

## **Psalm 8**

**Aim:** To help us glory in our mighty Maker and consider how He is mindful of us puny humans.

**Read Psalm 8** *What are your initial thoughts on this psalm? [Discuss]*

### **The Lord’s glory (vv. 1-2)**

*What does the psalmist (David) say about God’s name? (v. 1)*

God’s name is majestic (glorious, excellent, great, mighty). There is no other who has such a great and high name. Indeed, David uses, at the start of this psalm, the two great Hebrew names for God; Jehovah (YHWH) which is God’s personal name and is derived from “I AM” (Exod 3:14), and Adonai which means sovereign.

*Where has the glory (or splendour) of God been especially set for us to see? (v. 1)*

God’s glory has been set “above the heavens”; that is, above our atmosphere. The universe above declares to us the glory of God (Psa 19:1-3) and it helps us appreciate how great He truly is (Rom 1:20).

*Although the mighty universe declares God’s glory, who else does God use to do this? (v. 2)*

The Lord raises up children and infants to declare His glory. Consider Matt 21:14-16 where children were praising Jesus, although the religious leaders despised Him; and He quoted to them the words from Psa 8:2.

*What does God accomplish through the praises of children and infants? (v. 2)*

He causes those who oppose Him and mock Him, and His Christ (Psalm 2:1-3), to be silenced by the lowliest ones on the earth (children and infants). God’s glory in the heavens should silence them, but God specialises in using the lowly to confound the wise (1 Cor 1:18-21); eg, little children often have no trouble praising God for His creation, but many academic people refuse to acknowledge His existence.

### **The dignity of man (vv. 3-9)**

*What is emphasised in Psalm 8:3?*

The whole universe has been made by God. It has not come about by chance, but by the mighty working of God. Also, the word “finger” emphasises that God has crafted everything carefully and intricately.

*What contrast is made in Psalm 8:3-4?*

When we consider how great God is, especially as seen in the expanse of the universe that He has set in place, and how puny we are in comparison, what is man that God should be mindful of us. Consider Isaiah 40:12-17. Even the nations are but a drop from a bucket to God; ie, the nations are nothing before Him.

*Are we then nothing to God? Is this the point David is making?*

No! What is beyond comprehension is that the awesome and majestic God is mindful of us, and not only that, takes an interest in us. We are especially valued to God (Luke 12:7).

*Not only is God mindful of us, but what else do we learn in v. 4? What event is the pinnacle of this?*

God cares for us (1 Pet 5:7). Of course, the pinnacle of God’s care has been in the way He gave us His Son who died for us, so that, if we believe in Him, we shall not perish but have eternal life with Him (John 3:16).

*Not only is God mindful of us, but what status is given to mankind in Psalm 8:5?*

We have been made a little lower than “elohim”. This Hebrew word is normally translated “God”, but it can also mean “divine beings” or “angels” (as in Heb 2:7, where this verse is quoted). So, we have been made a little lower than angels, and have been crowned with glory and majesty; and this is because God has made us in His image (Gen 1:26-27). Indeed, through Jesus we are sons of God and higher than angels (Heb 1:14).

*What else do we learn about mankind in Psalm 8:6-8?*

God has given to man the rule of His earth (as also declared in Gen 1:28). We may be puny compared to God and His vast universe, but to God, man is special and stands as ruler over His creation.

*How should these truths affect us in our attitude toward ourselves and others?*

We should view ourselves as being precious and valued to God, and we should view others in a similar way.

*Psalm 8:4-6 is quoted in Heb 2:6-8. Who is the Hebrew passage speaking of? (Read Heb 2:5-9)*

It is initially speaking of us, but then it goes on to speak of Jesus, for when He came to earth, He humbled Himself (Phil 2:5-8) and took on a lower position (for a time) in order to save us and deliver us from death.

*Why does the psalm end in praise of God’s majestic name? (v. 9)*

Not only is the Lord so great as our mighty Maker, but it is He who has given man such status and dignity. Though we are so small compared to God and His universe, we are loved and cared for. Hallelujah!

**Summary: God is to be worshipped and adored. He is our Creator and He cares for us.**

## **Psalm 16**

**Aim:** To encourage us to put our confidence and trust in the Lord even in the face of death.

**Read Psalm 16** *What are your initial thoughts on this psalm? [Discuss]*

### **The Psalmist’s Plea and Defence (vv. 1-4)**

*What is the psalmist’s petition or request? (v. 1)*

David is seeking the Lord’s protection against the possibility of death. We are not sure what the situation was when this psalm was penned, but many times David’s life was in jeopardy (cf. 1 Sam 23:24-28).

