

VCEFC Daily Devotional

May 29 From Suffering to Praise

Psalm 22

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me? so far from the words of my groaning?...I am poured out like water; and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast.”

This psalm helps us meditate the suffering of Jesus on the cross. He has identified with the human condition, and suffered in his humanity, being rejected by God and man. He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. He was pierced for our transgressions and was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed. Through his suffering the people from all nations may worship the Lord and submit to his kingdom from generation to generation, because the middle wall of partition has been removed. This psalm moves from suffering to worship, praise and joy, because crucifixion produced resurrection. It celebrates how the worst that men could do has become the occasion for the unbelievable best that God can do.

May 30 God’s strength and grace for all ages

Psalm 23

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.”

This is one of the most charming and beloved of the Psalms. The universal appeal of this psalm lies in the comfort it gives to those who have experienced the most difficult period of life. To walk through the valley of the shadow of death is a fearful journey. However, prayer brings our fear into focus and helps us to face it. And more importantly, it affirms God’s presence in it. The rod and the staff symbolize God’s protection and guidance. Life in the presence of God is good and worth living.

May 31 Fellowship with God

Psalm 24

“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. “

God is the Creator, the Holy One and the glorious King. Who is acceptable to the Creator-Holy King? How may we prepare ourselves for fellowship with Him? Since God desires to rule over and to bless the people who open themselves to Him by living clean, pure lives in His presence, those who want to have fellowship with God not only have to prepare themselves ceremonially, but also spiritually by sanctifying their lives before God. Purity of hands and hearts is the condition of living before God in accordance to His instructions and His desires. Outward appearance of holiness is not sufficient, because the “clean hands” are expressive of “clean hearts”. In addition to loyalty to the Lord in heart and life, God expects a singleness of devotion. If we do not honor Him as the Lord of ALL, He is not our Lord at all. “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and” Matthew 6:24. Who are you serving today?

June 1 Show me, teach me, guide me...

Psalm 25

“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways, according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord.”

Submission is the key to spiritual life. Times of adversity bring us to moments of reflection, when we submit our whole way of life to the scrutiny of God. Our love for God expresses itself in the earnest desire to do God’s will by praying to know “your ways”, “your paths” and “your truth”, and by living a life consistent with God’s expectations and pleasure. It requires a submissive spirit to divine instruction, for which we pray four times, “show me...teach me...guide me....teach me...” However, submission is not to a set of principles or rules but to the Savior-God, for in Him is life. Jesus says, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5: 39-40) True spirituality is an ongoing submissive relationship to the Person Jesus. He is the only focus of our spiritual life.

June 2 A Total Examination

Psalm 26

“Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind, for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth.”

The psalmist casts himself on the Lord with the request that the Lord pay attention to his undeserved suffering. He presents himself completely before the Lord and asks the Lord to give him a total examination, “vindicate me...test me....try me...examine my heart and my mind..” But who can be perfectly innocent under the scrutinizing eye of the Lord? Indeed, the psalmist’s confidence for vindication is not based on the his innocence but rather the fidelity of the Lord, “for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth.” It is because of the unfailing love of the Lord, that the psalmist believes that the Lord has motivated and enabled him to walk with integrity. As Paul declares, “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.”(2 Corinthians 5: 14-15)

June 3 One thing I ask of the Lord

Psalm 27

“One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: the I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.”

If you are allowed to ask God for one thing, what will you ask? What is your heart’s desire? For the psalmist, his deepest desire is to experience more fully the presence of God. His longing for the house of God expresses the intensity of his seeking after God Himself.. He has experienced God’s presence as his light, salvation and stronghold, giving him guidance, rescuing him from his enemies, and protecting him when he seeks refuge. The intimate knowledge of God’s loving and empowering presence casts away all

his fear. He desires to dwell in the temple of God for the rest of his life. In gazing on the Lord's beauty, he submits himself fully to experience the goodness of God. In seeking the Lord, he earnestly look for the words and deeds of the Lord that would satisfy the longing in his heart.

Your greatest desire always reflects the greatest joy you have experienced. If you have truly experienced the joy of the blessed presence of the Lord, you will desire the same thing as the psalmist.

June 4 The Silence of God

Psalm 28

"To you I call, O Lord my Rock; do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who have gone down to the pit..."

Have you ever cried to the Lord in anguish, "Why do you remain silent? Have you heard my prayer?" When your prayer seems to be unanswered, or things do not happen as you pray, you may begin to doubt the promise of Jesus, that "ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you."(Matthew 7: 7)

However, to truly understand the meaning of this promise, we have to pay attention to a bigger promise, that the Father in heaven always insists on giving "good gifts to those who ask Him."(Matthew 7:11) Faith is to trust that God will always give you what is best for you.