

April 19

Psalm 5-7, 10-11

Hey everybody, today is April 19 and this is the next edition of Project 4:4 where we're entering into some brand new turf. This is the Psalms and instead of commenting on the exact Psalms that you read today - we're going to have enough Psalms along the way to comment on - I thought it would be helpful to give you an overview of the Psalms in general.

Now the key authors of the Psalms are varied and they include David, Solomon, a guy named Korah - who was apparently a director of music under David - and the sons of Korah. There is even one that was written by Moses and there are 34 Psalms that are by unknown authors. Now the Psalms are like the poetic journal entries of a person's soul. It's a window into the hearts of the people of God - mostly from David's time. It contains all kinds of human emotion expressed towards God. Some of them become songs, but some of them you would never want to sing when you go into church, and as you read through them, you'll realize exactly why that is.

But in all of them, we learn a few things about worship - about relating to God in our very soul, in our heart of hearts. Worship is a seven-day pursuit. It goes through every kind of emotion. It's not a one-day program. It's an ongoing lifestyle and not a sporadic liturgy. It's an overflow - not an outer show - and it's authentic - not automated.

Now no one understood this better than the Jews. They knew what it was to worship as a lifestyle. In fact, they've got a whole book describing their worship journeys. It's the book of Psalms. It's the history of their life of worship. It's full of personal worship and corporate worship. It's about how they celebrated God in an authentic way, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In Psalms, you have a poetic and musical form. The history of the Hebrew people - from Moses to David and beyond - much of the feeling behind the events is included in these journalings.

You see, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings - as well as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles contain the events - Psalms contains the emotions. That's why many of our Psalms have been integrated into the events of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles. But when you go through the Psalms themselves - the ones that have not been placed in an historical context - what you find is that these Psalms are a peak into how the Jewish people lived 24 hours a day, seven days a week - such as how they responded to him in times of tragedy in Psalm 88 and 91. How they praised him in times of victory - Psalm 92 and 66. How they conversed with him in times of confusion and anger - Psalm 73 and 58. How they cared for each other in times of need - Psalm 23, 37, 42. How they repented and confessed in times of disobedience - Psalm 32 and 51. How they found God in times of loneliness - Psalm 71 and 62. And how they felt about the law of God - Psalm 119.

In a word, it's a snapshot into the worship life of the Jewish people - not only their worship services, assemblies and congregational events, but their whole history

and background is seen through the emotion of poetry and praise. In fact, did you know that the Psalms chronicle the Hebrews life so much that it's actually structured around the first five books of the Old Testament – what we know as the Pentateuch?

Let me show you what I mean. Psalms has five different sections or five books Psalms:

Book one – Psalm 1-41 – that corresponds with Genesis - the idea of man with God.

Book two – Psalm 42-72 – corresponds with Exodus – slavery, bondage and freedom.

Book three – Psalms 73-89 corresponds to Leviticus – tabernacle worship.

Book four – Psalms 90-106 corresponds to Numbers and the wanderings of the people of God.

Book five – Psalms 107-150 corresponds to Deuteronomy – which are themes of deliverance and victory.

Now the Daily Bible in Chronological Order does not put these all together in the same order as the Bible – the Bible that is put together by literary genre, but when you go back to that Bible, it is interesting to see the correlations in each of these five books of Psalms. Furthermore, there are many different types of Psalms even within these five internal groupings. You'll see these grouped together much more commonly in your daily Bible readings. There're things like pilgrim Psalms – Psalms 120 – 134 - or Psalms of ascent. You'll find messianic Psalms that talk about Jesus and his coming long before Jesus was there – Psalms 22, 109, 110. There are Psalms that are to be given and utilized during weddings, which might be interesting if any of you are planning a wedding.

My hope is that as you read the Psalms, you'll see that there are Psalms for every occasion. There are celebration Psalms, Psalms of mourning, Psalms to exalt God and even what are known as imprecatory Psalms. Those are the ones that begin like cursing your enemies – like crush their skulls and dash their babies against the rocks! Even if their motives and conclusions were unrighteous – it still came to God in his poetic journal we call the Psalms. The amazing thing is that all of these Psalms make it into the Bible. God considers them appropriate for interacting with him.

So what's the key lesson in all of this? Take your junk to God. Take your good times, take your bad times, take your pain and your problems - bring everything to God. He can handle your tears. He can handle your anger. He can handle your pain and your joy. He's a big God with big shoulders. He'll be there for you. Now he won't always do what you say, and He won't always consider your words or your actions to be justified. I don't think He did when He listened to the Psalmist write

these out the first time either. But He will love you and He accepts you and He will change your perspective if you bring it to Him.

So this is Mark Ashton encouraging you to bring your worship and tragedy alike to God. Do it like the Psalmist did!