*How did David describe his relationship with God? (vv. 1-2)*

God was his refuge, whom he trusted and hoped in for protection. He called God both “LORD” (Hebrew: *Yahweh*) and “Lord” (Hebrew: *Adonai*); that is, God was the great “I am” (*Yahweh*), and God was his master and king (*Adonai*). Also, the Lord was the only “good thing” in David’s life (cf. Psalm 73:25-28).

*What contrast is given in verses 3 and 4?*

David takes delight in fellow believers (saints or holy ones), and speaks highly of them. But he despises the practices of those who don’t believe (who follow other gods); he will not speak of them or honour them, or their gods. As a Christian, we are to despise evil practices too, but we are to love our enemies (Matt 5:43-44).

*How highly do you view fellow believers? Are you like David? (cf. John 13:34; 1 John 4:20-21)*

David calls fellow believers “majestic” or “glorious” ones – the same word he uses when speaking of the Lord in Psalm 8:1 and 8:9. He doesn’t just “put up” with them or try to get along with them – he values and treasures them, because they belong to the Lord; they are the Lord’s children. How much more we are to do the same, especially for us who are in Christ.

### **The Psalmist’s Delight (vv. 5-6)**

*What does David consider to be his greatest inheritance and treasure? (v. 5)*

The “promised land” was often spoken of as Israel’s inheritance (Deut 3:28). But for David, his inheritance and treasure was the Lord; not the land or anything else. His focus was on the Giver, not the gifts. *What do you treasure most? The Lord and your relationship with Him, or what you get from Him?*

*How does David speak of the Lord’s dealings with Him? (vv. 5b-6)*

David testifies of the Lord’s goodness and kindness in his life, despite his current situation. He uses the language of Israel’s physical inheritance (lots, lines, portions) to describe God’s presence and blessings to him.

*In Christ, God has dealt with us with such grace and generosity. What do we learn in Eph 1:3-12?*

We have been blessed beyond measure, because of God’s grace to us in Christ. We have an incredible inheritance and hope (cf. 1 Pet 1:3-5), to the praise of His glory and grace.

### **The Psalmist’s Confidence and Hope (vv. 7-11)**

*What does David praise the Lord for? (v. 7)*

In his time of crisis, David praises the Lord for His counsel and guidance. David didn’t depend on his own understanding, but on the Lord’s guidance (cf. Prov 3:5-6), and now he praises God for it.

*What gives David confidence to face his current crisis? (v. 8)*

David knows he doesn’t face this crisis alone – the Lord is right there by his side. He will not be shaken, because he knows the Lord is with him, and will direct him (cf. Psa 62:1-2).

*What is David able to do now as a result of his confidence in the Lord? (v. 9)*

His trust and confidence in the Lord enable him to be glad and rejoice, even in the face of possible death.

*What is David’s confidence in the Lord, even if he should die? (vv. 10-11)*

David knew God would not abandon him to Sheol (the place of the dead), but bring him into new life (“the path of life”), where he will enjoy God’s presence and pleasures forever. Although all go to Sheol, David knew that those who trust in the Lord will not remain there, but be resurrected one day (cf. Job 19:25-26).

*Who fulfilled, and made possible, what David hoped for in vv. 10 - 11 of this psalm? (Acts 2:25-32)*

God’s Son, Jesus, completely fulfilled these verses. Though He died, his flesh did not suffer decay, but His body was raised up by God on the third day, and He now lives forever more.

*Because of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, what hope do we have in the face of death?*

*(John 11:25-26; 1 Thess 4:13-18, 1 Cor 15:51-57)*

If we trust in Jesus, then we will not be abandoned in Sheol (Hades). Instead, at death, we shall be in the presence of the Lord (2 Cor 5:8), and on the Last Day, the Lord will also raise up our earthly bodies as well.

**Summary: Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection believers have nothing to fear; in life or in death.**

## **Psalm 19**

**Aim:** To show that God’s glory is revealed in Creation and His Word, and that we should praise God.

**Read Psalm 19**      *What are your initial thoughts on this psalm? [Discuss]*

### **The Heaven’s Declare God’s Glory (vv. 1-6)**

*In what way do the Heaven’s declare God’s glory? (vv 1-2)*

The vastness and beauty of the heavens, stars and planets speak of our great Creator and testify to His glory, His mighty power and His divine nature. There is a constant and joyful stream of praise from Creation, pouring forth to testify and reveal our great God. (cf. also Rom 1:20, Isa 40:25-26)

*Verse 3 literally says “There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard.” What does that mean? And what does verse 4 mean: “their line/voice has gone out to the ends of the earth”?*

Although there is no audible word to the human ear, Creation is proclaiming the praises of its Creator, to all people groups, no matter what language they speak in. All are able to take in Creation’s declaration of the Creator, if we would stop, look up and observe. *What things in Creation have spoken to you about the Lord?*

*Why does the psalmist now choose to speak of the sun in vv. 4b-6?*

For us here on earth, the sun is the most important Creation in the Heavens. Without the sun, there would be no life on earth. The sun itself displays God’s faithfulness, love and care for us. Despite its importance, the psalmist speaks of the sun rejoicing and glorying in the One who created it.

