

## VCEFC Daily Devotional

June 12 The Fountain of life.

Psalm 36

*“How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.” 36: 7-9*

God’s steadfast love and faithfulness are unspeakably precious. His resources overshadow all people and, like the Garden of Eden, there is no dearth nor drought for the soul who seeks Him and commits to Him. (The word “delights” is from the same root as Eden). He protects, feeds, and satisfies all the desires of His creatures, who exist by the goodness of the heavenly host. The metaphors of “feast” and “drink” denote the abundant blessings of God for His people, both material and spiritual. Only by outflow from the Lord is life itself enjoyed, and only by His illumination do we have the light of truth. Do you want to feast and drink from the fountain of life? Jesus says, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” John 7: 37-38

June 13 It’s unfair, Lord!

Psalm 37

*“Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong, for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture, Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.” 37: 1-6*

Facing the problems of the prosperity of the wicked and the seemingly inequalities of life, the psalmist exhorts his readers to fret not, be not envious, and refrain from anger, but to trust, take delight in, commit, be still, wait, and hope, all in connection with the sovereignty, justice and goodness of the Lord, Who will eventually vindicate the faithful and bestow upon the soul that delights in Him the fulfillment of his heart desires. By setting our hearts upon the Lord and keeping our lives on His path, we will witness the downfall of the wicked, and the eternal blessings of the godly.

June 14 The discipline of God

Psalm 38

*“Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear...I wait for you, O Lord, you will answer, O Lord my God.” 38: 3-4, 15)*

Suffering is a form of God’s discipline in the school of righteousness. The psalmist deeply experiences the righteous wrath of God over his sins, and there is no part of his being that is unaffected. He has come to a breaking point because the consequences of his sin have become totally unbearable. However, instead of running away from God, the psalmist lifts himself up to the Lord with the prayer for relief, compassion and reconciliation, because he trusts in the steadfast love of God, and he knows that the Lord

only disciplines those He loves, as the book of Proverbs teaches us, “My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves as a father the son He delights in.” (Proverbs 3: 11-12) The book of Hebrews also gives us very important insight into God’s discipline, that “God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12: 10-11)

June 15 Each man’s life is but a breath.

Psalm 39

*“Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days, let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro; He bustles about, but only in vain, he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you” 39: 4-7*

The awareness of the brevity and frailty of life brings the psalmist to his knees to plead for divine mercy and guidance. He asks the Lord to show him his life’s end, the number of his days and how fleeting is his life, so that he can gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90: 12). He discovers that his days are as little as a “handbreadth”, which is one of the smallest units of measurement in ancient Israel. It is equivalent to “a couple of inches”, about four fingers thick.(Jeremiah 52:21) Man is of innate fragility, and even in matters of worldly business and the appointment of his own resources he cannot pierce into the future so as to make it suit his wishes. It is only when one turns his eyes to the Lord that he can find hope. There is hope of forgiveness (v. 8), and more importantly, there is hope residing in the divine purpose for human life. (vv. 9-11) One can find the meaning of his life only when he understands God’s call in his live and determines to live it out.

June 16 The heart of worship

Psalm 40

*“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, “Here I am, I have come- it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” 40: 6-8*

The proper response to the wonders God has done in our lives, is worship. However, the heart of worship is not in the ritual of the blood of beasts as such, but in the willing surrender of the worshipper’s life for continual obedience to the will of God. The four offerings here mentioned are detailed in Leviticus 1-4. But while they had a rightful place in divine worship centred in the altar, they were not the sole or primary requirement laid upon the worshipper. Offerings in isolation from the moral and spiritual response of repentance and dedicated obedience were recognized as “vain”, as warned by the prophet Isaiah, “Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations- I cannot bear your evil assemblies.”(Isaiah 1:13) The very thing that God requires of us is “to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”(Deuteronomy 10:12)

June 17 Disloyalty of a close friend.

Psalm 41

*“Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. But you, O Lord, have mercy on me.” 41: 9-10*

David probably wrote this psalm when he experienced the treachery of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15:12, 31) . The experience of disloyalty of a close friend is not uncommon in human life. This is one of the bitterest among all human experiences. Even our Lord Jesus had encountered such painful experience, and He used this psalm to speak of His own betrayed by His disciple, Judas. (John 13:18) How can we find comfort when we suffer at the hands of a close friend (lit. ‘the man of my peace’, bound together in a covenant of loyalty.)? How can we cope with the bitter disappointment caused by our trusted companions? It is by trusting the Lord who reveals His good pleasure in vindicating His own (v. 11), rewards virtue, and brings His beloved into a permanent intimacy with Himself (v. 12). By laying down His life for us, Jesus invites us to be His friends, “You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know His master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”(John 15: 14-16.

June 18 The thirst for God

Psalm 42

*“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God...Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.” 42: 1, 5*

The psalmist expresses the intense and searing sense of want he experiences by the imagery of a timid fallow-deer audibly panting because of extreme thirst. He craves for communion with the living God, the fountain of living water. His intense love and yearning for God is shown by his constant tears over the skepticism of his companions. His soul is further depressed with the memories of his glorious past, when he used to lead the throng of pilgrims in procession to the house of God. It is only by the upwelling of his irrepressible faith that the psalmist calls upon his mournful soul not only to trust in God but actively focus his attention on Him to hope for His deliverance. Turn your eyes upon Jesus, He is the only right focus of the Christian life.