

PSALMS MIXTAPE

B BLACKHAWK CHURCH

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JOURNAL
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PRELUDE

Welcome to the Psalms Mixtape Journal.

You are holding a tool you can use with our 10-week Psalm reading plan and the Sunday messages in this series. We trust it will be a helpful companion as we spend time in the Psalms—deepening our understanding of God’s Word and allowing it to impact our lives: heart, head, hands.

The Psalms are a collection of poetry—songs and prayers—that can give words to our own prayers and cause us to reflect on our own lives and relationship with God... “The Psalms are poetry and the Psalms are prayer... They are not provided to teach us about God, but to train us in responding to him. We don’t learn the Psalms until we are praying them.” - Eugene Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*

This Scripture journal is focused not on our own thoughts, but on the Bible passages for each week. Once we’ve spent time in the Word, we can begin to reflect on what it is saying to us. Taking the time to write these reflections down can help us put words to our thoughts and emotions as God’s Word speaks into our lives. For each week, you will find the following pages:

- *A listing of the Psalm readings for that week and two blank pages to write down your reflections*
- *A page for notes on the Sunday message that week*
- *A final page with a devotional quote for your reflection*

Rest assured, there is no single or correct way to fill in the blank spaces of this journal. We encourage you to “color outside the lines.” Use this journal for note taking, writing down prayers and even drawing pictures or doodles as ways of creatively responding to God’s Word.

We hope this journal will help you in your personal time in the Word as you read, reflect and respond to what you read. May this journal be an invitation to all of us to engage with the Psalms in ways that lead to deeper spiritual growth.

*Craig Gartland
Pastor of Spiritual Formation
Blackhawk Church*

WEEK ONE

Weekly Reading: Psalms 1-13



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 1

Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.

"The Psalms cover the full gamut of human experiences. Some we would rather avoid. Some psalms we love and others cause discomfort. By praying all the psalms we are stretched by God's Word and we allow God to teach us and shape us. Many of the psalms shift from lament to praise. We are invited to experience all the emotions and challenges of our humanity such as betrayal, illness, confession, anger, pleading and thanksgiving. Praying prayers written by the faithful connects us to God and each other."

- MaryKate Morse, *A Guidebook to Prayer*

WEEK TWO

Weekly Reading: Psalms 14-27



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

"The Psalms are acts of obedience, answering the God who has addressed us. God's word precedes these words: these prayers don't seek God, they respond to the God who seeks us."

- Eugene Peterson, *Answering God*

WEEK THREE

Weekly Reading: Psalms 28-41



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 4:1-3

Answer me when I call to you,
my righteous God.

Give me relief from my distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

² How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?

³ Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.

“What I see in the Bible, especially in the book of Psalms, which is a book of gratitude for the created world, is a recognition that all good things on Earth are God’s, every good gift is from above. They are good if we recognize where they came from and if we treat them the way the Designer intended them to be treated.”

- Philip Yancey

WEEK FOUR

Weekly Reading: Psalms 42-57



MESSAGE NOTES

"I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with... The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."

- C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*

WEEK FIVE

Weekly Reading: Psalms 58-72



MESSAGE NOTES

“It does not depend, therefore, on whether the Psalms express adequately that which we feel at a given moment in our heart. If we are to pray aright, perhaps it is quite necessary that we pray contrary to our own heart. The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

WEEK SIX

Weekly Reading: Psalms 73-89



MESSAGE NOTES

“The psalms also help us see God—God not as we wish or hope him to be but as he actually reveals himself. The descriptions of God in the Psalter are rich beyond human invention. He is more holy, more wise, more fearsome, more tender and loving than we would ever imagine him to be. The psalms fire our imaginations into new realms yet guide them toward the God who actually exists.”

- Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

WEEK SEVEN

Weekly Reading: Psalms 90-106



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 67:1-2

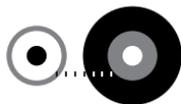
May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us—
²so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.