### **The Word Declares God’s Character (vv. 7-11)**

*How highly does the psalmist view the law or instruction of the Lord?*

The sun is essential for physical life and nothing is hidden from its reach (v.6), but the law or instruction of the Lord is essential for all of one’s life – especially for spiritual life (Psa 1:1-3).

*Just as the heavens declare the glory of God, what does the law reveal about God?*

Because God Himself gave us His law (instruction), it reveals to us the very nature of God. What God says and does always reflects who He is.

*What qualities of God’s Word (and thus God’s character) does the psalmist speak of in vv.7-9?*

- Perfect (v.7): God’s Word is perfect and complete - nothing is better (Matt 5:48).
- Sure (v.7): His Word is sure and completely trustworthy and dependable.
- Right (v.8): Everything God says (and does) is right and without error.
- Pure (v.8): His commandments are morally excellent and without sin.
- Clean (v.9): To take God and His word seriously (to fear Him) is clean and un-polluting (Rom 12:2)
- True (v.9): God’s judgments in His word are true and just; there is no injustice in Him (Rev 19: 1-2)

*As we respond to what God reveals through His Word, what does God do for us through that Word?*

The effect of God’s law on those who respond to the Lord includes:

- Restoring the soul: He gives life and rest to our souls (Psa 23:3, Matt 4:4) and restores us to Himself.
- Giving wisdom to the simple: He helps us to be wise and avoid foolishness (James 1:5)
- Rejoicing the heart: He gives us an inner joy as we meditate on His Word and walk with Him.
- Enlightening the eyes: He reveals Himself and the truth about life most clearly through His Word.
- Revering the Lord and enduring forever: He teaches us to revere and fear Him.

*What is the psalmist’s attitude towards God’s law/instruction (vv.10-11)?*

God’s law is more desirable and valuable than any treasure that this world could offer. The psalmist finds great delight in God’s law (Psa 119:47-48) and through it he sees the Lord even more clearly. God’s Word also helps to warn him of dangers and direct his footsteps in the right paths (Psa 119:9, 119:105).

### **Our Response to God’s Glory and His Word (vv. 12-14)**

*What effect does God’s law have on the psalmist (vv.12-13)?*

In light of God’s glory and beauty, the psalmist becomes more aware of his own heart and the errors or sins which can so easily take over his life. He calls out to the Lord to be merciful and forgive him.

*What is the prayer of the Psalmist’s heart in v. 14?*

The psalmist desires that the words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart are acceptable and right in the sight of God. Just as creation declares God’s praise, so the psalmist wants to declare it in his life too. (cf. the prayer of the psalmist in Psa 139:23-24)

**Summary:      Creation and the Word of God declare His glory and nature – our lives should too.**

## **Psalm 22**

**Aim:** Firstly: to encourage us to trust in the Lord even in the midst of suffering; and  
Secondly: to comprehend the depths of Christ’s sufferings for us.

### **Introduction**

David faced many difficult times in his life, especially when Saul and Absalom pursued him and desired to take his life. At one level, the psalm appears to speak of David’s experience, but it is undoubtedly fulfilled completely in Christ. We will never comprehend its depth and richness apart from Christ.

### **The speaker’s anguish and his plea: (Psalm 22:1-21)**

*What is the speaker’s great anguish and concern of his heart? (vv. 1-2)*

The speaker, in the midst of great agony and conflict, feels that God has deserted him and left him at the hands of his enemies. He cries out, but God doesn’t answer. *In what way are these verses fulfilled in Christ? (Matt 27:46). Why did Jesus feel like this?*

*From vv. 3-5, what makes this anguish even more painful?*

In past days, those who trusted in God were not disappointed – He rescued them when they called on Him for help. But where is God now? It feels like God has abandoned him. *Discuss how this was true of Jesus.*

*What are those around the speaker also doing? (vv. 6-8)*

They despise him and speak maliciously (“separate with the lip”), sneering and taunting him. They seek to shake His confidence in God and drive him to utter despair. The way they treat him is less than human - like a worm for which no-one cares. *Discuss its fulfilment in Jesus - Matt 27:39-43, Isa 53:3.*

*What is the speaker’s plea in vv. 9-11?*

He expresses his total dependence on God, even from his mother’s womb. Now in great suffering and despair for his life, he pleads for God to draw near and not stand afar – for he has no-one but the Lord.

