

VCEFC Daily Devotional: June 19-25, 2006

June 19 My joy and my delight.

Psalm 43

*“Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight.” 43: 3-4*

What is your source of joy and delight in the darkness of adversities? For the psalmist, there is no hope apart from the covenant God Who is forever faithful to His promises. The psalmist trusts that he will experience restoration by asking God for His light (the fullness of His redemption, 36:9) and truth (the expression of His covenantal fidelity 40:10). As the Lord guided Israel through the wilderness with the pillar of cloud and smoke to the Promised Land, he too longs for the Lord’s guiding hands to bring him to the holy mountain, the altar of God, where he can worship God and enjoy His fellowship, for God alone is all his satisfaction. The anticipation of unhindered communion with God gives him joy and delight.

June 20 The Sufferings of the Godly.

Psalm 44

*“All this happened to us, though we had not forgotten you or been false to your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from your path.” 44: 17-18*

This psalm is a national lament reflecting defeat in battle. Although it seemed that God had forsaken the people, they still clung close to God with a strong determination to remain faithful. They were loyal to God by keeping His covenant and remaining completely (with hearts and feet) devoted to His way. In refusing to give themselves over to idolatry and to conform to the pagan world, they suffered even more and were like “sheep to be slaughtered.”

Can you remain faithful to God in the midst of unjust sufferings, or even when you have to suffer for God’s sake? Peter affirms that it is commendable before God if we bear up under the pain of unjust suffering because we are conscious of God, and if we suffer for doing good and we endure it (1 Peter 2: 19-20) As Calvin writes, “In order, therefore, that weariness, or dread of the cross, may not root up from our hearts true godliness, let us continually reflect upon this, that it behoves us to drink the cup which God puts into our hands, and that no one can be a Christian who does not dedicate himself to God.”

June 21 Marriage loyalty.

Psalm 45

*“Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father’s house. The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.” 45: 10-11*

This song of a royal marriage was prompted by the ceremony of a Hebrew king marrying a foreign princess. The bride is encouraged to forget her own loyalty to her native land and people, and to fully devote to the bridegroom. Like Abraham, she had left her father’s house, and like Ruth, she had to pledge allegiance to God’s covenant people and foreswear allegiance to her own. The human marriage relationship is an allegory of the covenant relationship between God and His people. This same basic idea is carried over

into the New Testament where the church is described as the Bride of Christ. (2 Cor 11:2, Eph 5:31-32). In order to be loyal to this divine marriage, we are also called to forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead (Philippians 3: 13), because “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”(2 Corinthians 5:17)

June 22 Come, see and be still

Psalm 46

*“Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth.... Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” 46:8-10*

Are you able to see the works of God in your lives? It demands a heart full of gratitude and an attitude of worship, without which our thinking will become futile and our hearts will be darkened (Romans 1: 21), and we will lose sight of God’s marvelous works which can be seen everywhere. Very often, human works and achievements are directing our attention from God, and we busily engage ourselves in all kinds of activities to seek for personal advancement. However, as Eugene Peterson reminds us, “When we are noisy and when we are hurried, we are incapable of intimacy- deep, complex, personal relationships. If God is the living center of redemption, it is essential that we be in touch with and responsive to that personal will. If God has a will for this world and we want to be in on it, we must be still long enough to find out what it is.” (Living the message, p. 36)

June 23 God is in control.

Psalm 47

*“How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth! He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.”47: 2-4*

This psalm is a joyful celebration of the kingship of God, who has come down from heaven in power and great might to deliver His people, and is now returning to His throne. When the psalmist reflects on God’s mighty acts in salvation history, he sees how the Lord has subdued the nations and has chosen the land as their inheritance because of His steadfast love for them. The Lord is not only the exalted King of Israel, but is also the glorious King over all the earth. One day all the nobles and kings will submit to the sovereign rule of the Lord.

In remembering God’s mighty works in our lives, we shall be able to see that God is still in control of everything, and then we can worship, shout for joy, and sing praises to Him

June 24 True security

Psalm 48

*“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord Almighty, in the city of our God: God makes her secure forever. Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.” 48:8-10*

Just as the Lord is highly to be praised because He is the King over all the earth, so is His city worthy of all honor. God has marvelously preserved His city. Even though a league of kings assembled together to besiege the city, yet when they saw its strength they lost heart and turned away in panic. The people of God had witnessed God’s power in

ordering the events of the world and in working out the redemption of His people. Even as they had heard of God's mighty acts in their fathers' days, so had they seen His powerful hand in protecting His city, and making His city secure forever. They are brought together in the common expressions of meditation, praise and rejoicing as their appropriate response to the loving kindness of God.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8: 31) True security is found in God. "Let us remember that a nod alone on the part of God is sufficient to deliver us; and that although our enemies may be ready to fall upon us on every side to overwhelm us, it is in His power, whenever He pleases, to strike them with amazement of spirit, and thus to make their hearts fail in a moment in the very midst of their efforts against us. Let this reflection serve as a bridle to keep our minds from being drawn away, to look in all directions for human aid." (Calvin 2:223)

June 25 Death discloses a man's true worth

Psalm 49

*"A man who has riches without understanding is like the beasts that perish." 49:20*

The only thing that distinguishes a man from a beast is "understanding". If a man has no understanding of himself as man, of his mortality, and of his God, he lives and dies like the beast that perish. Worldly treasures can do him no good, for "the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough- that he shall live on forever and not see decay."(v. 8) Only the life of God's only Son, Jesus Christ, is sufficient enough to pay the heavy price of redemption. Those who receive the gift of salvation by faith will have the privilege of fellowship with God, and the hope of resurrection. The triumph of faith gives no ground to fear what is transitory. Riches, splendor, praise of self, or praise of man makes no difference in the grave. The tragedy of riches is that it protects from the hardness of life, and gives a false sense of security and life.