

150 Days in the Psalms

*Help me, O Lord my God! Save me according to your steadfast love!
Let them know that this is your hand; you, O Lord, have done it!*

“Desperate times call for desperate measures.” We’ve all heard that phrase before. Never has it been more true than this year. Collective humanity has grown desperate out of fear of the novel coronavirus. And, in response, has instituted measures more desperate than in any other time in modernity. Out of desperation, lockdowns, quarantines, and restrictions have been imposed. Out of desperation, we have put our faith and trust in our own collective efforts to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

It goes without saying that many of these desperate measures are necessary. We have a moral obligation to protect the most vulnerable. But we delude ourselves if we think that our efforts can abolish death, be it by coronavirus or by anything else.

For, above all else, death is the most desperate time in the life of a human being. It is, by all appearances, the end of conscienceness; the end of vitality. And human beings have gone to desperate measures to try and halt death. But those measures invariably fail, and death is the fate that awaits every human being. We can’t quarantine from it. We can’t social distance from it. It is a reality. A desperate reality.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. The Psalmist wrote the 109th in a state of desperation; a state that he could not escape by his own reason or strength. “For I am poor and needy, and my heart is stricken within me. I am gone like a shadow at evening; I am shaken off like a locust.

In danger of death; in danger of hell; the Psalmist cries out to God for relief, and God is quick to grant it. “For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.”

We too, as we endure these desperate times, are called to trust in our God to deliver us. For, although biological death is a desperate event, it is not the most desperate. It is eternal death that we should fear most, and that was utterly vanquished by Christ on His Holy Cross and in His Resurrection. Desperate times called for desperate measures, and our Blessed Lord transformed death into life, and life into abundant life. For He sent redemption to his people; He has commanded His covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

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Psalm 106

Monday



The 106th Psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the Psalmist acknowledges all the sins which the people of Israel had committed against God, by which they had made themselves unworthy of all His grace and blessings. Therefore, it says constantly that God has done all these things for His name's sake, and for the remembrance of His covenant. Moses also says this in Deuteronomy 9:6, therefore they cannot glory in themselves, except in God's grace alone – as we also can have no other glory.

¹ Praise the Lord!

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!

² Who can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord,
or declare all his praise?

³ Blessed are they who observe justice,
who do righteousness at all times!

⁴ Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people;
help me when you save them,

⁵ that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones,
that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation,
that I may glory with your inheritance.

⁶ Both we and our fathers have sinned;
we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness.

⁷ Our fathers, when they were in Egypt,
did not consider your wondrous works;
they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love,
but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea.

⁸ Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
that he might make known his mighty power.

⁹ He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry,
and he led them through the deep as through a desert.

¹⁰ So he saved them from the hand of the foe
and redeemed them from the power of the enemy.

¹¹ And the waters covered their adversaries;

not one of them was left.

¹² Then they believed his words;
they sang his praise.

¹³ But they soon forgot his works;
they did not wait for his counsel.

¹⁴ But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness,
and put God to the test in the desert;

¹⁵ he gave them what they asked,
but sent a wasting disease among them.

¹⁶ When men in the camp were jealous of Moses
and Aaron, the holy one of the Lord,

¹⁷ the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
and covered the company of Abiram.

¹⁸ Fire also broke out in their company;
the flame burned up the wicked.

¹⁹ They made a calf in Horeb
and worshiped a metal image.

²⁰ They exchanged the glory of God
for the image of an ox that eats grass.

²¹ They forgot God, their Savior,
who had done great things in Egypt,

²² wondrous works in the land of Ham,
and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.

²³ Therefore he said he would destroy them—
had not Moses, his chosen one,
stood in the breach before him,
to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

²⁴ Then they despised the pleasant land,
having no faith in his promise.

²⁵ They murmured in their tents,
and did not obey the voice of the Lord.

²⁶ Therefore he raised his hand and swore to them
that he would make them fall in the wilderness,

²⁷ and would make their offspring fall among the nations,
scattering them among the lands.

²⁸ Then they yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor,
and ate sacrifices offered to the dead;
²⁹ they provoked the Lord to anger with their deeds,
and a plague broke out among them.
³⁰ Then Phinehas stood up and intervened,
and the plague was stayed.
³¹ And that was counted to him as righteousness
from generation to generation forever.

