

January 11 Su Reading B11 — Psalm 38 — The Memorial Offering

Audio: [Psalm 38 \(ESV\)](#)

Consequences of Sin — The title of this psalm of David is, “*for the memorial offering*,” which is described in Leviticus 2 as containing a handful of the grain offering brought for the priests. This handful was burned on the altar as “*a most holy part of the Lord’s food offerings*” (Lev. 2:3). It was somewhat like a tithe of a tithe that was given to God by the priest. As Psalm 38 shows, with many references, the memorial offering provided an opportunity to confess one’s sins before God. David referred to “*my sin ... my iniquities*” (v. 3-4), “*my foolishness*” (v. 5), “*when my foot slips*” (v. 16), and “*I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin*” (v. 18). Our sin negatively affects many areas of our life. It brings conviction from God, which David said felt like arrows shot into him by God and having His hand heavy upon him (v. 2). Twice he said, “*There is no soundness in my flesh*” (vv. 3, 7). Sin drags us down physically. It also affects us emotionally: “*all the day I go about mourning*” (v. 6) and “*I groan because of the tumult of my heart*” (v. 8). It results in loneliness sometimes as well, when “*friends ... companions ... and my nearest kin*” (v. 11) distance themselves from us in embarrassment. After we bring our sins before the Lord in humble and full confession, we wait for Him to act on our behalf: “*for you, O LORD, do I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer*” (v. 15). Think twice before you submit to an intentional sin! Ask yourself if you are willing to pay the consequences!

January 12 M Reading B12 — Psalm 41-42 — Blessed be the Lord

Audio: [Psalm 41-42 \(ESV\)](#)

Hope and Praise — The Book of Psalms is divided into five books or sections, each section closing with a doxology, i.e., a formal spoken or written praise to God. Psalm 41 is the last psalm of the first book, closing with this praise: “*Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.*” (v. 13). We have previously read the closing psalms of sections 2-4 (Ps. 72, 89, 106). The final psalm of the book closes with this praise: “*Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!*” (Ps. 150:6). Our second psalm for today’s reading has an interesting, repeated verse: “*Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God*” (Ps. 42:5, 11). Notice that they both ask the same question: “*Why are you cast down, O my soul ...?*” They also offer the same solution: “*Hope in God.*” Hope is the key to any of our depressing experiences because it turns our attention to God and His infinite wisdom, love, and power, instead of focusing on our circumstances. Hope in God in faith, and then praise Him in gratitude!

January 13 Tu Reading B13 — 2 Samuel 22 — The Song of David

Audio: [2 Samuel 22 \(ESV\)](#)

Delighted to Rescue — This psalm of David was repeated later for public worship as Psalm 18, which we have previously read. Four times, at the beginning and end of this song, it mentions God’s deliverance (vv. 1, 2, 44, 49). Why does God deliver people who are in trouble? Two reasons are provided here. The first one is because God’s people call upon Him. David said, “*I call upon the LORD ... and I am saved from my enemies*” (v. 4) and “*In my distress I called upon the LORD ... he heard my voice*” (v. 7). An interesting contrast to the effectiveness of David’s call was that his enemies also called upon God but were *not* listened to: “*They ... cried to the LORD, but he did not answer them*” (v. 42). God answers the prayers of those who belong to Him. The second reason God delivers His people is because of His love for them. David said, “*he rescued me, because he delighted in me*” (v. 20). God delights in those He saves, and he rescues those in whom He delights.

