

Psalms Series Sermon Discussion Guide

Psalm 1 (Pastor Andrew Zakhari—August 1, 2021)

- What do you commonly hear a blessed life to be in reference to?
 - What about a happy life?
 - What does Scripture teach us about the blessed (or happy) life?
 - What do you make of the fact that God wants us to be happy?
- Meditation is a way of life for a Christian.
 - What does a Scriptural understanding of meditation look like compared to other forms?
 - Can you recall a time that meditating on Scripture made a profound influence on how you lived or how you have come to view key aspects of your life?
- What are ways that you are tempted to “walk in the counsel of the wicked/stand in the way of sinners/sit in the seat of scoffers?”
 - What helps you avoid such ways?
 - How do you think that avoiding such ways has made an impact on your life? Family? Jobs? Other important life decisions?
- What do you make of the idea that the blessed one is “like a tree...that yields its fruit in its season”?
 - What’s the significance of a tree bearing fruit in its season?
 - What does this teach us about the concept of maturing in faith vs. instant spontaneous growth?
 - How does this challenge you?
 - How does this comfort you?
- Robert Alter translates vs. 6: “For the Lord embraces the way of the righteous...” (ESV says the Lord *knows the way of the righteous*).
 - Discuss the concept of being embraced by God.
 - What images come to mind?
 - Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 where Paul talks about being known by God.
 - How does what Paul says here relate to Ps. 1?

Psalm 85 (Pastor Tracy Troxel—August 8, 2021)

This Psalm has 4 stanzas.

- Stanza 1 (vs. 1-3) - Remembering God's faithfulness in the past
 - Have you recently reflected on God's faithfulness to you, to your family, the church? This is part of why we worship each week.
 - But are you doing this in your personal life?
 - Share with your group or family how God was faithful to you in the past.
- Stanza 2 (vs. 4-7) - Desperately asking God to renew us.
 - Is this a regular part of your prayer life?
 - How desperate are you to see God change you, your spouse, your roommates, your workplace, our church?
 - Ask God to do what only He can do.
- Stanza 3 (vs. 8-9) - Sometimes we must wait for God's renewal in us and in our lives.

- Why is it hard to wait on the Lord?
- How can we persevere even as we await the promises of God?
- Stanza 4 (vs. 10-13) - The results of God's renewal
 - What are the results of God's renewal of God's people?
 - Do you see that these results can only be brought about through God's power?

Psalm 44 (Pastor Tracy Troxel—August 15, 2021)

- Describe a time in your life when God was silent and when He didn't seem to hear or answer your prayers.
 - If we are honest this is the experience that all of us will experience in our spiritual journey.
- The Psalmist remembers God's faithfulness in vs. 1-8.
 - When was the last time you spent some time reflecting on God's faithfulness to you?
 - Can you recount instances of God's past faithfulness to you and your family?
- The Psalmist clearly understands that all of the good gifts that they enjoy have come directly from God.
 - Do you see that everything good in your life is ultimately from the hand of God?
 - Do you sometimes take more credit than you deserve?
- The Psalmist then recounts the ways in which they feel isolated and deserted by God Himself.
 - Do you take your grief, lament and complaints directly to God? Why or why not?
 - How might this be helpful to do in your spiritual life?
- In vs. 17-22 the Psalmist acknowledges that it doesn't appear that God's withdrawal from God's people is because of sin or God's discipline.
 - How do you understand this situation?
 - Does our faithfulness necessitate that we should be blessed?
 - What does it mean to have the silence of God even when we are walking with God?
 - How does Jesus's suffering on the cross help us understand our suffering?
- Finally, the Psalmist calls out to God for the sake of God's loyal love.
 - When you are in a tight spot, so you ask God to deliver you based on His loyal love or based on what you think you deserve?

Psalm 32 (Pastor Andrew Zakhari—August 22, 2021)

- What role does confession of sin play in the spiritual life?
 - What role does Jesus see it play (Read Mk. 1:14)?
 - How does confession relate to the life God wants us to live and to living with him for eternity?
- V. 6 says "Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you (God) may be found..."
 - What is this verse teaching about the importance of timely confession?
 - Compare this verse to Psalm 86:5 "For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you."
 - How do we make sense of both verses in our walk of faith?
- V. 9 says "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." This verse likely refers to God speaking to the Psalm writer.
 - How does confession of sin to God help us avoid sin in the future?

- In what ways does God instruct us away from sin?
- Psalm 32 ends with a communal call to be glad in the Lord for the forgiveness of sins.
 - How does our individual confession of sin positively shape the whole community of faith?
 - What happens if the community of faith does not seriously confess sins and seek restoration?
 - What fruit does genuine confession of sin bring to the individual and to the entire body of believers?

Psalm 34 (Pastor Jim Erickson—August 29, 2021)

- We are commanded to give prayers of thanks and prayers of praise.
 - Do you find one of these types of prayers easier than the other?
 - Why or why not?
- Come up with a list of attributes and traits of God that we can give praise for.
 - Discuss and/or share stories on how they have affected, impacted, and/or changed your life.
- God wants us to take refuge in Him.
 - Has there been a time where you took refuge in God?
- David references the “righteous” several times in this Psalm.
 - Who are they and/or what makes someone righteous?
- What does “fear of the Lord” look like to you and how does it play out in your daily life? At work? In your families?

Psalm 24 (Pastor Andrew Zakhari—September 5, 2021)

- What is the significance to our lives that God is the personal creator over all that exists?
 - How does failing to recognize God as creator affect the way we relate to his created order in terms of earth’s resources, our relationship to the animals?
 - What would we do differently as believers if we took God’s role of creator seriously?
- V. 4- Discuss what it would mean to have clean hands and a pure heart in your current life situation.
 - In what ways do you need to remember that Christ offers forgiveness of sins in these areas?
 - “Does not lift up his soul to what is false” refers to the commandment not to take God’s name in vain.
 - Other than in speech, in what ways do people do evil deeds in relation to God’s name? How do we safeguard against this as believers?
 - Do you find one of these types of prayers easier than the other?
- Why is it significant that both blessing and righteousness in this passage comes from the Lord?
 - Read 1 Peter 3:18 and discuss why this idea is so important for the gospel.
- How does knowing that Jesus is the King of glory who enters into heaven on our behalf both challenge and comfort you in light of the week you had?
 - What is the significance that Jesus, the second Adam, appears before the face of God?