³² They angered him at the waters of Meribah,
and it went ill with Moses on their account,
³³ for they made his spirit bitter,
and he spoke rashly with his lips.

³⁴ They did not destroy the peoples,
as the Lord commanded them,
³⁵ but they mixed with the nations
and learned to do as they did.
³⁶ They served their idols,
which became a snare to them.
³⁷ They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to the demons;
³⁸ they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was polluted with blood.
³⁹ Thus they became unclean by their acts,
and played the whore in their deeds.

⁴⁰ Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people,
and he abhorred his heritage;
⁴¹ he gave them into the hand of the nations,
so that those who hated them ruled over them.
⁴² Their enemies oppressed them,
and they were brought into subjection under their power.
⁴³ Many times he delivered them,
but they were rebellious in their purposes
and were brought low through their iniquity.

⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress,
when he heard their cry.

⁴⁵ For their sake he remembered his covenant,
and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁴⁶ He caused them to be pitied
by all those who held them captive.

⁴⁷ Save us, O Lord our God,
and gather us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.

⁴⁸ Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, "Amen!"
Praise the Lord!

Prayer

O Lord God, full of mercy and pity, who did so many times deliver Your people from their adversity: Remember us, O Lord, according to the favor You bear toward Your people, and visit us with Your salvation. For although we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly against You, still be pleased to help us for Your Name's sake, and make Your power to be known in the mighty deliverance and redemption of us from so great danger and misery. Give us grace to believe Your words, to walk in Your law, and to relinquish our own sinful and vain desires. Your Name be blessed, O Lord God, from everlasting to everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Psalm 107

Tuesday



The 107th Psalm is a psalm of thanks for all the various helps which God shows to all those in distress, be they Christian or not. We are to give God thanks for these great gifts, and not delight in our own reason or strength. These concordant themes of enlightenment and gratitude reinforce each other throughout the psalm, and, indeed, throughout the rest of the fifth book of psalms, of which Psalm 107 is the opening hymn.

- ¹ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!
- ² Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble
- ³ and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

- ⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to a city to dwell in;
- ⁵ hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.
- ⁶ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.
- ⁷ He led them by a straight way
till they reached a city to dwell in.
- ⁸ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!
- ⁹ For he satisfies the longing soul,
and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

- ¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
prisoners in affliction and in irons,
- ¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the Most High.
- ¹² So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor;
they fell down, with none to help.

¹³ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
and burst their bonds apart.

¹⁵ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze
and cuts in two the bars of iron.

¹⁷ Some were fools through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;

¹⁸ they loathed any kind of food,
and they drew near to the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from their destruction.

²¹ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!

²² And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

²³ Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the great waters;

²⁴ they saw the deeds of the Lord,
his wondrous works in the deep.

²⁵ For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.

²⁶ They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their evil plight;

²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunken men
and were at their wits' end.

²⁸ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.

²⁹ He made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.

³⁰ Then they were glad that the waters were quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.

³¹ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,

for his wondrous works to the children of man!

³² Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,
and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

³³ He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty ground,

³⁴ a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the evil of its inhabitants.

³⁵ He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of water.

³⁶ And there he lets the hungry dwell,
and they establish a city to live in;

³⁷ they sow fields and plant vineyards
and get a fruitful yield.

³⁸ By his blessing they multiply greatly,
and he does not let their livestock diminish.

³⁹ When they are diminished and brought low
through oppression, evil, and sorrow,

⁴⁰ he pours contempt on princes
and makes them wander in trackless wastes;

⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of affliction
and makes their families like flocks.

⁴² The upright see it and are glad,
and all wickedness shuts its mouth.

⁴³ Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things;
let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

Prayer

O Lord God, gracious and good, whose mercy endures forever, have mercy upon us when, in our trouble we cry to You; for when our hearts are brought down through heaviness and there is no one to deliver us out of our distress, You are there, O Lord. Bring us out of darkness, break our bonds asunder, and guide us through the desert of this world. And in Your due time, bring us to eternal rest, and to the congregation of Your holy people, that we may praise You for Your goodness, and declare the wonders You have done for us in bringing us to life, light, and eternal joy, as we behold the face of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Psalm 108

Wednesday



The 108th Psalm is a psalm of thanks in which the psalmist gives thanks for his kingdom, where God's Word could be truly taught and in which there was good orderly government. Already in verse 1, the Psalm exalts the kingdom of Christ and prays that God would establish His kingdom in all the world, and accordingly bring David's kingdom to its proper, final, and full station. For David had only a slight, partial piece of which was promised to come to Him. As Isaiah 9:7 says, "he will reign on the throne of David, and over his kingdom."

