

June (C2C)

(Comments based on ESV text)

June 1 — **Job Cycles** — Job 13-16. To give us a better perspective of the structure of the book of Job, we see the three friends of Job presenting their comments in three cycles, always in the same order (except that Zophar retires before the third cycle!), and each usually answered by Job. We heard from Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar in chapters 4-14. The second cycle starts in our reading today and covers chapters 15-21. The third cycle follows that, ending with chapter 25. After a long response by Job (26-31), a fourth friend, Elihu, presents his rather arrogant arguments (32-37). God ends the book by answering Job with His divine perspective and restoring Job's health, family and wealth.

June 2 — **Seeing God** — Job 17-20. Job gives a wonderful early expression of the expectation of life with God after death: "*After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God*" (19:26 ESV). In contrast, Zophar sees Job as a wicked man, who, being punished by God, "*will fly away like a dream and not be found; he will be chased away like a vision of the night*" (20:8). What a different way of looking at the end of life! Many non-believers today see death as the end of everything that concerns them. The Christian, however, knows that his/her Redeemer lives (19:25) and that after this life, in a new body (19:26), we "*shall see God*."

June 3 — **Why?** — Job 21-24. Job posed a question that reflects our human sense of fairness: "*Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power?*" (21:7). It is like the question many challenging unbelievers ask today: "Why does God allow evil?" I would say that a primary answer involves patience and love. He gives them time to repent, "*not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance*" (2 Pet. 3:9). In today's reading, I also discovered a good basis for Henrietta Mears' motto of "No Bible? No breakfast!": "*I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food*" (23:12). This is a statement about priorities. Are you behind in your daily reading? Make it a priority! You can not only keep up, but you can catch up as well. It is not too late.

June 4 — **Gaining Wisdom** — Job 25-29. Job suggests two ways to gain wisdom: fear God and forsake evil. "*The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding*" (28:28 ESV; ideas repeated in Prov. 1:7, 3:7, 9:10 and 16:6). One way is positive and one is negative. Fearing God has both the ideas of respecting greatness and dreading punishment. In a way, God is both awesome and awful. Like the Christ-like lion Aslan in C. S. Lewis's Narnia Tales, God is "good" but not "safe." We fear God in worship, acknowledging His greatness; we fear God in obedience, avoiding His indignation.

June 5 — **Temptations** — Job 30-32. Most men tend to be drawn into sin by their eyes. It was apparently also true for Job, and he guarded against it: "*I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?*" (31:1). This verse has been a good reminder to me for many years about trying to keep my mind and heart free from lust. Job later mentioned the sinful potential that "... *my heart has gone after my eyes*" (31:7) or that "... *my heart has been enticed toward a woman*" (31:9). So much for men. What is it that tends to draw women into sin? (I will leave that up to you ladies to decide!) All of us have weaknesses that have trapped us in the past. We need to recognize and admit those tendencies and find some way to guard against letting them ensnare us again.

June 6 — **Youthful Pride** — Job 33-35. When I was a young man and a new Christian, I warmly identified with Elihu, probably because of his youth. I remember thinking that he was wiser than Job's other three friends and probably wiser than Job as well. I see him differently now. He reeked with pride. When we were introduced to Elihu yesterday, it said four times in the first five verses (32:1-5) that "*he burned with anger*" as he looked down on the arguments of Job and the three older friends (32:9). Today's reading is filled with evidence of his critical pride: "*Answer me, if you can ...*" (33:5),

“... no fear of me need terrify you” (33:7), “Pay attention, O Job, listen to me ... I will teach you wisdom” (33:31, 33), “Job speaks without knowledge” (34:35), and “Job opens his mouth with empty talk” (35:16). Whether we are young or old, we need to check ourselves for evidence of pride. If we compare ourselves to God rather than to people, we will have a humbler understanding of who we are.

June 7 — **Still Human** — Job 36-38. At the beginning of this book, God said that Job was “a blameless and upright man” (1:8). However, in chapter 38, God shows that there is still something lacking in Job: he is not divine and he does not know everything. A good look at the wonders of creation should remind all of us how far above us are the wisdom and power of God. That is a humbling consideration. We are all called to live a righteous life and we try our best but we are still human and we still have a sinful nature. Our humanness reminds us of our limitations and our sinfulness reminds us of our need for a Savior.