*What trouble confronts the speaker and how is this seen in Jesus’ suffering (vv. 12-18)?*

- He is oppressed by those stronger than he, ready to tear him apart like a lion devouring its prey (vv.12-13).
- He has great anguish within (vv.14-15). He is utterly spent (“poured out”), completely powerless, and his energy and life almost completely drained out. Death is near. *(cf Matt 26:36-38, John 19:28)*
- Those who seek to destroy him have surrounded him like a pack of wild dogs and pierce his hands and his feet (v.16). *(Cf. John 19:37)*
- He is ostracised and treated as already dead and without hope, dividing his clothing among themselves (vv.17-18). *(Cf. John 19:23-24)*

*What does the speaker do again in vv19-21?*

He continues to look to the Lord and cry out to Him for deliverance from those seeking to destroy him.

### **God’s answer and praise to God: (Psalm 22:22-31)**

*Why does the speaker now turn to praising God in these verses?*

It appears that God has now answered his cry for help – the last part of v.21 literally reads, “From the horns of the wild oxen, you have answered me”. The Lord has heard his cry (v.24). *How do we see this fulfilled in Jesus? (cf. Heb 5:7). Although Jesus suffered death, He was ultimately raised to life (cf. Acts 2:22-24).*

*What comes about as a result of this mighty deliverance?*

- The Lord’s name and salvation is proclaimed among the people (v.22, v.25).
- Those who hear will glorify the Lord and stand in awe of Him (v.23).
- Those who are afflicted can look to the Lord with confidence that they will be satisfied (vv.24, 26)
- This news will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth, and worship will be given to the Lord because He is the true King and ruler of the nations (vv. 27-29). *How does this speak of Christ? (cf. Rev 11:15)*
- The effect of God’s mighty deliverance will be declared and passed on from generation to generation, and will be remembered forever (vv. 30-31). *(cf. Rev 5:12-13)*

### **Application:**

Even though David wrote this psalm, it becomes clear as we study it, that what he was describing was so much more than some experience he had. By God’s Spirit, he was writing about the suffering and agony of the Son of God (David’s greater son). This psalm is quoted more than any other psalm in all the NT. May we see in Psalm 22 the anguish and suffering for Jesus for our sake, as well as his triumphant victory.

**Summary: What a description we have here of Christ’s death in Psalm 22! May we love Him more.**

## **Psalm 23**

**Aim:** To show that our God is a wonderful shepherd to His people.

### **Read Psalm 23**

*This psalm is regularly read at funerals and has been of great comfort to many Christians during times of grief. Has this psalm been of comfort to you? Why?*

### **The Shepherd’s provision (vv.1-3)**

*David grew up as a shepherd boy and became the great shepherd king of Israel (Psa 78:70-72).*

*Though David was a shepherd, how does He describe the Lord? Why? (v.1)*

David describes the Lord as his “shepherd”. That’s because David knew of the Lord’s leading and guiding in his life, and of His care and protection, which is akin to what a shepherd does for his sheep; ie, the primary duty of a middle-eastern shepherd was to lead his sheep so that they would not wander aimlessly, to provide and care for their needs, and to protect them from predators and danger, and even from themselves.

*What does David affirm in the second half of v.1, and what does this mean?*

With the Lord as his shepherd, David lacked nothing. The Lord provided and fulfilled all of his needs (Phil 4:19) so that he was satisfied and utterly content and didn’t crave or desire any other thing (cf. John 7:37-38).

*In what way did David experience the Lord’s care and provision (v.2)?*

David pictured himself like a sheep that is totally dependent on his shepherd to lead him to food and water in an arid environment, and to provide rest and protection from dangers. David testified of the Lord’s goodness.

- The Lord led David to “green pastures” and quiet waters so that he was continually nourished and his thirst satisfied; he did not need to go off and satisfy his hunger or thirst elsewhere. (cf. John 4:13-14)
- David found refreshment and rest under the care and watchful eye of his shepherd; he lay down without fear (Psalm 3:5-6) and was led beside quiet and peaceful waters (ie, he enjoyed peace - Phil 4:7).

*What else did David experience in v.3?*

- The Lord “restores my soul” – David experienced the Lord’s restoration, not just physically (eg Psa 3:1-4), but also spiritually through the Lord’s forgiveness and fellowship. Even when David wandered away, the Lord drew him back and restored him (Psa 51:10-12, Psa 32:1-5).
- The Lord guided him in paths of righteousness - rather than leaving him to wander aimlessly like a sheep without a shepherd, the Lord constantly guided David in his daily life (Exod 15:13).