¹ My heart is steadfast, O God!

I will sing and make melody with all my being!

² Awake, O harp and lyre!

I will awake the dawn!

³ I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;

I will sing praises to you among the nations.

⁴ For your steadfast love is great above the heavens;

your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!

Let your glory be over all the earth!

⁶ That your beloved ones may be delivered,

give salvation by your right hand and answer me!

⁷ God has promised in his holiness:

"With exultation I will divide up Shechem
and portion out the Valley of Succoth.

⁸ Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;

Ephraim is my helmet,

Judah my scepter.

⁹ Moab is my washbasin;

upon Edom I cast my shoe;

over Philistia I shout in triumph."

¹⁰ Who will bring me to the fortified city?

Who will lead me to Edom?

- ¹¹ Have you not rejected us, O God?
You do not go out, O God, with our armies.
- ¹² Oh grant us help against the foe,
for vain is the salvation of man!
- ¹³ With God we shall do valiantly;
it is he who will tread down our foes.

Prayer

O Lord God, whose mercy is greater than the Heavens, and whose glory is above all the earth, be exalted in Your own strength, and magnify Your power and mercy in defending us, and all Your Church, against our enemies temporal and spiritual. Do not forsake us, O God, for You can be our only defense. Strengthen us as we daily go into spiritual battle, that we, being defended and armed by You, may do acts great and good, putting our confidence in Your righteousness alone, and being assured of our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 109

Thursday



The 109th Psalm is a psalm of prayer, prayed in the person of Christ against Judas, his betrayer, and against those who crucified Him. It vehemently cries against them and prophesies of them, that they would be vanquished. This was fulfilled by the same Jesus Christ, who won the total victory over the forces of darkness on the cross.

- ¹ Be not silent, O God of my praise!
- ² For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.
- ³ They encircle me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.
- ⁴ In return for my love they accuse me,
but I give myself to prayer.
- ⁵ So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

- ⁶ Appoint a wicked man against him;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.
- ⁷ When he is tried, let him come forth guilty;
let his prayer be counted as sin!
- ⁸ May his days be few;
may another take his office!
- ⁹ May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow!
- ¹⁰ May his children wander about and beg,
seeking food far from the ruins they inhabit!
- ¹¹ May the creditor seize all that he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil!
- ¹² Let there be none to extend kindness to him,
nor any to pity his fatherless children!
- ¹³ May his posterity be cut off;
may his name be blotted out in the second generation!
- ¹⁴ May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord,
and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out!

- ¹⁵ Let them be before the Lord continually,
that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth!
- ¹⁶ For he did not remember to show kindness,
but pursued the poor and needy
and the brokenhearted, to put them to death.
- ¹⁷ He loved to curse; let curses come upon him!
He did not delight in blessing; may it be far from him!
- ¹⁸ He clothed himself with cursing as his coat;
may it soak into his body like water,
like oil into his bones!
- ¹⁹ May it be like a garment that he wraps around him,
like a belt that he puts on every day!
- ²⁰ May this be the reward of my accusers from the Lord,
of those who speak evil against my life!
- ²¹ But you, O God my Lord,
deal on my behalf for your name's sake;
because your steadfast love is good, deliver me!
- ²² For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is stricken within me.
- ²³ I am gone like a shadow at evening;
I am shaken off like a locust.
- ²⁴ My knees are weak through fasting;
my body has become gaunt, with no fat.
- ²⁵ I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
when they see me, they wag their heads.
- ²⁶ Help me, O Lord my God!
Save me according to your steadfast love!
- ²⁷ Let them know that this is your hand;
you, O Lord, have done it!
- ²⁸ Let them curse, but you will bless!
They arise and are put to shame, but your servant will be glad!
- ²⁹ May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;
may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak!
- ³⁰ With my mouth I will give great thanks to the Lord;
I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

³¹ For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,
to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.