June 8 — **Awesome God** — Job 39-42. God’s response to Job emphasized the vast difference between human and divine understanding. God first showed Job his lack of understanding regarding the creation of the universe: “...when I laid the foundation of the earth” (38:4 ESV). Secondly, God pointed out Job’s ignorance regarding many created animals, like his ignorance about “when the mountain goats give birth” (39:1). Job’s response showed an overwhelming recognition of the awesome gap between his knowledge and that of God: “I lay my hand on my mouth” (40:4). God is infinite in wisdom, power, and love. What a privilege to have a personal relationship with such an awesome God! Now, let’s take our hand off our mouth and praise Him!

June 9 — **Hebrew Poetry** — Psalms 1-7. We were introduced to a large block of Hebrew poetry in the book of Job. Now, we will see all the Psalms couched in that form. What is Hebrew poetry? It does not rhyme like much of our English poetry but it does use a lot of figurative language, like “He is like a tree planted by the streams of water ...” (1:3). It also uses many couplets—two lines that have one of three different forms of relationship to each other. Probably the most common could be called “restated,” in which the second line says essentially the same as the first line but in different words:

“He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision” (2:4).

The second form might be named “expanded.” Here, the second line adds something to what the first line says:

“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (1:5).

The third form could be termed “contrasted,” where the second line says something opposed to the first line:

“... for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish” (1:6).

June 10 — **Too Busy for God?** — Psalms 8-15. All of today’s psalms were written by David (Ps. 10 is really an addition to Ps. 9). David wrote 73 of these 150 psalms—almost half. Can you imagine a king who rules over a nation of several million, having time to write poetry?! He was not too busy to put God first. Are you? Even when he was being threatened with death from his enemies, he remembered God’s history of past victories and turned to Him in trust: “I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me” (13:5-6).

June 11 — **My Strength** — Psalms 16-19. When my older daughter was in 2nd or 3rd grade, we began a project of memorizing one verse of each book of the Bible. I don’t remember how far we got, but I know we got as far as the Psalms because Ps. 18:1 was her memory verse for that book: “I love you, O LORD, my strength.” It is simple but powerful. It expresses our feelings toward God and it

recognizes His ability and willingness to give us all that we need for living a life pleasing to Him. You might take this as your prayer for the day. Say it often, every time you think about Him, then you can say, *"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight"* (Ps. 19:14).

June 12 — **Waiting on God** — Psalms 20-26. There are some very familiar psalms in our reading for today. Psalm 22 is a song of lament because of affliction. Parts of it are quoted often in the Gospel's story of Jesus' crucifixion, like dividing His garments and casting lots for them (Ps. 22:18; Matt. 27:35), wagging mocking heads (Ps. 22:7; Matt. 27:39), trusting with delight in God for deliverance (Ps. 22:8; Matt. 27:43), and asking why God had forsaken Him (Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46). There is also David's statement that *"they have pierced my hands and feet"* (Ps. 22:16), which fits the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt. 27:35). But the psalm reminds us later that God has not abandoned His own who are suffering: *"He has not hidden his face from him, but has heard"* (22:24). God's loving presence through suffering is repeated in the next familiar psalm, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death ... you are with me"* (23:4). If you are walking in a dark shadow today, be assured that God is still with you and cares for you. He has not abandoned you but is using time and circumstances to work out what is best for you. Be confident that *"you are the God of my salvation,"* therefore *"for you I wait all the day long"* (Ps. 25:5).

June 13 — **Covered** — Psalms 27-32. There are many great things in our passage for today. God's Word is so rich! One thing that struck me was the use of the word "cover" in a contrast between trying to hide my sin from God vs. having God hide my sin in His forgiveness. *"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered ... I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not cover my iniquity ..."* (32:1, 5). We need to develop a habit of immediately admitting to God individual, specific sins that we commit. *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 Jn. 1:8-9).

