

VCEFC Daily Devotional

May 15 Why do you bother with us?

Psalm 8

“Why do you bother with us? Why take a second look our way?

Yet we’ve so narrowly missed being gods, bright with Eden’s dawn light. You put us in charge of your handcrafted world, repeated to us your Genesis-charge...”

Praying psalm 8 helps us to joyfully look at God as the good Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of the universe, and to humbly look at ourselves as God appointed governor over His creation. God holds us accountable to Him. By understanding where we are and who we are, we’ll have a right orientation of life.

What is the orientation of your life? Are you aware of the fact that you are accountable to God in everything you do?

“Be happy, young man(and young woman), while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart, and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things ,God will bring you to judgment. Ecclesiastes 11: 9

May 16 Grace and gratitude

Psalm 9

“I’m thanking you, God, from a full heart,

I’m writing the book on your wonders.

I’m whistling, laughing, and jumping for joy; I am singing your song, High God.”

“*Charis* always demands the answer *eucharistia* (Grace always demands the answer of gratitude. Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice an echo. Gratitude follows grace as thunder follows lightning.”(Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics) When we count God’s blessings, our hearts overflow with joy, even in the midst of trial and hardship. Everyday when you wake up and before you go to sleep, find ten reasons to give thanks. This spiritual exercise will strengthen your soul and change your life.

“Be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 4: 16

May 17 Lord, you do see, you do act!

Psalm 10

“But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand...You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.”

Have you ever cried out to God for justice, when you saw the power of evil grew bold, and the wicked cursed, lied, threatened, and convinced that God did not care? Meditate on God’s righteous rule, and your confidence will rise , like the Psalmist, who is able to see that the Lord is king, and he will uproot evil and defend the rights of his people.

By turning the “why”, expressive of our occupation with the problems of everyday life, into a cry for God’s help, we’ll be able to see a new vision and a new direction of life, and to regain the confidence and hope for the future.

May 18 To see the face of God

Psalm 11

“For the Lord is righteous, He loves justice; upright men will see His face”

This psalm must have been written by David when he was hunted down by Saul, “The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea-as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.” (1 Samuel 26: 20) The central message is the persecution of the righteous by the wicked. Whenever the power of evil seems to triumph, the people of God can still find hope because their confidence is in God. The psalm begins with the advice of Psalmist’s friends who despair of evil and tell him to flee. However, the psalmist, out of his confidence grounded in years of walking with the living God, encourages his friends to trust in the Lord who sees both the righteous and wicked. This kind of confidence can withstand trials, temptation and persecutions. The psalmist knows in his heart that the Lord is King, who examines the works and words of all men and will reward each in accordance with his deeds. The wicked will be punished and the godly “will see His face”. Confidence in the Lord is one of the most important signs of spiritual maturity. Through the eyes of faith, we can see the face of God under whatever difficult circumstances.

May 19 The unresolved tension of Christian life

Psalm 12

“And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O Lord, You will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.”

This psalm is a community lament, a prayer on behalf of the people of God for deliverance from the deceptions and scheming of the godless. It begins and ends with a prayer for deliverance, expressing the unresolved tension created by the conduct of the wicked. The words of God are placed in the central to focus the readers’ attention on God’s promise to protect His own. God expects His children to live with the tensions resulting from a walk in faith: to rely on His promise as they are still suffering from the reality of the ever-present vileness of man. It echoes the prayer of Jesus for all believers, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” (John 17:15)

May 20 Waiting

Psalm 13

“But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.”

The psalm presents us with a deeply touching picture of despair and hope. The psalmist repeatedly utters “how long”, expressing the deep anguish of his soul. However, the progress of his prayer, from “look” to “answer” to “give light”, slowly brings his focus back to the promise of God’s covenant love, even when he is still in the midst of darkness. Luther describes this psalm as “hope despairs and yet despair hopes.” The major turning point of the psalm is “but I trust..”. It is an extraordinary response from the heart of a depressed person, and is only possible by the grace of God. Life may be so bitter at times, and prayers may not be always answered in time, BUT I trust...I rejoice... and I sing....

May 21 Be wise

Psalm 14

“The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.”

The “fool” does not refer to the ignorant or atheist, but the wicked, who aggressively and intentionally flouts his independence from God and His commandments. He denies any personal accountability to God for his actions, and disregards God’s expectations in his life. The denial of God results in extreme selfishness and lacking concern or love for others. The eyes of the Lord are looking for the wise, who is not only a man of understanding, but one who seeks after God’s will for his love for Him. By living in accordance with God’s standards of holiness, purity, and justice, he is often the object of persecution, abuse and affliction, and needs God’s protection and deliverance. The Lord is the refuge of the wise, while He’ll bring judgment to the fool. Be wise, and don’t be a fool.