David's Roles — Most of today's chapter has essentially the same content about the mighty men of David that we read earlier in 1 Chronicles 11, so let's focus today on the poetic Song of David at the beginning, which makes three important statements about David. The first was about his role as king. He was *"the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob"* (v. 1). He came from relative obscurity, a young shepherd boy from Bethlehem, and was anointed to be king by Samuel under the clear direction of God. That his dynasty would continue was divinely promised: *"For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant"* (v. 5a). The second significant statement about David was that he was a psalmist, called *"the sweet psalmist of Israel"* (v. 5b). Almost half of the Book of Psalms was composed by David. He started the whole concept of music and poetry for use in Israel's congregational worship. The third important statement about David expands on his ministry of writing psalms by showing that he was also a prophet. He recognized that the source of his psalms was God: *"The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me..."* (vv. 2-3). Some consider this to be a Messianic psalm that looks ahead to the revelation of Jesus Christ. When it says in verse 1 that *"these are the last words of David,"* it is speaking of prophetic words, words that he knew came from God. David was a king, a psalmist, and a prophet.

Come and Worship — The title of Psalm 57 shows that it fits an earlier time when David was fleeing from Saul, but it also fits with Psalm 95 in terms of worship. Worship involves focusing on God and His greatness. Twice in Psalm 57, this statement of worship is made: *"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!"* (vv. 5, 11). Worship is basically exalting God, recognizing and declaring His greatness. David responded with two parts of worship, those of singing and giving thanks: *"I will sing and make melody! ... I will give thanks to you, O Lord"* (vv. 7, 9). Is that the way you worship with other believers every weekend? You don't have to be a good singer to sing because twice in Psalm 95, it instructs us to *"make a joyful noise"* to God (vv. 1-2, emphasis added). Three times we are called to come together for worship: *"Oh come, let us sing to the LORD ... Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving ... Oh come, let us worship and bow down"* (95:1, 2, 6). We are repeatedly instructed to gather for worship. Let's do it with purpose and pleasure!

Loving Him — Yahweh is declared in this psalm to be the ruler over all: *"The LORD reigns ... the Lord of all the earth"* (vv. 1, 5). Clear evidence of His greatness and goodness is displayed for all to see: *"His lightnings light up the world ... The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory"* (vv. 4, 6). Those who will respond positively are described in the last stanza as those *"who love the LORD ... his saints ... the righteous, and ... the upright in heart"* (vv. 10-11). Those terms are labels for us Christians as well, and the same closing section gives us three commands to follow. The first one is to hate evil: *"O you who love the LORD, hate evil!"* (v. 10). Are we doing that? Yes, we hate evil when we watch the news reports on crime, but how about the evil that tempts us and sometimes makes us fall, like anger, lust, gossip, and lying? Do we hate that, or do we tolerate them as only minor sins? The more we love God, the more we should hate those kinds of evil. The second command for righteous people is this: *"Rejoice in the LORD..."* (v. 12). We don't always do that, either. We sometimes think of Him as not really loving us, but neglecting us and even being unjust in withholding something we think we deserve. The command is not to *complain* about the Lord but to *rejoice* in Him. The third command comes in the same verse: *"and give thanks to his holy name!"* This involves no longer looking for things God seems to be withholding from us, but looking

at what He has already given to us. It is more than that, however, because this command is directed to “*his holy name*,” i.e., to who He is. He is the creator, the universal ruler, and the Savior.

January 17 Sa Reading B17 — Psalm 98-99 — Sing to Yahweh

Audio: [Psalm 98-99 \(ESV\)](#)

Joy to the World — Isaac Watts based his famous Christmas hymn on Psalm 98: “Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King.” Twice in Psalm 98 all the earth is challenged to “*make a joyful noise to the LORD [Yahweh] ... [and]... to the King, the LORD [Yahweh]*” (vv. 4, 6). Joy came to Adam when he met his Creator; it also came to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, and to you and me when we surrendered to Jesus. The Christmas hymn’s phrase, “Let heaven and nature sing,” comes from, “*Let the sea roar, and all that fills it ... Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together*” (vv. 7-8). Even the elements of nature rejoice in their Creator as they go about doing what they were designed to do. Watts ended with, “He rules the world with truth and grace ... [with] the glories of His righteousness,” reflecting the psalmist’s words, “*He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity*” (v. 9). The Creator God and Savior Christ will have the final word on all that was created, and it will be entirely fair and right.