Prayer

O God of our praise, who was contented that Your son, Jesus Christ, should be betrayed into the hands of sinners by one of his own Apostles, let Your righteous judgements find out all those that are enemies to the Church, that by punishments in this life, they may be driven to a sharp and salutary repentance, and may be saved in the life to come. Deal with us, O Lord, according to Your mercy, and let not Your blessing be far from us. Do not remember our wickedness, let our minds do good and our hearts and lips be given to prayer, that we may stand at Your right hand, and our souls be saved from the unrighteous, through the righteousness and passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Psalm 110

Friday



The 110th Psalm is a prophecy of Christ, of how He shall be an eternal priest and king, indeed, true God, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and how He would be glorified and recognized. In the entire Scripture, there is nothing like this Psalm. It would be fair to acknowledge it as the chief confirmation of the Christian faith, for Christ is prophesied with such clear plain words as a priest and an eternal priest. This psalm is yet again and more splendidly extolled in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is indeed a shame that such a psalm is not more richly extolled by Christians.

110 The Lord says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

2 The Lord sends forth from Zion
your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your enemies!

3 Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day of your power,
in holy garments;

from the womb of the morning,
the dew of your youth will be yours.

4 The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek.”

5 The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

6 He will execute judgment among the nations,
filling them with corpses;
he will shatter chiefs
over the wide earth.

7 He will drink from the brook by the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

Prayer

O Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when Your Son had drunk that bitter cup of salvation, had set him at Your right hand: fill our hearts with His love and praise, that we may pay him the offerings of our souls and bodies in holy worship, and joyfull thanksgiving for all the parts and mysteries of our redemption. For his birth. For his Death and Passion. And for his continual mediation and intercession by which he does officiate in his eternal Priesthood. Remember us, O blessed Jesus, in the day of Your power, when You come to judge the world, that we may sit at Your right hand to magnify and behold the glories of thy Kingdom forever and ever.

Psalm 111

Saturday



The 111th Psalm is a psalm of thanks for the people of Israel to sing at the Passover, concerning the Passover Lamb. In this psalm, they learn to praise God and give thanks in a fine song for all His miracles, especially for the spiritual authority, priesthood, passover, law, Word, freedom, justice, the Land, God's help, and other blessings.

¹ Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

² Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.

³ Full of splendor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy;

⁸ they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name!

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever!

Prayer

O Blessed Jesus, whose righteousness endures forever, Your work is worthy to be praised, for You have been merciful and gracious to us. You have given us food of the blessed Sacrament to those that fear You, that by

participation of Your holy Communion, we should be equipped for the challenges ahead. Plant Your fear in our hearts, give us wisdom and good understanding, and make us to have pleasure in You and all Your works, that we, hearing the promises of Your holy Gospel, may worthily praise and adore Your holy Name in this life, and in the great congregation of saints in the life to come, through Your mercies, O blessed Jesus. Amen.

Psalm 112

Sunday



The 112th Psalm is a psalm of comfort in which the pious, who fear God, are praised for their good life and are promised eternal comfort against all trouble. They are especially commended to a sincere confidence and trust in God's grace, so that they may be undismayed and undaunted until they see the destruction of the godless and their foes.

¹ Praise the Lord!

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who greatly delights in his commandments!

² His offspring will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.

⁵ It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;
who conducts his affairs with justice.

⁶ For the righteous will never be moved;
he will be remembered forever.

⁷ He is not afraid of bad news;
his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

⁸ His heart is steady, he will not be afraid,
until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.

⁹ He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever;
his horn is exalted in honor.

¹⁰ The wicked man sees it and is angry;
he gnashes his teeth and melts away;
the desire of the wicked will perish!

Prayer

O Lord God, teach us to respect Your Name, that we may serve You without fear of our enemies in holiness and righteousness all our days. Let Your light rise upon the darkness of our minds, let Your mercies cure all thought

of unmercifulness in us, and make us charitable, yearning with pity over the needs of the poor. Teach us to guide our words with discretion, make us never to be moved from our purposes of holy living and fill our hearts with Your love, that on the last day, You may give us the rewards of Your right hand, that we may be satisfied with the riches and plentiousness of Your house for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.