June 14 — **Praise in Pain** — Psalms 33-36. Ps. 34 is probably my favorite psalm. It begins with the desire and intent to exalt God (*"I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth"*—v. 1), and continues to encourage others to join in (*"Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!"*—v. 3). It challenges those on the outside of this level of appreciation to *"taste and see that the LORD is good!"* (34:8). But it also recognizes that although a godly life often contains hardship (*"brokenhearted ... crushed in spirit"* [34:18]), God is near to them and will ultimately provide deliverance (34:19). Are you in emotional or physical pain today? Let it remind you that praise of Him should be on your lips.

June 15 — **Delight** — Psalms 37-40. It is interesting to me how many times the word "delight" is used in our reading for today. We are told to *"delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart"* (37:4). When our "delight" is in God, the "desires" of our hearts will not be selfish. The meek shall *"delight themselves in abundant peace"* (37:11). The delight from peace is better than delight from things. *"The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way"* (37:23). When we desire to follow God, He will show us the way. *"I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart"* (40:8). When we memorize and meditate on the Word of God, He helps us to become willing to obey.

June 16 — **Psalms' Structure** — Psalms 41-47. You might notice in your translation at the beginning of Ps. 42 that it is the beginning of Book 2. Psalms is divided into five books. The first book is a collection of psalms written by David. In Book 2 (Ps. 42-72) we see other authors: sons of Korah, one by Asaph, one by Solomon, and more by David. As you will notice in our reading for today, many psalms have different "flavors." In Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart's book, *"How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth,"* they list various kinds of psalms. There are psalms of personal and

corporate lament (e.g., Ps. 42), of thanksgiving (Ps. 40), of praise (Ps. 33), of celebration (Ps. 45-47), of wisdom (Ps. 37), and of trust (Ps. 62).

June 17 — **Sacrifices** — Psalms 48-52. What God wanted from Israel is exactly what He wants from us: heartfelt worship and obedience. After showing the limited aspects of ritual animal sacrifice at the beginning of Ps. 50, the psalmist points to God's primary desire: sacrifices of thanksgiving and obediently keeping one's vows (50:14). The same thanksgiving and obedience (one who "*orders his way rightly*") are repeated in 50:23. A heartfelt approach to God in worship is summarized in Ps. 51:17, "... *a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*" We thankfully worship and obey God because "*Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised*" (48:1).

June 18 — **Lament** — Psalms 53-59. The psalms of David we read today fall in the category of "lament." The dictionary defines "lament" as a passionate expression of grief or sorrow. We lament in various circumstances. There was some lamenting recently in the memorial service for my sister Ruby but there was also joy. There is a difference for people who trust in God—we can lament and trust at the same time. Whether it is "*an enemy who taunts me*" (55:12) or "*my familiar friend ... who deals insolently with me*" (55:13), you can "*cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you*" (55:22).

June 19 — **Insomnia** — Psalms 60-67. I hesitated to write about this because I don't want to be tested with a poor night's sleep but God seemed to emphasize it to me as I read today. David said, "*my mouth will praise you with joyful lips when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night*" (63:5-6). Insomnia is a frustrating experience, yet David praised and meditated on God at night "*with joyful lips.*" He even sang for joy (63:7) on his bed. That might not sound like a good remedy for getting back to sleep but it does provide a great opportunity to be satisfied ("*joyful ... joy*") with praise to our Creator and Savior. And who knows, being satisfied, we might find the peace needed to get the remainder of the sleep we need.

June 20 — **Delight in War** — Psalms 68-71. David prayed that God would "*scatter the peoples who delight in war*" (68:30). The passing of time has not changed that tragic situation. It is probably even worse now, and Jesus said that "*wars and rumors of wars*" (Matt. 24:6) would precede "*the end.*" As I write this, there are 67 countries involved in wars in our world plus 761 ongoing conflicts between militias, guerrillas, and terrorist-type groups (<http://www.warsintheworld.com>). Why? Sin. Selfishness and the desire for power, wealth, and religious dominance drive this striving against others. But another part of David's prayer is that God would bring these warring nations to know Him: "...*kings shall bear gifts to you*" (68:29) and "*Nobles shall come from Egypt; Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God*" (68:31-32). Our world situation is desperate, but not hopeless. Let us pray with David that warring peoples around the world will hear of, and submit to, the God of peace.

