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Favorite Psalms

OF THE

Bible Institute Hour
Listeners

Notes for January, 1957

by

CHESTER J. PADGETT, D.D.

AS GIVEN OVER NETWORK BROADCASTS OF THE

Bible Institute Hour

8:30 A.M. - MON., WED., FRI.

MUTUAL DON-LEE NETWORK

PREFACE

This is the last booklet in a series on the general theme "Favorite Psalms of The Bible Institute Hour Listeners," and constitutes the Psalms selected by our listeners and discussed over the Mutual Don Lee Network during the month of January, 1957.

It has been a joy to think through these precious Psalms with you and I want to thank you for your interest, your splendid letters regarding the broadcasts, and for your daily prayers that the Spirit of God would bless His Word as it was given out via radio.

You will rejoice in the evidences of God's goodness in bringing souls to Christ and in building up the saints through the radio ministry of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles during the year just past. We of the radio staff are confident that you will continue to name us before His throne of grace and mercy and that you will help us all you can in the coming months to present the claims of Christ and the rich treasures of His Word.

With Christian love,

Chester J. Padgett

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THE PSALM OF THE SATISFIED SOUL

(Psalm 103)

Here is another of the thanksgiving Psalms. The book of Psalms abounds in notes of thanksgiving and praise to God for His wonderful goodness. If the Old Testament saint could sing in such a manner how much more should the believer on this side of the Cross and the empty Tomb find occasion for hymns of praise?

The opening two verses of the Psalm set the atmosphere for all that follows. Here we are told that the believer is to "bless" the Lord. What does this mean? It means to praise and extoll Him. Surely every believer will admit the propriety of this! Note, too, that the Psalmist is carrying on conversation with himself — "O my soul." Here is one time when it is safe to talk to yourself. We hear it said that carrying on conversation with oneself is the first sign of insanity; but in this case it is a sign of spiritual wisdom. Let us talk our soul into blessing God; this certainly is not wasted time!

Note in the introductory statements that David wanted no half-hearted praise — he calls on his whole being to enter into this holy occupation (v. 1.) Note also that such praise is the best antidote against the common fault of ingratitude — "forget not all His benefits" (v. 2.) The spirit of thanksgiving is indicative of a healthy soul. Let us not forget God and all His benefits during this new year. Now, what are some of these "benefits" for which David is so grateful? Let us list them in the order of their appearance in the Psalm.

First, *he is thankful for forgiveness*. Every believer knows the meaning of this and will never forget that glorious moment when the sense of forgiveness burst into his soul. Man's chief problem is his sin and there is no solution for this problem but the blood of the Lord Jesus (I Jno. 1:9.) Education, reformation, psychology and psychiatry, nor other human means can bring the sense of divine forgiveness — this must come from God alone, and does come when the guilty sinner confesses and turns to Christ. Note that the Psalmist rejoiced in *full* forgiveness — "Who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities. . . ." There is nothing for the sinner to do but receive forgiveness. The only penance God's wants is repentance.

The Psalmist was thankful for healing (v. 3.) Some people do not believe that those of us who do not go in for the large "healing meetings" have much faith in the ability or willingness of God to heal. This is not the case. Most, if not all, Christians believe in divine healing. In fact, the truth of the matter is that God is healing all the time. Since sin entered the world and death through sin men have been dying even from birth. Disease and disease germs and all the thousands of parasites that prey on the human body would make life impossible were it not for

the overruling power of God which He exercises momentarily in the body. If you have your health today, my friend, it is *only* because God is healing "all thy diseases"!

Again, *David is thankful for redemption* (v. 4.) This means the salvation of both soul and life from destruction now and in eternity. He is grateful for all physical, temporal and spiritual blessings (v. 4). A man is a king indeed when the recipient of all God's bounties!

He is exceedingly grateful for soul satisfaction (v. 5.) Have you ever stopped to contemplate on what a rich thing it is to be satisfied with life? No doubt it would be safe to say that most people are *not* satisfied and this very unhappiness leads to one kind of neuroses or another. Study Paul's words in Phil. 4:11-12 in this connection.

David was grateful for God's justice (v. 6.) Sometimes it seems as if this world is full of injustice, but eventually right triumphs over wrong, and in the coming day of divine reckoning this will be true in every life (John 5:28-29).

