

Reading Schedule for July 17-23, 2017

You must be enjoying this month of Scripture readings because we are in the Book of Psalms. This is one inspiring day after another as we read words of praise, lament, devotion and remembrance. I am surprised how meaningful these readings have been for me. Let's continue again, even as we remember Proverbs for our reading as we close the day.

July 17 – Psalm 77: “When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted.” (v.2) David is not the only author to write about deep distress and a sense of hopelessness. This author used similar words as we read in Psalm 13. In verse 7 we read, “Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?” When we focus on the present situation, it can feel overwhelming. If the author changes from despair to remembering God's mighty power and his trustworthy character, these trials would shrink in light of the author's focus on how good God has been to him in so many ways. He will also point back to history, remembering the God who is the same yesterday, today and forever. What does this Psalm teach you? It is an invitation to be honest with God, but a reminder to remember who God is and what he has done for you. As we pray to God, we shift our focus from ourselves to him. That is what I see in this Psalm. What inspires you about this Psalm? I encourage you to read Proverbs 17 as well.

July 18 – Psalm 84: “Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.” (v.10) There is a very familiar worship song entitled, “Better is One Day,” and it comes from this verse, as well as the message of this Psalm. I enjoy so many aspects of this Psalm because it encourages me to draw near to God. The author yearns for closeness with God. His heart longs for a fresh touch from the living God. I love that the author wanted to get away from the chaos of the world around him and meet with God in a quiet dwelling place. The devotion of our psalmist is clear. That is what I take from this Psalm. The Lord loves when we put him first. If we really find our true satisfaction from him, the Lord will continue to bless us and bestow his favor on our lives. Do you agree? How are you inspired by this Psalm? I also encourage you to read Proverbs 18.

July 19 – Psalm 90: “Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.” (v.10) This is a verse that I remember from reading this Psalm previously. But I also wanted us to read it because it is attributed to Moses. This would mean that we are reading the oldest Psalm recorded in the Book of Psalms. My verse focuses on the fact that our time on earth is limited, and we are to use it wisely. We should not just think of living in the moment, but we should continue to have an eternal perspective. Isaiah told us that, “All men are like grass, and the glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flower falls, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.” (Isaiah 40:6-7) That's what I think of when I read these words. Take time to number your days by asking, “What do I want to see happen in my life before I die? What small step could I take toward that pursuit today?” I encourage you to read Proverbs 19 as you wrap up the day.

July 20 – Psalm 95: “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.: (vv. 6 & 7) These words have been put to music in a familiar chorus that I enjoy singing. This worship psalm is directing us to praise, gratitude and sincere worship. It warns us not to harden our hearts. The historical background is found in Exodus 17, when the people hardened their hearts against the Lord's will. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. When someone hardens his/her heart, the person is stuck in a road that leads downward. They do not turn back to God. If we resist God long enough, God may set you aside because you have become useless in his purpose for you. How do you respond to that challenging word that is incorporated in this worship psalm? I encourage you to read Proverbs 20.

July 21 – Psalm 100: “For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” (v.5) This short Psalm is worth our meditation. To enter joyfully into God's presence is a privilege because of our access to the Lord through Jesus Christ. It invites us to know the Lord personally, and to come into his courts with others to lift up his name. It is all because of God's unchanging character. God alone is worthy of being worshipped. This Psalm tells us to remember God's goodness and dependability, and then to worship him with thanksgiving and praise. I enjoyed this short Psalm and I wanted us to remember the strong message of lifting up our voices to God. The King James Version says to make a joyful noise, so the most important thing is not the quality of our music, but the condition of our heart. What stands out to you in this inspiring Psalm? You could also read Proverbs 21.

July 22–Psalm 110: “The Lord says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” (v.1) This is one of the most quoted Psalms in the New Testament because it is a clear reference to the Messiah. Jesus cited these words, and applied them to himself. It pointed to Christ's final victory and the destruction of the wicked, which we read about in Revelation. Verses 2 & 6 are also mentioned in the Book of Revelation, pointing to the final battle on earth, when Christ will overcome the forces of evil (Revelation 19:11-21). Some of the Psalms are prophetic, and this is one of them. This is attributed to David. What stands out to you? Let's continue with Proverbs 22.

July 23 –Psalm 118: “The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.” (v.24) I think this is the most famous verse in this long Psalm of thanksgiving. The theme really is about God's eternal love. His love is unchanging in the midst of changing situations. This should give us a sense of security. It is important to remember that every day is a gift from God. That is how I read verse 24. Oftentimes, I will be anxious or discouraged about something that happened, and forget about the gift of this day, and remain stuck in my discouragement. The message is to rejoice anyway. Give thanks in all circumstances. You will find that God will give you a reason to rejoice. God is giving you this day to live and to serve him. So be glad! What else inspires you from this often-quoted Psalm? Proverbs 23 would be a good read as well.

Prayers: Pray for our weekly connections at Northgate park with Karen & Meredith reaching out to families and children.