June 21 — **Asaph** — Psalms 72-76. The last verse of Ps. 72 concludes Book 2, ending the bulk (75%) of David's psalms. Of the psalms in Book 3, Asaph wrote 10, the sons of Korah wrote 4, David wrote 1, and Ethan wrote his only psalm. Asaph, the son of Berechiah, wrote the first four psalms of Book 3 that we read today. He was a contemporary of David, the chief Levite who ministered before the ark of the covenant and a singer who also played the cymbals (1 Chron. 15-16). I liked his expression that he "*almost stumbled*" and "*nearly slipped*" when he "*was envious of the arrogant*" and "*saw the prosperity of the wicked*" (73:2-3). That is a great picture of temptation. Human nature is attracted to the confidence and wealth of other people. We "*almost*" stumble, but don't because we know better. We know that true confidence relies on God's strength and true riches are found in Him.

June 22 — **Glorious Deeds of Yahweh** — Psalms 77-78. The long Ps. 78 is a "historical" song, a category not listed in Fee and Stuart's book I mentioned earlier (June 16). When I was in seminary, one of my good friends took a class focused on Psalm 78 and felt it was one of the best classes he

had in seminary. The psalm is a look back to the history of Israel from the time of the Exodus. It challenges people to *"tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD"* (78:4). Yet, in spite of all the miraculous things God did for them, *"they sinned still more against him"* (78:17). So, God punished them, and *"they sought him; they repented and sought God earnestly"* (78:34). But their repentance was either short-lived or insincere: *"They flattered him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues"* (78:36). How important it is for us to remember the past deeds of God, to genuinely turn from our sins, and to submit to our Shepherd for guidance and protection!

June 23 — **Is God in Control?** — Psalms 79-85. Ps. 81:11-16 shows the struggle between the will of God and the will of His people. A loving God wanted to *"subdue their enemies"* (:14) and *"feed you with the finest of wheat"* (v. 16). On the other hand, the determined will of His people was to *"not listen to my voice ... not submit to me"* (v. 11). But rather than forcing them to obey Him, God *"gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels"* (v. 12). In a sense, God is not in control of everything, because He allows mankind to go their own way if they so choose, and suffer the consequences of missing out on intended blessings and having to endure hardships. How much better it is for His followers to *"listen to me ... walk in my ways!"* (v. 13). His continuing promise is that *"No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly"* (84:11).

June 24 — **Rock Solid** — Psalm 86-89. When God appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai to give him the second set of commandment tablets, the Lord declared that He was *"a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"* (Ex. 34:6). Throughout the psalms we read today, we see these ideas of God's steadfast love and faithfulness (Ps. 86:5, 15; 89:2, 14, 24). Then, the psalmist poses the question, *"Lord, where is your steadfast love of old, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?"* (Ps. 89:49). Do you sometimes also wonder why God doesn't show His steadfast love and faithfulness? Me too, but He is *still* steadfastly loving and faithful. He just has His own good reasons and timing. We may need those "dry times" to strengthen our faith to *believe* Him when we don't *feel* Him.

June 25 — **Useful Old People** — Psalms 90-96. Book 4 contains 17 psalms but only three of them have authors named in the titles (two are from David). The first one (Ps. 90) is a psalm of Moses, the only one attributed to him in the entire book of Psalms. There is a flavor of the wilderness wandering experience in Book 4, where Moses is mentioned six times. Moses was 120 years old when his life ended just short of the Promised Land, yet he declared that the average lifespan was much less: *"The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty"* (90:10). The relative shortness of life is emphasized, being like grass that flourishes in the morning but *"in the evening it fades and withers"* (90:6). So, what are we to do with this short life? Moses asked God to *"teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom"* (90:12). Make the most of your days! I have now passed that upper-average age of 80 but Moses gives me hope by saying that the righteous *"shall bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright"* (90:14-15). Even old men and women have a purpose: to grow, to praise God, and to declare His greatness to others. *"Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!"* (96:2-3).