Another of the Lord's benefits for which the Psalmist expresses his profound thanksgiving is that of *Grace* (vv. 8-12.) The grace of God is really the theme of the Bible. The sacred record opens with an account of the grace of God and closes with an account of the same grace. Salvation is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-10.) The believer is chosen by grace (Eph. 1:4), saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), kept by grace (Gal. 3:1-5; Phil. 1:6), and brought into glory by grace (Rom. 8:28-30.)

The writer mentions *the fatherly pity and sympathy and understanding* of God as another item calling for deep gratitude on the believer's part (vv. 13-18.) How good God is! He knows how weak and frail we are and that is why He is so patient with us, and why even His chastening is tempered with great love (Heb. 12:3-15.)

We dare not omit the truth of v. 19, — here is security! If God's throne is established in the heavens then all is well and we need not fret over personal or world problems God will smooth out all difficulties and bring His sovereign program to a successful culmination.

The Psalm closes with another heart-felt appeal for the entire universe to praise God and thank God for Himself and all His benefits (vv. 20-22.)

THE PSALM OF THE COVENANT

(Psalm 105)

Like Psalm 89 this Psalm deals with the history of God's chosen people Israel. The emphasis is on God's covenant-keeping love and upon His sovereign grace in election. The truth of the Psalm is just this —

that God is always faithful to His Word and will never let His people down!

In this Psalm David deals with *the basis for God's faithfulness*. This is, first of all, His holy character (v. 7.) It is His nature to be faithful. He is eternal and unchangeable in all His attributes. He is loving and gracious in His attitude toward His covenant people and His faithfulness flows out these qualities of His nature (cf. Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 2:1-10.) The second basis for God's faithfulness is His covenant — the agreement into which He entered with His chosen people (vv. 6-11.) The Bible is a covenant book, and is the sacred record of God's faithfulness to His bargain.

The Psalm also portrays who are the recipients of God's faithfulness — they are His covenant people. It is true that God's faithfulness is extended to all His creatures, but in a special and peculiar sense to those whom He has chosen to be His very own (vv. 6, 16, 42-43.) These chosen ones He seals (Eph. 1:14), keeps (I Pet. 1:5), and sustains to the very end (Phil. 1:6.)

Now, what are *the evidences of God's faithfulness*? (vv. 8-45.) The entire Psalm is a recount of Israel's past experiences all of which teach one great truth — the faithfulness of their God. These evidences include the miracles — the divine display of supernatural power in behalf of His people. My dear friend, do not suppose that this was true only in Old Testament times. Having read through this wonderful Psalm turn to the Gospels and see the mighty power of God in the miracles of the Lord Jesus, in His Resurrection and in His ascension to Heaven.

Not only did God work miracles for His people but He also provided them with adequate leadership as another proof of His faithfulness (vv. 17, 26.) God has always had *a man* — think of the great leaders of the Old Testament! These men were but men — they had their faults and their failures, but they were used of God to lead His people on. We Christians think of *the Man*, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ Who is our Captain and the one who shall surely lead us to triumph (II Cor. 2:14; Heb. 2:10.)

Now, in the light of God's evident and proven faithfulness what is the expected response on the part of His people? (vv. 1-7.) Let every believer "give thanks" and "call upon His name," and "sing unto him," and "glory in his name," and "rejoice" in Him, and "remember" all His works.

THE PSALM OF GOD'S LOVER

(Psalm 116)

What a beautiful opening statement — "I love the Lord. . . ."! This is not mere sentimentalism, this is the very heart of a genuine spiritual

experience with the Lord Jesus Christ! Someone has well said, "The heart of Christianity is Christ in the heart." We are told by the Bible itself that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart (Matt. 22:37.) The true Christian experience is an emotional experience. But let us remember that it is never duplicated! Each man has his own experience with the Lord, and as long as he is sure he does love Christ he need long for any other man's relationship!

There are two lines of thought in the Psalm: first why David loved the Lord; and, second, the resolutions he makes based on this love.