### **The Shepherd’s protection and presence (vv4-6)**

*What confidence did David express in the Lord’s protection and care (v.4)?*

Even when the shadow of death encroached, or some terrible enemy approached, or some horrific trial came, he feared no evil because He knew that the Lord Almighty was with him (Isa 43:1, Heb 13:5-6, 1 John 4:4).

*What comforted David according to the second half of v.4?*

The Lord’s rod and staff comforted him. Metaphorically, this speaks of the great Shepherd’s power and might. The Lord can smash to pieces any enemy and can deliver us from any situation. No one can resist Him or overpower Him. What a great Shepherd we have who keeps us; even from the evil one (1 John 5:18).

*In the midst of trials, and even at the point of death, what did David experience from the Lord? (v.5)*

He experienced the Lord’s overflowing goodness. He described it in the sense of being at a banquet, with an overflowing cup, and having one’s head anointed with oil. Metaphorically, the Lord causes His people to enjoy His rich blessings. He pours into their lives His love, joy and peace. Their soul is well satisfied, and those about cannot help but see that the Lord’s anointing and blessing rest on them.

*Though David endured many trials in his life, what two things was he certain of? (v.6)*

- That the Lord’s goodness and mercy would be upon him and surround him every day of his life
- That one day he would dwell in the Lord’s presence (the Lord’s heavenly home) forever and ever

*Are we certain of these two things? If the Lord is our shepherd, then we can be.*

### **Jesus the Good Shepherd**

*In the New Testament, we are introduced to the wonderful truth that Jesus, like the Father, is our shepherd, if we have put our trust in Him. What do we learn from John 10:11-18; 1 Pet 2:25, 5:4; Rev 7:17? Jesus is the good shepherd who lay down His life for us; He’s the shepherd and guardian of our souls; He’s coming back for us; and in glory will eternally shepherd us. The Father has appointed Him to be our shepherd.*

**Summary: The Lord is our most wonderful shepherd, if we have turned to Him and put our trust in Him. His love and mercy will be upon us every day, and He will bring us to glory one day.**

## **Psalm 24**

**Aim:** To show who the Lord is, who can come into His presence, and how we should receive Him.

### **Read Psalm 24**

Note: This psalm was probably composed when the ark of the covenant entered Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-15).

#### **The Lord is Creator (vv.1-2)**

*What does the psalmist seek to do in the opening of this psalm?*

He seeks to show how the Lord is so great and majestic, so that we may have a right and high view of Him.

*What specifically do we learn about the Lord in verses 1 and 2?*

It was the Lord who created the earth; He founded it and established it. This shows us how powerful and how awesome God is (cf. Psa 104:24). Also, because He is Creator, all things including every person, belong to the Lord, for He has made us all. We are owned by Him, and are answerable to Him.

*What attitude should we have toward the Lord our Creator? (cf. Rev 4:11)*

We should be filled with praise and worship of Him for He alone created everything; including us.

#### **Who may approach the Lord? (vv.3-6)**

*In verse 3 what important question is asked?*

The psalmist asks who may approach this great Creator God. This question needs to be asked because of how the Lord is so holy and majestic. We should not expect to just enter into His presence automatically.

*Who then can enter into the Lord's presence? (v.4)*

Only those who are pure and without sin can enter the Lord's presence. This includes having a pure heart; that is, a heart free from sinful thoughts and attitudes and deception. Jesus reiterated this in Matt 5:8.

*We have all sinned (Rom 3:23) and are disqualified from entering God's presence, but through God's grace, we are still able to enter. How is this possible?*

We may enter the Lord's presence if we have been made clean. For Old Testament believers, this was through faith and the offering of sacrifices. For us, it is through faith in Jesus, and being washed clean of our sins through His shed blood (cf. the powerful picture God gave us the moment Jesus died - Matt 27:50-51).

*For those who have been cleansed and who can enter the Lord's presence, what do they receive? (v.5)*

They receive from the Lord a blessing (His favour) as well as righteousness (which is, having a right standing before the Lord). Note that righteousness is something we receive from the Lord as a gift (cf. Gen 15:6); it cannot be earned by good works, for no one can meet God's standard. It is granted by faith.

