

## Reading Schedule for July 10-16, 2017

How great is it to be reading through the Book of Psalms?! I often forget how deep and meaningful the record of the Psalms is for our relationship to God and a reminder the He is enough. The Psalms that I've chosen this week are no exception. We are advancing through the month of July with the nourishment found in this book of prayers. I am asking God to put a new song in your heart.

**July 10 – Psalm 42:** “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.” (v.1) I am drawn to many statements in this Psalm, but the way it begins is most memorable to me. As the life of the deer depends upon water, so our lives depend upon God. The Psalmist is feeling separated from God, and longs to be restored to close connection to the Lord. He thirsts for God. If you had a season in your life where you felt distant from God, because of that, you can relate to this Psalm. I am quite sure that the heart of the author is pleasing to God. He is telling us to put our hope in God, even when we are discouraged and feel depressed. Many contemporary song writers have put these words to music. I can see why. They breath hope into me. How about you? What stands out to you in this Psalm? Why? Also, I encourage you to read Proverbs 10 as you close the day.

**July 11 – Psalm 46:** “He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’” (v.10) I am reminded of another song that I knew in my beginning days as a Christian. It is from verse 4. But verse 10 is the verse I thing about most. In a chaotic world with so many voices trying to get my attention, I long for stillness. It is difficult to hear the Lord without quieting my soul. There is also a sense that God is absolutely in control and that I do not have to fret about anything. The more my confidence increases about God’s ability to help me and his care over my life, the more at peace I am. Is that true for you? It says that the Lord Almighty is with us . . . Isn’t that enough?! How does this Psalm bless you? Proverbs 11 is the Proverb for the day.

**July 12 – Psalm 51:** “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (v.10) When I have disobeyed the Lord and recognize sin in my life, this is a prayer that I have utilized. However, this Psalm is filled with statements that resonate in my heart. I want my sins cleansed. I know the inclination of my heart is away from God at times. I want him to restore the joy of my salvation, and I am reminded that a broken and contrite heart is pleasing to God. But more than anything, I want God to restore and renew a love for him and a desire to serve him. There are so many numbing distractions, that I could pray this prayer every day and not pray too often. Verses 10-12 could be a great way to connect with God in prayer. Why is this Psalm so significant in the Book of Psalms? What aspect are you most drawn to? Why? Proverbs 12 is a quiet way to close the day.

**July 13 – Psalm 57:** “Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.” (v.1) I was mostly drawn to this Psalm because it has a connection historically. Most of the Psalms do not tell us anything about the specific situation. But it appears that this Psalm was written while David was hiding in the cave from Saul. If you read I Samuel 22-24 you will get the backdrop to this Psalm. It may help you to understand the meaning of David’s words. He is counting on the protective assurance of God in the midst of a crisis as the king is trying to take his life. In times

of great stress, David teaches us not to retaliate in revenge or wallow in self-pity, but rather look up to God for strength and endurance. Do you agree? How do your respond to this Psalm, knowing this specific situation? Proverbs 13 is our Proverb for the day.

**July 14 – Psalm 63:** “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.” (v.3) I happen to know the special word used for love in this verse. Oftentimes this verse is translated with the word “lovingkindness.” This is the word “chesed.” We had just focused on what really satisfies as the theme for the sermon this past Sunday at the fair. We can clearly read what satisfies David the most. My soul is satisfied as if to be nourished by the richest of foods. My soul clings to you, O God. There are so many statements that affirm David’s faith, and have made him the most cherished author in the Old Testament. He speaks a language that helps us find strength in the Lord, and freedom from the things that try to pull us down. Remember, so many things that this world offers are like dust. David said, “In a dry and weary land where there is no water.” Don’t try to take a drink from the things this world has to offer when you can have the thirst quenching reality – closeness with God. Does that make sense? Please read Proverbs 14 before you fall asleep tonight.

**July 15–Psalm 67:** “May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.” (v.7) This is a short Psalm, and it is almost unnoticeable. We don’t have a specific author, and you might even miss the main theme. In the Old Testament, too often the focus is on the faith of the Jews to the neglect of the rest of the world. But this is not God’s heart. Every verse in this Psalm mentions God’s relationship with the entire globe. The intended audience of this message spans the world. This Psalm was written for you, but also to give you a heart for the whole world. “God so love the world . . .” It has always been God’s intent to reach every people, tribe and nation. The Gospel is for the whole world. Don’t forget that our God is a missionary God, and he is pursuing people throughout the globe. To be in step with him, you must do the same. How does that challenge you? What do you hear in this Psalm? I encourage you to enjoy Proverbs 15 as well.

**July 16 –Psalm 72:** “For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.” (v. 12 & 13) I am drawn to this Psalm because it is identified as from the pen of Solomon. Solomon had every earthly comfort available to him. He wrote a book called Ecclesiastes to explain how empty that was apart from God. You see something that you wouldn’t expect in Solomon in the verses I have chosen. He tells us about how God cares for the needy, the afflicted and the weak. Solomon understands that God cares about those who have very little resources, as much as he cares about those who have much. Sometimes those who have much do not sense the blessing of God like someone who has only a few things. I have experienced poorer cultures through missionary work, and notice that their joy and gratitude is as great as ours, if not more so. I just wasn’t expecting that from Solomon and I am glad that I read it. What verse stood out to you? Why? I encourage you to read Proverbs 16 as well.

**Prayers: Pray for all those who heard the Gospel at the fair and their response to the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.**