David loved the Lord *because He heard and answered prayer* (vv. 1-7.) Many people today scoff at the idea of answered prayer, but believers who have had their prayers answered do not scoff! Prayer is reasonable. For one thing, God has a Father's heart. What father would refuse to hear and answer the pleas of his child? (Luke 11:9-13.) Prayer is reasonable because Christ has made a way of access into the Father's presence (Rom. 5:1-2; Heb. 4:14-16.)

David loved the Lord *because He had provided salvation* (v.8.) The writer speaks of "deliverance," or salvation from death. He knew that God has protected him from physical death on many occasions, just as He had done for each of us. And this is a wonderful thing. It is good of God to let us linger here in this world to enjoy His blessings and His protection in the midst of so many possibilities of evil and tragedy and sorrow. But the most wonderful deliverance is that from the guilt and power of our sin! Surely, David had this in mind in this Psalm. If the sparing of our earthly life is wonderful, what about the sparing of our life in eternity! What a boundless blessing to know that we shall live *eternally* in the light of the Father's blessing, delivered from the wrath and curse of the law and the flames of Hell forever!

David loved the Lord *because He had delivered his eyes from tears — here is Satisfaction!* (v. 8.) There are many tears in this life — all of us know this by personal experience. There are tears of sorrow for sin, tears of suffering, tears of bereavement, tears for the salvation of souls, tears of joy. All the tears that come to the believer's eyes because of bitter or unpleasant experiences our God is able and willing to wipe away. David loved the Lord because He had done this for him.

Again, David loved the Lord *because He had kept his feet from falling — here is Security!* (v. 8.) The keeping power of God was of special joy to David (cf. Ps. 37:23-24; 89:28-34.) Dear friend, this doctrine ought to be of greatest comfort and strongest motivation to every believer. Surely,

"If ever it should come to pass
That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day!"

But God will not let the believer fall out of His omnipotent hand (John 10:28-29.) Let each child of God confidently assert

"I to the end shall endure
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
Are the glorified spirits in Heaven."

Now, in the light of these reasons for loving the Lord, what resolutions ought the Christian to make? David lists them for us. First, he vowed to be *faithful in prayer* (v. 1.) Here is the believer's best work.

Second, he vowed to be *faithful* in his daily living (v. 9.) The phrase "before the Lord" means in fellowship with God — in the light of His Word — obedient to His will. It is this attitude that makes the Bible become a living Book, and that leads to practical Christian living.

In the third place David vowed *that he would be a witness for the Lord* (v. 19.) He would tell of his wonderful experience and seek to enlist others for God.

Again, David vowed *to enter into the fullest and deepest experience with God possible for his soul* (v. 13.) Some of us may be afraid to do this, we may be holding back, we may not be willing to surrender certain areas of our lives to Christ. But David wanted everything God had for him and he was willing to pay any price to get it.

The Psalmist vowed *to pay his obligation to the Lord* (v. 14, 18.) Every believer without exception owes the Lord Jesus his very life. In light of this the Christian is obligated to serve Christ to the very best of his ability. Anything less than this is robbing the Son of God.

Finally, David promised *to keep his heart in tune with God*, and with gratitude, to remember all His mercies (v. 17.) Surely daily meditation on the goodness of God will encourage the believer to love the Lord and to keep his resolutions fresh in mind.

THE PSALM OF THE WORD (Psalm 119)

Now don't get frightened! I'm not going to deal at length with this Psalm! If I did we'd be at it for a long long time because this is the longest chapter in the entire Bible — 176 verses! And every verse makes

some reference to the Word of God. Here is a divine commentary on the Word itself! You will notice that the Psalm is divided into 22 equal parts of eight verses each. Each part is headed by a Hebrew letter. These Hebrew letters are the Hebrew alphabet in order a series of eight verses, one for each letter of the alphabet. No wonder some have called this Psalm "The Golden Alphabet"!

We might well take v. 18 as the text of the Psalm. This is the Bible student's prayer, and a good one with which to start your study of the Bible each day. Note that the eyes of the heart need to be opened to the full understanding of God's Word (cf. Eph. 1:15ff.)

