

Reading Schedule for July 24-30, 2017

Believe it or not, we are winding down our month in the Book of Psalms. There is no question that this reading has surprised me. I would have thought of reading even more Psalms, and I just might have to come back to another run through Psalms before we close the year. Even though we will have read 31 Psalms this month, there are so many more we could have chosen. This first one for the week is the Psalm that I read during hospital visits more than any other. Isn't it great to know that the Lord is watching over you?!

July 24 – Psalm 121: “The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.” (v. 7 & 8) This Psalm is definitely one that brings comfort. Whatever challenges or difficulty I am going through, God is fully aware of my difficulties. There is nothing that happens in my life that is a surprise to God. He is protecting my heart, and sustaining me through the most difficult situations. This Psalm assures me that God is all-powerful. We are safe in his watchful care. This is true now, and it will be true forever. It is hard to believe, but God never sleeps. Sleep is such an important aspect of our lives, but God is self-sustaining and immensely concerned for your well-being. How does this Psalm encourage you? What stands out to you? May I suggest that you read Proverbs 24.

July 25 – Psalm 127: “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.” (v.3) As a man who has been blessed with children, I especially enjoy this Psalm. This is the second of two Psalms included in the Book of Psalms that Solomon wrote. The words of verses 1 & 2 remind me of Ecclesiastes where Solomon is telling us that all our pursuits mean nothing without the Lord as our focus. Life without God is senseless. It is interesting he begins this way and then he affirms the blessing of family life. It is almost as if he is saying, “The more children the better.” I believe he had a lot of children, as I recall from 1 Kings. Traditionally, a quiver was five arrows, but the idea is that each child, no matter the number, is a blessing from God. What do you notice in this Psalm about family life? Proverbs 25 would be a great way to close the day.

July 26 – Psalm 133: “How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!” (v.1) We clearly see that the theme is one of unity and enjoying harmonious relationships. But then the rest of the words are more symbolic. Unity is blessed by God. To be anointed by the oil is to be set apart for God's purposes. With harmony there is great potential for an abundant life and fruitful ministry. The idea of anointing and dew on the mountain are affirmations that God loves it when we are united in our purpose for him. How would you define unity? Why do harmonious relationships bring joy? To see how important this topic is to the Lord, please read John 17:21-23. This was Jesus' prayer for his people. This short Psalm is a very important theme. How so? I encourage you to read Proverbs 26.

July 27 – Psalm 139: “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” (v.14) You might not know Marilyn, but then again you might. She is a very important person in our fellowship. She is known as “the higger.” On her forearm she has the tattooed reference of Psalm 139:14-16. Isn't that a beautiful text to remind yourself that you are fearfully and

wonderfully made by God?! Too often you might feel worthless; but that is not true because it is contrary to God's Word. We should have a great deal of respect for ourselves, because God is behind it all. This is one of the high points in the Book of Psalms. I could have picked 8-10 different verses and each of them would have been just as impacting. We learn that God is all knowing and all present from this Psalm. I am curious, on which part of this Psalm do you identify with? This reminds us again that God is with us in every situation and in every trial. I hope this makes you appreciate the Lord even more. How do you respond to this inspirational Psalm? Proverbs 27 might be worth your read today as well.

July 28 – Psalm 143: “I spread out my hands to you; I thirst for you like a parched land.” (v.6) There are several statements in this Psalm that remind me of other Psalms that we have read. David is not repetitive but he has certain themes that he really emphasizes. He often said, “I cry to you O Lord.” The interesting thing is I think God was absolutely pleased with David because this was one of his first inclinations when he was in trouble . . . he cried out to the Lord. What do you learn from this Psalm? David reflects on God's faithfulness; he is quick to pray to the Lord; we see him putting his trust in God; he desires for God to direct him according to His will; he remembers God's unfailing love. This is a good Psalm for us because it summarizes so many things that are important to David. What stands out to you? Proverbs 28 would be a good read.

July 29 – Psalm 145: “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.” (vv. 8 & 9) How often do you think this statement is used in the Book of Psalms? I would guess over a dozen times. What a great summary of God's character. Which of these phrases is most meaningful to you? This is another Psalm of David that duplicates some of his favorite phrases: Verse 13 – “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.” Verse 1 – “I will exalt you, my God the King.” Verse 3 – “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.” Verse 20 – “The Lord watches over all who love him.” Do you agree that these are reoccurring themes in David's writing? How do you respond to this Psalm? Which part stands out to you? We are almost through with the Book of Proverbs as we read chapter 29.

July 30 – Psalm 147: “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” (v.3) I picked this statement because it is one of themes of our church. We want to be people of compassion. The announcement is that God is great and that he has created everything, but listen to these words because they also show that God has a soft heart towards the humble. With a sincere heart, you will experience God's attention in your life as you fear him and put your hope in his unfailing love. (v.11) We do not know who wrote this, but it is an inspirational Psalm that I am sure will uplift you. Within it we read about the mighty strength of God and also his tender care at the same time. I am always blessed by these strong characteristics that are accompanied with tender mercy from God. How do you respond to this Psalm? I think you will enjoy Proverbs 30, especially verses 7-9.

Prayers: Pray for our ministry to students, even as we anticipate prayerfully seeking God's direction for the upcoming school year.