“When we can’t help ourselves and call for help, when we don’t like where we are and want out, when we don’t like who we are and want a change, we use primal language, and this language becomes the root language of prayer.”

- Eugene Peterson, *Answering God*

WEEK EIGHT

Weekly Reading: Psalms 107-118



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

"The Psalms are the steady, sustained subcurrent of healthy Christian living. They shaped the praying and vocation even of Jesus himself. They can and will do the same for us. The Psalms do this, to begin with, simply because they are poetry set to music: a classic double art form. To write or read a poem is already to enter into a different kind of thought world from our normal patterns. A poem is not merely ordinary thought with a few turns and twiddles added on to make it pretty or memorable. A poem (a good poem, at least) uses its poetic form to probe deeper into human experience than ordinary speech or writing is usually able to do, to pull back a veil and allow the hearer or reader to sense other dimensions."

- N.T. Wright, *The Case for the Psalms: Why They Are Essential*

WEEK NINE

Weekly Reading: Psalm 119



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 130:1-4

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.

³ If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

“Paul speaks at one point of Christians as “God’s poem,” God’s “artwork.” We are his “workmanship,” say some of the translations of Ephesians 2:10. The Greek word Paul uses there is poiema, the very word from which the English word “poem” is derived. God gives us these poems, the Psalms, as a gift, in order that through our praying and singing of them he may give us as a gift to his world. We are called to be living, breathing, praying, singing poems.”

- N.T. Wright, *The Case for the Psalms: Why They Are Essential*

WEEK TEN

Weekly Reading: Psalms 120-134



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 62:5-8

Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.

⁶ Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

⁷ My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

⁸ Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.

"If we are to pray well, we too must discover the Lord to whom we speak, and if we use the Psalms in our prayer we will stand a better chance of sharing in the discovery which lies hidden in their words for all generations. For God has willed to make Himself known to us in the mystery of the Psalms."

- Thomas Merton, *Praying the Psalms*

WEEK ELEVEN

Weekly Reading: Psalms 135-150



MESSAGE NOTES

Psalm 8:1-4

LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.

²Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

³When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

⁴what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

“Slowly these words enter into the center of my heart. They are more than ideas, images, comparisons: They become a real presence. After a day with much work or with many tensions, you feel that you can let go in safety and realize how good it is to dwell in the shelter of the Most High.

Many times I have thought: If I am ever sent to prison, if I am ever subjected to hunger, pain, torture, or humiliation, I hope and pray that they let me keep the Psalms. The Psalms will keep my spirit alive, the Psalms will allow me to comfort others, the Psalms will prove the most powerful, yes, the most revolutionary weapon against the oppressor and torturer. How happy are those who no longer need books but carry the Psalms in their heart wherever they are and wherever they go. Maybe I should start learning the Psalms by heart so that nobody can take them away from me. Just to be able to say over and over again:

*O men, how long will your hearts be closed,
will you love what is futile and false?
It is the Lord who grants favors to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.—Ps. 4*

That is a prayer that really can heal many wounds.”

POSTLUDE

We trust you have found this journal a useful tool to help you engage and grow as you've read through the Psalms and reflected upon them.

Though our series in the Psalms has come to an end, may our time in the Psalms, on a regular basis, be just beginning. When we are not sure how to pray, when God seems close or far away, or in the mundaneness of everyday life, the Psalms can breathe life into our spiritual walk and ground us in who we are: people created to love God and others and live for His purposes in the world.

We also want to encourage you to continue the habit of journaling. It's a spiritual discipline that can prompt us to be more intentional in our engagement with Scripture and with the Sunday messages. Like any discipline, it takes intentionality, but can also help facilitate the spiritual growth many of us desire in our lives. Find yourself a blank journal and keep the habit going and growing in your life! May our commitment and conviction be like that of the Psalmist:

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" - Psalm 119:105