This Psalm tells us what the Bible is. Eight terms are used descriptive of the Bible in the opening seven verses. It is the word of God (v. 1.) It belongs to God — it is His law, not man's. How reverently then it ought to be treated and how carefully obeyed. It is "the law of the Lord" (v. 1.) This means that the Bible is God's constitution setting forth the laws of the land. The Bible contains and is the total will of God for His people. The Bible is called "His testimonies" (v. 2.) This means that the Bible is God's witness concerning Himself and His will for His people. God's witness is true. He cannot lie. How grateful we should be for this Book of absolute truth — truth that never changes because God never changes.

The Bible is called "His ways" (v.3.) This means that the Bible teaches the ways of God — the way He expects His people to walk — the way of righteousness and the way to Heaven. The Bible is called "His precepts" (v. 4.) A precept is a principle. The Bible establishes certain principles of conduct, simple rules of living which distinguish the child of God.

The Bible is called "His statutes" (v. 5.) These are those specific rules for the Christian to follow — the ten commandments, for example. These specific laws cover every possible attitude and action of the believer toward God and toward men. The Bible is called "His commandments" (v.6.) These are God's orders — His demands. He demands perfection, and the Bible shows that He provides that which He demands in giving His Son a substitute for sinners. Thank God every believer is "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6.) The Bible is called "His judgments" (v. 7.) These are His decisions. They are inviolable and unchangeable. What a wonderful book is the Bible!

Now, what does the Bible do? It cleanses (v. 9.) It arms with irrefutable arguments for the truth (v. 42.) It quickens, or makes alive (v. 50.) It enriches (v. 72.) It gives hope and comfort (vv. 81-82.) It gives stability of life (v. 89.) It gives light and illumination (v. 130.)

It gives happiness (v. 136.) It gives peace and harmony within the believer's heart and mind (v. 165.)

How should the Bible be treated? It should be respected (v. 6), memorized (v. 11), mulled over, or thought through (v. 15), delighted in (v. 16), followed (v. 30), stuck to (v. 31), and walked in (v. 32.) Dear friend, let us thank God for what the Bible is, for what it does, and let us give it its proper place in our lives.

THE PSALM OF THE TRAVELER (Psalm 121)

The Psalm just before this one, that is, Psalm 120, begins a series of 15 special Psalms called the Psalms of Degrees, or the Psalms of Ascent. Bible students differ on the meaning of these terms and on the use of these Psalms by God's ancient people in Old Testament times. Probably these Psalms were sung by God's people as they made the pilgrimage from their homes to the Holy City at certain seasons of the year. Why not study through each of these 15 Psalms keeping the pilgrim in mind and then apply the truth to your own life for you, too, are pilgrim journeying toward that Holy City.

Psalm 121 presents two great truths — God is the believer's Helper, and He is the believer's Keeper.

Now, in order to see God as your Helper you must look up (v. 1.) Today men are looking every place but up — they are looking down, around, and in, but not up. Look up to the Cross and then on up to the Crown. You will see God as your divine Helper.

Now, why did David look up to the mountains and then beyond the mountains to the God of the mountains, the Creator of the earth? For several reasons: first, the mountains spoke to David of the power of God — only God could make the mountains! They spoke to him of the stability of God, of the peace of God, of the protection of God, and of the presence of God.

In what sense is God the believer's Helper? The Bible tells that it is God who helps the believer to Christ (Mat. 16:13-17; John 6:44-45, 65; Acts 2:39, etc.) It is God who helps the believer to do His will (Phil. 2:13-14.) It is God who helps the believer in times of temptation (I Cor. 10:13.)

Not only does this Psalm portray God as the believer's Helper, it shows Him to be the believer's Keeper, an equally precious truth. We note, of course, the primary reference in the Psalm to "Israel." Let us never forget that God is watching over His people Israel in these days

and is accomplishing His sovereign purpose in the nation. These closing days of the present dispensation are further proof of the accuracy of the prophecies of the Bible and of the necessity of literally interpreting the Word of God.

But the Psalm is also true of every believer — God is his keeper, too. God promises to keep the believer's feet (v. 3.) Life is a rough and rocky and treacherous path; we need the keeping power of God. Note that God's keeping is constant (vv. 3-4.) He never sleeps nor loses His awareness of every believer. The keeping power of God is thorough and sufficient protection for every type of adversity — shade from the fierce heat of temptation and protection from the baneful influences of life. The keeping power of God is active through the entire life span of the believer and will see him straight through to glory (vv. 7-8.)