*What characterises those who have been cleansed and who can enter the Lord's presence? (v.6)*

They seek the Lord and long to see His face (cf. Jer 29:13; Phil 3:8-15). *Does this characterise our lives?*

#### **The Lord entering His sanctuary (vv.7-10)**

*Assuming this psalm was composed when the ark of the covenant entered Jerusalem, what do we learn in vv. 7-10?*

The psalmist was delighted for the Lord (symbolised by the ark of the covenant) entering Jerusalem. He was conscious of who the Lord is, the Creator and King of glory, and that it was a great honour for the King to come and dwell with them.

*Because it was such an honour, what does the psalmist make sure of? (vv.7,9)*

He wants to make sure that there's nothing to hinder the King from entering Jerusalem (“lift up the gates”).

*How was the Lord to be received?*

He was to be received as the King of glory; the One who has the right to rule and reign over us.

*These verses (vv.7-10) also allude to another great event. What is that? (Acts 2:32-35)*

These verses point to the ascension of Jesus. Heaven's gates were opened wide for the One who alone could ascend to “the hill of the Lord” because he had clean hands and a pure heart. After His sacrifice on the cross to atone for our sins, He rose and sat at the right hand of the Father as King (cf. Dan 7:13-14; Phil 2:9-11).

*In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus desires to not enter a city, but what? (John 1:10-13)*

He desires to enter into our heart and being, to save us and to make us a child of God.

*What should our response be to the Lord's desire to come into our heart? (cf. Rev 3:20)*

We should swing our heart's door open. In the words of Psa 24 “lift up your heads, O gates”. We should long for Him to dwell in us in order to save us; and for Him to rule us – for He is the great Saviour King.

**Summary: The Lord our Creator seeks to dwell with us if we would cleanse ourselves of our sins through Christ's shed blood, and if we would welcome Him as the King.**

## **Psalm 27**

**Aim:** To show that we are to put our confidence in the Lord, rather than to fear the things about.

### **Read Psalm 27**

*This psalm of David has been a real source of encouragement for many Christians. Why? [discuss]*

### **Confidence in the Lord (vv.1-3)**

*With enemies all about, who or what did David not rely upon? Who did he rely upon? (vv.1-3)*

David did not depend on his military prowess (though he was a great warrior), nor on his mighty men.

David’s confidence was in the Lord (cf. Psa 33:16-20). David relied solely upon the Lord.

*How did David see the Lord? What is significant about the words he uses in v.1 about the Lord?*

- The Lord was David’s light – who shone and made the way clear in the darkness and chaos
- The Lord was David’s salvation – who delivered him again and again from his enemies (cf. Psa 18:17)
- The Lord was David’s strength – who helped him endure through every situation (cf. Psa 28:7)

*Others would have called on God for help, but had no success. What was different for David?*

David knew the Lord personally – **my** light, **my** salvation, **my** strength.

*What was the result of David’s reliance upon the Lord? (vv.1-3)*

It caused David not to fear. We live in a world where we have much fear, but if we would put our trust in the Lord and pray to Him, our fears will vaporise, and we will enjoy His perfect peace (cf. Phil 4:6-7). Because of the Lord, we are not to fear any enemy; not even Satan or death (cf. Heb 2:14-15, Rom 8:31-32).

### **Love of communion with the Lord (vv.4-6)**

*Having victory over enemies was not David’s primary desire. Nor was it having God’s blessings and benefits. What was David’s primary desire? (v.4)*

David’s primary desire was knowing the Lord and worshipping Him. This should be the same in our lives too; not seeking the Lord’s benefits and blessings; but the Lord Himself.

*What did David particularly seek in regard to the Lord? (v.4)?*

It wasn’t to carry out religious ritual before the Lord, or to bring his needs to the Lord. Instead, it was to behold and meditate on the glorious character of the Lord, so that he might love and appreciate the Lord so much more. God wants us to have the same heart too. What “beautiful” things do you see in the Lord?

*What blessing comes to those who would seek the Lord first? (vv.5-6)*

As David sought and communed with the Lord, he felt so protected from his enemies and was filled with joy. It’s the same for us. When we commune with the Lord, we feel so at peace and filled with joy, despite what we might be enduring or facing.

### **David’s request of the Lord (vv.7-12)**

*After seeking the Lord first and glorying in His holy character, what did David do next? (vv.7-12)*

David brought his requests to the Lord in prayer. He specifically asked the Lord to answer him (v.7), to not abandon him (v.9), to teach him the Lord’s ways (v.11), and to deliver him from his enemies (v.12).

*What confidence did David have that the Lord would not abandon him? (vv.9-10)*

David knew that others might and had abandoned him (even his father and mother), but that the Lord “will take me up”. Do we have the confidence that though all may forsake us, the Lord will not forsake us (Heb 13:5)? The Lord has promised to always be with us; even to the end (Matt 28:20).

