



A Journey Through Lent
With the Psalms
2021

Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit
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Welcome to our journey through Lent with the Psalms. We are glad to be walking this path together.

The Psalms can be grouped together in various themes. Some are songs of praise or thanksgiving; others are songs of inspiration or lament. Each week in Lent, we will reflect on two Psalms: One from that Sunday's reading, and another psalm in the same "category."

We invite you to read the two psalms each day during the week, and offer some general questions to reflect on below, as well as reflection questions specific to the psalms for the week. This booklet includes all the psalms we'll be studying, reflection/discussion questions, and space for you to write your own thoughts.

You are also invited to join our Spiritual Enrichment Group (SEG), which will meet each Sunday at 11:30 am to discuss the psalms for the week. Below is the SEG discussion schedule:

Sunday, Feb. 21: The First Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses introduction to Psalms; throughout the week, read Psalms 25 & 23

Sunday, Feb. 28: The Second Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 25 & 23; throughout the week, read Psalms 22 & 9-10

Sunday, March 7: The Third Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 22 & 9-10; throughout the week, read Psalms 19 & 46

Sunday, March 14: The Fourth Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 19 & 46; throughout the week, read Psalms 107 & 40

Sunday, March 21: The Fifth Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 107 & 40; throughout the week, reads Psalms 51 & 139

Sunday, March 28: Palm Sunday

SEG Group discusses Psalms 51 & 139

General Questions to Reflect on as you read the Psalms:

- The Psalms are songs. What piece of music would you select to accompany this psalm? What would you consider the beat or tempo to be?
- What emotion if any does this psalm evoke in you?
- Read the psalm aloud. Is there a word, line or phrase that resonated with you?
- Read the psalm silently. Is there a word or phrase that resonated with you?
- What images come to mind with this psalm?
- What does this psalm tell you about God?
- What kind of a backstory would you create for this psalm? What do you think motivated the writer to create it?
- Is there any experience in your own life that would evoke you to write a song such as this?

Sunday, Feb. 21: The First Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses introduction to Psalms

Psalms of Inspiration: Psalms 25 (Sunday reading) and 23

Psalm 25

- ¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
² O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.
⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!
⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.
¹¹ For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
¹² Who are they that fear the LORD?
He will teach them the way that they should choose.
¹³ They will abide in prosperity,
and their children shall possess the land.
¹⁴ The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes his covenant known to them.
¹⁵ My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.
¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
¹⁷ Relieve the troubles of my heart,
and bring me out of my distress.

¹⁸ Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
¹⁹ Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
²⁰ O guard my life, and deliver me;
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
²¹ May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.
²² Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all its troubles.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
³ he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Additional questions for these psalms:

- Where do you look for inspiration?
- What does it mean to trust in God?
- Is there a person or story in scripture that inspires you?

Reflection space:

Sunday, Feb. 28: The Second Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 25 and 23

Psalms of Lament: Psalm 22 (Sunday reading) and Psalms 9-10

Psalm 22

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.
³ Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
⁴ In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
⁵ To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.
⁶ But I am a worm, and not human;
scorned by others, and despised by the people.
⁷ All who see me mock at me;
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
⁸ "Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"
⁹ Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.
¹⁰ On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
¹¹ Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
¹² Many bulls encircle me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
¹³ they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
¹⁵ my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.
¹⁶ For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shriveled;

¹⁷ I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
¹⁹ But you, O LORD, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion!
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
²² I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
²⁴ For he did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me,
but heard when I cried to him.
²⁵ From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
²⁶ The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.
May your hearts live forever!
²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.
²⁸ For dominion belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.
²⁹ To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and I shall live for him.
³⁰ Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord,
³¹ and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

Psalm 9

¹ I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

² I will be glad and exult in you;
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

³ When my enemies turned back,
they stumbled and perished before you.

⁴ For you have maintained my just cause;
you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment.

⁵ You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name forever and ever.

⁶ The enemies have vanished in everlasting ruins;
their cities you have rooted out;
the very memory of them has perished.

⁷ But the LORD sits enthroned forever,
he has established his throne for judgment.

⁸ He judges the world with righteousness;
he judges the peoples with equity.

⁹ The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

¹⁰ And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.

¹¹ Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion.
Declare his deeds among the peoples.

¹² For he who avenges blood is mindful of them;
he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

¹³ Be gracious to me, O LORD.
See what I suffer from those who hate me;
you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ so that I may recount all your praises,
and, in the gates of daughter Zion,
rejoice in your deliverance.

¹⁵ The nations have sunk in the pit that they made;
in the net that they hid has their own foot been caught.

¹⁶ The LORD has made himself known, he has executed judgment;
the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.

¹⁷ The wicked shall depart to Sheol,
all the nations that forget God.

¹⁸ For the needy shall not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

¹⁹ Rise up, O LORD! Do not let mortals prevail;
let the nations be judged before you.

²⁰ Put them in fear, O LORD;
let the nations know that they are only human.

