

VCEFC Daily Devotional July 3 – July 9, 2006

July 3 Inner Transformation.

Psalm 57

*“My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music...I will sing of you among the peoples, for great is your love, reaching to the heavens, your faithfulness reaches to the skies.” 57: 7, 9-10*

This psalm expresses confidence in the Lord during adversity. It begins with lament, but ends in thanksgiving. Because of his trust in the justice, love and protection of the Lord, the psalmist remains clam even when he is surrounded by his enemies. He experiences inner transformation of the heart (a steadfast heart) when he witnesses the mighty acts of the Lord delivering him from the wicked, who is entrapped in his own scheming. His gratitude is so great that he not only sings songs of praise and makes a joyful noise on the instruments, but also invites all the nations to join him praising and giving thanks to the Lord.

Pay attention to the mighty acts of God, and you will experience inner transformation of the heart.

July 4 Surely there is a God who is the righteous Judge.

Psalm 58

*“The righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked. Then men will say, “Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.””*

The psalmist charges the earthly system of justice with corruption and commits his case to the Lord's justice. The malpractice of the earthly rulers is exposed. Their wrongs in the hearts lead to the violence of the hands. The inner perversion belongs with humanity infecting the unborn embryo and the new-born child. It is a deadly poison, and it is also intractable, deaf to all appeals or pressures. The psalmist pleads for a sentence which shall bring about the complete removal of such rulers from the earth. When evil is visibly crushed and removed, the righteous, i.e. the redeemed people of God, will rejoice in profound satisfaction, and all men should openly acknowledge the worth of righteousness and confess the inescapable judgment of the Lord.

July 5 True security

Psalm 59

*“But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. O my strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God.” 59: 16-17*

Although married to Saul's daughter, David was dogged by men commissioned by Saul to kill him (1 Samuel 19:1, 9-18). His enemies are like scavenger-dogs, who want to make the most of night's darkness. However, David contrasts his enemies' powerlessness against God with his own power in God, Who gives him strength in his own person and the surrounding protection of a fortress. His confidence of divine empowering is entirely related to the character of this personally-known God, who comes to meet David in his need clothed in His steadfast love. Since the Lord's love is new every morning to those He loves, the servant of God can renew his song in the morning.

So the noise of evil “at evening”, a metaphor of affliction, will be exchanged for the song of the redeemed in the morning, a symbol for deliverance. While the psalmist sees the desire of his foes go unsatisfied, his own joy and confidence in God are intensified.

July 6 Unkept promise

Psalm 60

*“Save us and help us with your right hand, that those you love may be delivered... Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. With God we will gain the victory and he will trample down our enemies.” 5, 11-12.*

This psalm conveys the sense of national humiliation resulting from a wholly unforeseen military reverse. In a typical biblical way, the psalmist regards God as responsible for every happening. Secondary causes, physical, strategical, cultural, etc. were not necessarily held to be significant. This unexpected military reverse had struck a tremendous blow at the people’s morale. Divine action had led to defeat. It seemed that God’s promises were unfulfilled. What is the reaction to an unkept divine promise? Turn the promise into prayer and plead it before God. Man cannot fulfill the promises of God; if God does not keep them, they fall to the ground. All depends on God, and all is summed up in the single plea of faith: “ Save us and help us.”

July 7 Prayer from a fainting heart

Psalm 61

There must be many moments in the life of David- as of any other king or leader, then and now- when in the loneliness of his office he felt himself at the end of his rope, urgently needed a new sense of security, and longed to get away from it all. Being overwhelmed by a sense of distance from God, the psalmist finds himself crying from the end of the earth to God. He craves for a realization of security unattainable by his own efforts. He pleads for the hospitality extended to a guest or a refugee, and the motherly love of a bird, fluffing out her wings to house her young. The psalmist’s confidence begins to grow as he recalls God’s past acts of giving him the charge over the inheritance of the Lord on his day of coronation, on which he made vows to God. Will not the Lord who gave the responsibility give also the grace to bear it? Yes, God’s grace is sufficient. It is in prayer we find our resource, and in our relationship with God we find our true joy.

July 8 Quiet and poised, waiting

Psalm 62

*“God, the one and only- I’ll wait as long as He says. Everything I need comes from Him, so why not? He is solid rock under my feet, breathing room for my soul...” 62:1-2*

In Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, there is a turbulent scene in which a whaleboat scuds across a frothing ocean in pursuit of the great, white whale, Moby Dick. The sailors are laboring fiercely, every muscle taut, all attention and energy concentrated on the task. The cosmic conflict between good and evil is joined; chaotic sea and demonic sea monster versus the morally outraged man, Captain Ahab. In this boat, however, there is one man who does nothing. He doesn’t hold an oar; he doesn’t perspire, he doesn’t shout. He is languid in the crash and the cursing. This man is the harpooner, quiet and poised, waiting. And then this sentence: “To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooners of this world must start to their feet out of idleness, and not out of toil.”

Melville's sentence is a text to set alongside the psalmist's "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10), and alongside Isaiah's "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." (Isa. 30:15)

July 9 Joy in the wilderness

Psalm 63

*"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you, my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory, because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you." 63: 1-3*

This psalm is originated in David's experiences in the wilderness of Judah. The essential value of the poem lies in its expression of continual fellowship with God even though the psalmist is cut off from the outward and visible means of grace, and surrounded by discomforts and perils. Humanly speaking, David's experiences were of deprivation and insecurity, but his experience of God is more than compensating. God is his sufficient sustenance and his shelter. It was in the responsive acts of thinking and meditating and clinging that this spiritual abundance became his. Blessed are those who acknowledge and obey the Lord, for they shall rejoice because of God's care and goodness!