*In David’s prayer request in v.12, what came first? Why?*

Before David asked for deliverance from his enemies, he prayed that the Lord would teach him and lead him in the right way. It was important to David that he live in such a way that the Lord would be glorified (cf. Psa 139:23-24; Matt 5:16). Is this our desire too? More than our self-interests?

### **Conclusion (vv.13-14)**

*After making his request in prayer, what was David confident in seeing? (v.13)*

He was confident that he would see the Lord’s goodness in this life. Let us also rest in the truth that the Lord is good, and He delights to pour out His abundant goodness on us (Psa 36:5-9). May this comfort our soul.

*Until the Lord’s goodness comes, what are we to do when we are undergoing trials? (v.14)*

We are to wait on the Lord. Although we can be impatient and become despondent, let us remind ourselves that the Lord is good and His lovingkindness is everlasting. Therefore, be strong and courageous and wait.

**Summary: The Lord is our light and salvation – seek Him first, depend on Him, and wait for Him.**

**Psalm 42**

**Aim:** To encourage us to seek God, even when we are in a state of despair and struggling with trials.

**Read Psalm 42**

*What is the setting of the psalm? Where do we think the psalmist is? (vv.2b-4, 6)*

We believe he was in exile - away from the land of Israel, and away from the temple (and presence) of God.

*What does it appear he used to be, according to v.4?*

It appears he was a worship leader, perhaps a Levite, who had the joyful task of leading worship.

**Thirsting for God (vv. 1-4)**

*Despite the psalmist's trying situation, being in exile, what was his deepest desire? (vv.1-2a)*

He desired God. Like a deer in a dry land that thirsts for water lest it perishes, he thirsted for God. He sensed that, without God, he would perish spiritually and fall into despair.

*Can we, as Christians, relate to the psalmist being in exile? In what way? (cf. Phil 3:20; Heb 11:13)*

We can relate. We are in exile, away from the full presence of our Lord; away from our true home in heaven.

*In exile, what kind of society did the psalmist live in? (v.3)*

He lived in a society that mocked and taunted him in regards to God's existence and God's care of him.

*Like for the psalmist, consider the society we live in. What do we often experience (John 15:18-19)*

We experience people hating us because we belong to Jesus, and are taunted about God's existence & care.

*Why is the picture of a deer panting for water so apt, both for the psalmist and us?*

We live in a world that is spiritually declining, and that “sucks us dry” of our spiritual vitality. In this fallen world, nothing satisfies, and so we thirst. The question is: “*Like the psalmist, do we thirst and long for God?*”

*Jesus used the metaphor of “thirsting”. Read John 4:13-14, 7:37-38. Who can quench our thirst?*

Only Jesus can quench our spiritual thirst. He alone can give us “living water” – abundant and eternal life.

*In Psa 42:2b, what did the psalmist long for?*

He longed for returning from exile, and being at the temple and in the presence of the Lord.

*What is the New Testament equivalent to Psa 42:2b? (cf. Acts 2:42; Heb 10:24-25)*

We should long for fellowship; being in the presence of God's people to encourage and build each other up.

*We are called to thirst for God in a spiritually dry and weary land. More than that, what do we see through the apostle Paul in Phil 3:7-11?*

We should long to know Christ, and to experience the power of His resurrection and share in His sufferings.

*When we go through trying times, when our soul is troubled, when our heart is sad, what do we do?*

Like the psalmist, we shouldn't just “put up” with how things are, but we should thirst for and desire God.

**Hoping for God (vv. 5-11)**

*In vv.5-6, we see the psalmist honest with himself and honest with God. What state was he in?*

He was in despair, he was disturbed (v.5, v.6, v.11).

*In this low state, what did the psalmist do? (v.5)*

He instructed his soul to hope in God. He spoke to his own soul to not give up, but to look to the Lord.

*Not only did he instruct his soul to hope in God, but what else did he do? (v.6)*

He prayed to God: “O my God”. He poured out his heart to God, even his feelings of despair & abandonment.

*In v.6b, v.8 and v.4 there was one more thing he did. What was that?*

He reminded himself of God's greatness and goodness; he reminded himself of the good times (v.4).

*From vv.5-8 what can we learn for ourselves when dealing with despair and distress?*

We need to instruct our soul to hope in God, to pray, and to remember God's goodness and greatness.

*In v.7 and v.9 we see something else. How did the psalmist feel about God?*

The Psalmist felt that God had afflicted him – like as if he had been dumped by wave after wave of difficult circumstances. He also felt that God had forgotten him

*When we have all sorts of thoughts and feelings, what do we need to do?*

We need to remind ourselves of God's character and His promises eg, He will never forsake us (Heb 13:5b-6).

