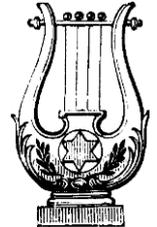




Meeting God in the Psalms

Summer 2017

Introduction



At the beginning of this year Adrian encouraged us to “Do the basics. Do them better.” He spoke from Psalm 1 with its image of a tree that flourishes: ‘Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the Law of the Lord and who meditates on his Law day and night... 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.’

We want to flourish, both individually and as a church, as we meet God in his Word. On summer Sundays we are looking at some psalms that we haven’t preached from recently.

Who wrote the Psalms and When?

Two of the Psalms that we are looking at this summer are attributed to King David (Psalms 23 & 40). The others are by unknown writers, although at least one is by a temple musician (Psalm 85). Many psalms may go back to the time of King David and other early kings (1000-800 BC); others may have been written at the time of the prophets (800-500 BC). Since they were used in public worship, they may well have been adapted over time, just as some hymns we sing stay the same whilst others are edited and even rewritten – just think of the different versions of ‘The Lord’s my Shepherd’, all based on Psalm 23.

Why were the Psalms written?

Although many psalms are poems that are based on personal experience, either of particular events or of a lifetime of trying to follow God’s way, they have all been used in shared worship, whether in small groups or in big public occasions in the temple. So the psalmist is not only speaking privately to God but also encouraging those around him to praise God, or to ask for God’s help, to share their joy or their grief, their confidence or their despair.

How can We Use the Psalms?

*The psalms help us to talk honestly to God in prayer, both on our own and together. They show that God understands and accepts the whole range of our human feelings, as long as we bring them to him. We don’t have to pretend in God’s presence – and it is pointless trying to do so. We don’t have to know the answer or how we want God to act, before we pray to him; and the psalms show that real prayer is much wider than asking, anyway. By looking at the psalms together, we can help each other to see how God is concerned with every aspect of our lives, how we can bring it all to him, and how he can be there with us and for us in the middle of everything. Above all, I hope that we shall find that we are not only meeting each other in our growth groups, but **meeting God in the psalms.***

Summer Sundays and Passages

July 23	Psalm 40	Responding to Rescue
July 30	Psalm 71	Secure at Every Stage
Aug 6	Psalm 85	Longing for Restoration
Aug 13	Psalm 23	Led by the Shepherd
Aug 20	Psalm 119:97-112	Delighting in God’s Word
Aug 27	Psalm 146	Praising the Protector