brave to tackle a dry subject such as the Psalms. I would indeed be brave to tackle a dry subject, but the Psalms are far from being *dry*!

Next Sunday is the first Sunday in Advent! It is, therefore, appropriate to close this preview into the Psalms by examining what it has to say about Jesus the Christ. There are about 90 references to Jesus in the Psalms, Psalm 22 and 110 being two very obvious ones.

Jesus comes to be our Christ, and is our *real* hope. We should be looking back with gratitude, examining the present with confident anticipation of what God is about to do, and looking forward to the future with real hope.

Let's play a game. I will read selections and you have to tell me if it is a Psalm.

The earliest Psalms are 3,500 years old (1440 BC) and the collection spans 1,100 years (to 586 BC). It is true that the Psalms are a wonderful collection of worship liturgy, but it is sad when we do not realise that the story of the **Bible** is the story of God and the story of the worship of God. God created us to worship Him, which is to be in a grateful relationship with Him. Worship is not just about singing, and praying and being in Church on Sundays; worship is enjoying the presence of God, who created us in love, and who makes Himself available to us through His Son and through the Holy Spirit, because of the mess we have created for

ourselves in this world, believing we alone can solve and resolve all its problems.

It is equally sad when we divide history into old and new testaments, where **old** is looking back, being negative and pejorative, and **new** is looking forward and positive and hopeful.

As we enter the season of advent and look forward to Christmas, let me leave you with three things you can easily practice, which **IS** worship.

First, worship is about **honouring God**. The first commandment God gave His people was, ***I am God, your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of slavery. No other gods, only Me.*** So, when Jesus is asked by an impetuous teacher of the law, *Which is the greatest commandment?*, Jesus is absolutely right in saying, ***Love (honour) the Lord your God, with all your soul, with heart, and with all your mind.*** To honour God is admit our failure to anything about our lives, and accept, **ONLY** God has the resources to look after us.

Come, let us bow down in worship, Let us kneel before our Maker¹, is an invitation to us as the gathered Church, to collectively honour God for being our God, who has our well-being at the centre of His heart.

Second, worship is about **servicing God**. We serve God together, following where He goes, doing what He wants done, but our service is individual. We are one body together but we are responsible to God individually and our service to Him is our individual commitment to Him.

When Joshua leads the nation of Israel into their Holy Land, he says to them, ***if you don't want to worship the Lord, then choose right now! Will you worship the same idols your ancestors did? Or since you're living on***

¹ Psalm 95:6

land that once belonged to the Amorites, maybe you'll worship their gods. I won't. As for me and my family, we are going to worship the Lord God and live by His rules!²

Third, worship is about **revering God**, admiring Him, holding Him in awe. Only we can do this as individuals; we cannot hide behind someone else revering God. God is able far more than we can ever imagine or visualise. Our act of confession is not only to admit our failures, the result of our pride which says *I can do it my way*, but to allow God to do what He knows is best for us, even when we cannot see anything good. This is **revering God**, watching God with awe as He answers prayer, when we live in total surrender to Him.

Worship is gathering together and giving God all honour; worship is serving God collectively as one body, but with our individual gifts, and worship is revering God, allowing Him to do what He knows is good for us, only when we live in total surrender to Him.

This has been a momentous year for us. We close one chapter in our lives as a church, and as we open another chapter, we consider the question, *Will we be the same old church in a new building, or will we be a renewed and refreshed people of God, in a new building, seeking new opportunities to honour God, exploring new ways to serve God, and living in submission to God, revering Him with awe, for His majesty and power over all things?*

We can never be too old, or too tired, or unqualified, or unable to honour, serve and revere, the Creator and Sustainer of Life! The **ONLY** way to God our Father, is through His son Jesus the Christ whose birth we shall soon celebrate. **AMEN**

² Joshua 25:14