*In v.8 we see hope in the psalmist, despite his despair. What's the basis for this?*

God still ruled, and He is faithful and true to His character; He will shower us with lovingkindness and joy.

*V.5 and v.11 are almost the same. What conclusion does the psalmist leave us with?*

Hope in God! He is good (cf. Psa 27:13) and His lovingkindness endures forever (Psa 103:17-18).

**Summary:** In our challenging world, thirst for God – desire Him, and hope in God – don't despair.



## **Psalm 32**

**Aim:** To show that the godly person confesses their sin and enjoys the blessing of God’s forgiveness.

### **Read Psalm 32**

*What blessing does David share in this psalm? What’s your greatest blessing as a believer? [discuss]*

### **The blessedness of being forgiven (vv.1-2)**

*Both Psalm 1 & 32 begin with the phrase about the blessed person. What is needed to be blessed?*

To be blessed we must meditate on God’s Word (Psalm 1), and we must confess our sins to the Lord (Psalm 32). God blesses the life of the one who does these things; He leads them in His ways, and when they sin, He graciously forgives them. Both are tremendous blessings in the life of the believer. Do you experience these?

*The basis of this psalm is how David had sinned against the Lord. What three particular words does David use to describe his disobedience? What do they mean? (cf. also Psalm 51:1-2)*

*Transgression, sin, and iniquity* are the words used. *Transgression* means doing something prohibitive by “cutting across” and being rebellious; *sin* means missing the mark (falling short); and *iniquity* means doing something perverted that causes corruption. All three words help us understand what disobedience really is.

*What three words does David use to describe what God does with our sins when we confess them?*

God *forgives* our sin – He takes them far away from us sin (cf. Psa 103:12). God *covers* our sin – this means that they are buried out of sight as they have been fully atoned for (cf. Mic 7:19); God does *not impute* sin to us – this means we are pardoned and have no record against our name; they are blotted out (cf. Psa 51:9).

*Why could David be forgiven before our holy God? Why can we be?*

David’s forgiveness from the Lord was not because of the offering of OT sacrifices. Both David and us can only be forgiven because of Christ dying on the cross for our sins and shedding His blood (cf. Heb 10:4-10).

### **David’s Testimony (vv.3-5)**

*How does David describe what happened to him when he did not confess his sin; “kept silent”? (v.3)*

David speaks of suffering physically and psychologically. Physically, he was wasting away and becoming weak, and psychologically, he was groaning from his guilt and shame. Does sin affect you like this? It should!

*Who does David attribute his suffering to? (v.4)*

David knew it was God who was making him suffer for his sin. God’s hand was constantly on him (“day and night”), so that David might confess his sin to Him. This is part of the Lord’s loving discipline (Heb 12:4-6).

*A “selah” marks the end of verse 4. Why is there? What does it mean?*

It’s a musical pause, for us to stop and consider what has been sung (or read). We are encouraged to pause and reflect on what happens when we do not confess our sins to the Lord.

*The moment David confessed his sin, what happened? (v.5)*

David immediately experienced forgiveness. It wasn’t delayed, or held back until David made restitution for his sin. Instead, after acknowledging and confessing his sin, he was instantly forgiven. Such is the grace of God.

### **David’s Appeal and God’s Appeal (vv.6-9)**

*What does David urge believers in the Lord to do in vv.6-7?*

He urges us to seek the Lord and be quick to acknowledge and confess our sins to the Lord. The Lord is gracious and will forgive, if only we would not hide our sins (cf. Isa 55:6-7; 1 John 1:9). Not only that, once we have confessed our sins and made ourselves right with God, then we will know His blessing. This includes having the Lord protect us and keep us when we are going through difficult times.

*What does the Lord promise to those who seek Him and confess their sins to Him? (v.8)*

The Lord promises to personally help us walk in His ways. Not only will the Lord forgive us of our sins, but He desires to help us not sin. Such is the heart of our shepherd (cf. Psa 23:3). What a blessing!

*What does the Lord Himself urge us to do in v.9?*

We are not to be stubborn and resistant like a horse or mule, who won’t obey their rider unless they have bits of metal in their mouth to keep them in check. God wants us to willingly obey and yield to Him.

### **David’s Closing Words (vv.10-11)**

*What conclusion does David come to at the end of the psalm in vv.10-11?*

When we trust in the Lord (which is characterised by seeking to live a godly life, and confessing our sins), then we will enjoy God’s lovingkindness, rather than sorrow, and be filled with joy (cf. John 15:10-11).

**Summary: God graciously blesses all those who confess their sins, and He grants them forgiveness.**