June 26 — **Tolerated Evil** — Psalms 97-103. I was struck with the statement about what our attitudes should be regarding evil: *"O you who love the LORD, hate evil!"* (97:10). Who doesn't easily hate evil?! If we are still bold enough to watch the news on TV, we are appalled with the hideous things that are being done around the world with wars, murders, rapes, theft, etc. As I read on to David's Ps. 101, I saw a different picture of evil: evil things I do and often excuse, things that happen even within my own home. What God wants me to always do is to *"walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless ... I will know nothing of evil"* (101:2-4). Think of this when you are deciding what to watch on TV in your own home: *"I will not set*

before my eyes anything that is worthless.” We must not tolerate evil—coming from the outside or welling up from the inside.

June 27 — **Sweeping History** — Psalms 104-106. All three of these psalms are historical, recounting God’s works in creation and the experiences of His people. As pointed out by the ESV Study Bible, Ps. 104 roughly summarizes the six days of creation (see chart below). Ps. 105 is a sweeping historical psalm that begins at the Patriarchs’ promise of the land, continues to the plight of Joseph that brought the Hebrews into Egypt, their deliverance through the plagues in Egypt, and their entrance into the Promised Land. Ps. 106 focuses on the wandering of the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness and their continuing sinful practices in the Promised Land.

Creation day	Genesis	Event	Psalms
Day 1	1:3-5	Light	104:2a
Day 2	1:6-8	Divided waters	104:2b–4
Day 3	1:9-13	Divided land with plants	104:5–18
Day 4	1:14-19	Heavenly bodies	104:19–24
Day 5	1:20-23	Fish and fowl	104:25–26
Day 6	1:24-31	Animals and humans	104:27–30

June 28 — **Book 5** — Psalms 107-111. We begin Book 5 of Psalms today. Of those 44 psalms, only 15 of them reveal the writer’s name, 14 from David and one from Solomon. Scattered throughout our reading for today, there are four similar verses about giving thanks to God in the presence of other people: “*Let the redeemed of the LORD say so ...*” (107:2), “*I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples ...*” (108:3), “*... in the midst of the throng ...*” (109:30), and “*... in the company of the upright ...*” (111:1). We should not only praise God among other Christians but “*the peoples*” around us also need to hear our thanks for what we know God has done in creation, in circumstances, and in our personal lives.

June 29 — **Acrostically Blessed Commandments** — Psalms 112-118. Both Ps. 111 and 112 are acrostic poems, having each line begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. I noticed something surprising as I began reading today in Ps. 112:1, “*Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments!*” It is not natural to like being told what to do but that is what God wants from us regarding His commandments. If we take God’s “unnatural” way by delighting in those commands, we are “*blessed*” or “happy” as a result. Another “unnatural” statement comes in Ps. 112:5: “*It is well with the man who deals generously and lends.*” We usually resist being generous but it goes “*well*” with us when we do. God’s way often goes against what is “natural” to us but it is always the best way.

June 30 — **Good Affliction** — Psalm 119 is unique in many ways. It is the longest psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible, longer than several other books. It has an acrostic structure *par excellence*, with 22 stanzas, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza has 8 verses and the first word of each of those verses begins with the same alphabet letter. Like Ps. 19, the primary focus of Ps. 119 is the Word of God. It is called many things: commandments, decrees, laws, precepts, promises, rules, statutes, testimonies, ways, and words (in alphabetical order!). Almost every verse uses at least one of these words. One thing that struck me as I read was this: “*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word*” (119:67). Affliction can get our attention and remind us about our need for God. He can even give us affliction to lead us back to His Word: “*in faithfulness you have afflicted me*” (119:75). Later, we can appreciate how God used it to help us focus on Him: “*It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes*” (119:71). I thought it was significant that I had the hiccups throughout this reading, which was a small affliction

but enough to remind me that it is difficult to concentrate on anything, even God, when our body is calling to us in pain, discomfort, or annoyance.