Psalm 10

- ¹ Why, O LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
- ² In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor—
let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.
- ³ For the wicked boast of the desires of their heart,
those greedy for gain curse and renounce the LORD.
- ⁴ In the pride of their countenance the wicked say, “God will not seek it out”;
all their thoughts are, “There is no God.”
- ⁵ Their ways prosper at all times;
your judgments are on high, out of their sight;
as for their foes, they scoff at them.
- ⁶ They think in their heart, “We shall not be moved;
throughout all generations we shall not meet adversity.”
- ⁷ Their mouths are filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;
under their tongues are mischief and iniquity.
- ⁸ They sit in ambush in the villages;
in hiding places they murder the innocent.
Their eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;
- ⁹ they lurk in secret like a lion in its covert;
they lurk that they may seize the poor;
they seize the poor and drag them off in their net.
- ¹⁰ They stoop, they crouch,
and the helpless fall by their might.
- ¹¹ They think in their heart, “God has forgotten,
he has hidden his face, he will never see it.”
- ¹² Rise up, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand;
do not forget the oppressed.
- ¹³ Why do the wicked renounce God,
and say in their hearts, “You will not call us to account”?
- ¹⁴ But you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief,
that you may take it into your hands;
the helpless commit themselves to you;
you have been the helper of the orphan.
- ¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked and evildoers;
seek out their wickedness until you find none.
- ¹⁶ The LORD is king forever and ever;
the nations shall perish from his land.
- ¹⁷ O LORD, you will hear the desire of the meek;
you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear
- ¹⁸ to do justice for the orphan and the oppressed,
so that those from earth may strike terror no more.

Additional questions for these psalms:

- Do these psalms of lament resonate with your experience of this past year; has God forsaken us; is God hiding from us?
- Who would you describe as 'the enemy'?

Reflection space:

Sunday, March 7: The Third Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 22 and 9-10

Psalms that tell of the power of God: Psalm 19 (Sunday reading) and 46

Psalm 19

- ¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- ² Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
- ³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
- ⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
- ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hid from its heat.
- ⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the LORD are sure,
making wise the simple;
- ⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
- ⁹ the fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.
- ¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹² But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.
- ¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

⁶ The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth."

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Additional questions for these psalms:

- Do you see the power of God working in your life?
- Have you felt an absence of God's power during this epidemic?
- How can we take “refuge” in the power of God?

Reflection space:

Sunday, March 14: The Fourth Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 19 and 46

Psalms of Thanksgiving: Psalms 107 (Sunday reading) and 40

Psalm 107

- ¹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
those he redeemed from trouble
- ³ and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.^[a]
- ⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;
- 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,
until they reached an inhabited town.
- ⁸ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
- ⁹ For he satisfies the thirsty,
and the hungry he fills with good things.
- ¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in gloom,
prisoners in misery and in irons,
- ¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the Most High.
- ¹² Their hearts were bowed down with hard labor;
they fell down, with no one to help.
- ¹³ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress;
- ¹⁴ he brought them out of darkness and gloom,
and broke their bonds asunder.
- ¹⁵ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
- ¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze,
and cuts in two the bars of iron.
- ¹⁷ Some were sick through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities endured 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 saved them from their distress;
²⁰ he sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from destruction.
²¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
²² And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.
²³ Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty 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 calamity;
²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.
²⁸ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress;
²⁹ he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.
³⁰ Then they were glad because they had quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.
³¹ Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
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 wickedness 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 live,
and they establish a town 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 cattle decrease.
³⁹ When they are diminished and brought low
through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,
⁴⁰ he pours contempt on princes
and makes them wander in trackless wastes;

⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of distress,
and makes their families like flocks.
⁴² The upright see it and are glad;
and all wickedness stops its mouth.
⁴³ Let those who are wise give heed to these things,
and consider the steadfast love of the LORD.

Psalm 40

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
² He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.
⁴ Happy are those who make
the LORD their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.
⁵ You have multiplied, O LORD my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.
⁶ Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering
you have not required.
⁷ Then I said, "Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart."
⁹ I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O LORD.
¹⁰ I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;

I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

¹¹ Do not, O LORD, withhold
your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe forever.

¹² For evils have encompassed me
without number;
my iniquities have overtaken me,
until I cannot see;
they are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails me.

¹³ Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
O LORD, make haste to help me.

¹⁴ Let all those be put to shame and confusion
who seek to snatch away my life;
let those be turned back and brought to dishonor
who desire my hurt.

¹⁵ Let those be appalled because of their shame
who say to me, "Aha, Aha!"

¹⁶ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who love your salvation
say continually, "Great is the LORD!"

¹⁷ As for me, I am poor and needy,
but the Lord takes thought for me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
do not delay, O my God.

Additional questions for these psalms:

- Why is it important to “give thanks?”
- What are the things in our life that we can be thankful around?
- Have you ever expressed thanks for those things that cause us pain or sorrow?
- What does it mean to be delivered from our troubles?

Reflection space:

Sunday, March 21: The Fifth Sunday of Lent

SEG Group discusses Psalms 107 and 40

Psalms of Forgiveness: Psalm 51 (Sunday reading) and 139

Psalm 51

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
- ⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,
¹⁹ then you will delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Psalm 139

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
³ You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.
⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,"
¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
¹⁷ How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸ I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.
¹⁹ O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—
²⁰ those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!
²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
²² I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.
²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
²⁴ See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Additional questions for these psalms:

- Do we really believe that God loves us for who we really are, warts and all?
- David believed that his sin was against God; is that the way you see sin?
- Is asking for forgiveness a part of our spiritual practice?
- Psalm 139 speaks to the God of the Hebrews. As we approach Easter, what does the Resurrection add to this image of our relationship to the Divine?

Reflection space: