

Well, I am excited to share with you some great information this morning. You're going to learn a lot from this introduction alone. Question. Why do blind people not skydive?

It freaks out the dogs.

Now you're going to get this. What do you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener.

Why did the math book look so sad?

Because of all its problems. What kind of tree fits in your hand? Palm tree. How many lips does a flower have? Okay, second graders, answer this.

How many lips does a flower have? Two lips.

Alan, what are the strongest days of the week?

Sunday and Saturday. All the rest are weekday.

Why should you stand in the corner if you get cold?

Who said that? It's always 90 degrees. Okay, okay, enough of that. Listen, listen. If you think you can do better, at the end of the service, I'm gonna give three people the chance to tell their best dad joke.

The person with the most groans wins a prize. So be thinking. Right now. It's a good prize. We're starting a new series called Jesus in the Psalms or summer in the psalms.

But I like to call it Jesus in the psalms. And to do it, I want to start with perhaps one of the, maybe not the most well known psalm, but one of my favorite psalms, psalm 100. Can we stand together and just read this psalm together? Psalm 100. A psalm for giving grateful praise is how the author titled it.

Let's read it together. Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us and we are his. We are his people. The sheep of his pasture enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name for the Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations.

Amen. You can be seated. A couple weeks ago, I shared about living in Guam and going to this place called Talafofo falls. Amazing experience. But if you know the story, it forever shaped my feelings about open water.

So there was another experience. When we lived in Guam, it wasn't about water at all. Although water was proximate. It was the little church that we attended when we lived there. Now it wasn't because it was an amazing facility building.

It sat right on the beach. We had to park on grassy sand, you know, can you picture grassy sand? And then we would walk through the grassy sand to this little wooden deck that would go up on the back side of the church. If you looked over this way, you would see the Pacific Ocean. If you looked on this side, you would see the side of the church.

We would go in, and some days, on good days, they'd open the windows and the doors, and this just warm salt air would kind of. Kind of billow through the space. It was a great facility, but it wasn't because of the facility. It wasn't because the pastor, his name was Jim Smith. There's like 5 billion Jim Smiths in the world, and he was one of them.

He was a great guy. But that church did not impact me because of the pastor. He was a fine man, but he was. He was. He was.

I was young, and he was my dad's pastor. He wasn't. Anyway, I don't want to denigrate Jim Smith. He was a great guy. It wasn't the size or the programming of the church.

We had less than 100 people on Easter. It was a very, very small church. What impacted me was the worship. Now, I grew up here in Indiana. That was my formative years.

And we went to a little pentecostal church down in Springville, and we sang some great songs, like all fly away, victory in Jesus blessed assurance. I'll meet you in the morning. All great hymns with all great messages. But when we got to Guam, we sang a different type of music in the worship service. We sang songs that were taken directly from scripture.

So we sang songs like seek ye first, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, taken from Jesus teaching. We sing songs like, thou art worthy, thou art worthy. Thou art worthy, taken from the book of revelation. A lot of the songs we sang, however, were taken from the Psalms. I will enter his gates with Thanksgiving in my heart.

I will enter his courts with praise. We sang. This is the day. This is the day that the Lord has made this one. We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.

Those are the songs we sang, and they were all taken from scripture. It was new, even though it was ancient. Old. Mostly it was powerful, because suddenly this ancient book from the middle of the Bible came alive to me, and singing the words of those songs opened up worship in a way that I don't know that I had ever experienced before. So today, we don't sit on a sandy beach with the windows open, enjoying the sound of gulls and the smell of dead fish.

We sit here in the middle of southern Indiana. But I'm gonna pray as we dig into the psalms over the summer, that your worship will be just as impacted as mine. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we open your word. Today we pray that you will reveal to us the wonderful things that you have there for us by your spirit.

Speak to us, teach us, open our eyes and ears to hear you. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. So the middle of your Bible, if you've got it in front of you, contains a wonderful, wonderful, marvelous gift. It's a songbook, actually.

We don't use hymnals in this church. Our lyrics are up there, but you have one in your hand nevertheless. It's called your Bible. And in the middle of your Bible is this book called psalms. And it is songs, really, songs that people wrote, songs about disappointment, songs about triumph, songs about despair and delight, written by many different people.

We think about David as the writer of the psalms, and he wrote the bulk of them. I would say he wrote over 73 that are directly ascribed to him. But Moses wrote psalm 90, a guy named Asaph, who was David's, like, worship leader, he wrote at least twelve. There was a band, a boy band called the Sons of Korah that wrote ten. Solomon wrote at least one or two.

A guy named Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman the Ezrahite. I think they were twins. I don't know. I picture them as twins. Ethan and Heman, they wrote two.

And then a third of the psalms. We don't know who wrote them. They're anonymous. Some rabbis ascribe maybe some to Ezekiel or Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah. We just don't know who wrote those psalms.

But because so many different people contributed to this book, in the middle of your Bible and their experiences, the psalms, when you read them, you will find they cover the entire spectrum of human experience, from anger and bitterness to peace and confidence. When I read the psalms, I'm reminded that my experience, my thoughts, my feelings, I'm not the first one who's ever felt that way. I'm not alone in my struggles. I can see the struggles of others in my concerns or complaints. When you read the psalms, you're aware of how complaining some of these poets and songwriters are.

David complains a lot. Complaints. I'm not alone in my complaints. I'm not alone in my uncertainty about life. If you feel uncertain about the direction of your life or the world, read the psalms, you will take comfort in the fact that you are not the first to feel that way.

And the truth is, even in their complaining and the way they express human concerns, the psalms also faithfully point us to the answer to those concerns. They point us to a better and more powerful understanding of God and how he works in our world, his goodness, his faithfulness to us, his power over the things that we are against, his majesty and the splendor, how he rules over all the affairs of men. And they give us a response and

encourage us in our response to God and how we pray. Sometimes we feel like we need to make up our own prayers to God. The psalms have some amazing prayers in there.

And when you read the psalms, you are praying those prayers alongside David or Asaph or the sons of Korah. They offer us words to express our repentance. They give us words to express our reverence for God's word. Now, to be clear, I still love victory in Jesus and blessed assurance. But singing those songs back in Guam brought Jesus closer, because Jesus took me to the psalms, and the psalms take me to Jesus.

How do they do that? How do the psalms point forward to Jesus? Well, if you read psalm 118, you will recognize something from Matthew, Mark and Luke, because psalm 118 describes the sacrifice and the work of Jesus far into the future when it says, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. If you go to psalm two, in fact, if you've got your bibles open, just open it right there in the middle and find the number two psalm. Psalm two is a confirmation that God, first of all, has anointed Jesus as lord and king at his baptism.

If you read psalm two, you will see a picture of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist when the spirit comes down and says, this is my beloved son. Psalm two says, this, you are my son. Today I have become your father. And in the very next verse points to the great commission Jesus would give to those of us who follow Jesus. Psalm two eight, he says, ask of me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession.

The early church took comfort from the promise of psalm two. It's an amazing psalm. When persecution came, when uncertainty came, when they were hiding in secret rooms and in the cellars and the wells away from persecution, they remembered that despite the troubles that they were in, God wins. In psalm two, verse one. If you got your bibles open, you can read that with me.

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? Because the one enthroned in heaven laughs, and he scoffs at them. He shakes his head. Why? Why do they rage against me?

They cannot win. In Ephesians four, Paul explains the gifts of the spirit through the lens of psalm 68, where the psalmist writes, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men. The psalms point forward to Jesus. But the psalms also do this. They allow Jesus to point back to them.

Jesus points back to the psalms. In John, chapter twelve, Jesus references psalm 22, says this, now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? In the very first verse of psalm 22, the psalmist writes this that you will recognize as a quote from Jesus. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

In Matthew 21, when the little children are being reprimanded for singing about Jesus in the temple, Jesus quotes psalm eight. He says, you have taught children and even nursing infants to give praise. In Matthew five, also known as the beatitudes, Jesus points us back to the psalms when he says this in verse 37. In psalm 37, the meek shall inherit the earth. Does that sound familiar?

And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Jesus points backward to the psalms. And these psalms not only give language for Jesus, but they give language for us as well. They give us words to say, speak when we are concerned over God's oversight of the world around us. Anyone been recently concerned about the world around us?

You? A little bit. Just a little bit. Little bit. Read the psalms.

Read the psalms and you will see that God scoffs at those who mock him. Are you worried about enemies? Are you worried about the nations? Are you worried about the future? Will the psalms speak to our fears about our enemies?

The psalms speak to how God rules over the nations. And the psalms speak of this promise he makes to bring us to his mountain, this figurative new Jerusalem, the place he has prepared for us. So this summer, we're going to unpack some psalms. We're going to unpack and explore this ancient book of worship and discover Jesus in it. But I want you to encourage.

I want to encourage you to do it. Not just here on Sunday mornings. I want to encourage you. Dad's Father's day. I want to encourage you to lead your family through some psalms.

Now, there are 150 of them. You can make an attempt over the summer to read through all of them. And if you just read through all of them, you can easily read through the psalms over the summer. But I'm going to recommend a more relaxed posture. I'm going to recommend.

Hold on. One a week.

You think you can do it? One psalm a week. Some of them are very short. Some of them are long. So some weeks may be a little more stressful on you, but one a week.

And here's how I want you to process it on day one. Pick a psalm. Any psalm will do. Pick a psalm. Day one, just read.

With the big picture in mind. I want you to turn to psalm 42. Psalm 42 is a great psalm. It's got some wonderful stuff in it. And we might want to just get our notepads out and start writing and making notes quickly.

But I encourage you not to do that on day one. Just read. Just read it, maybe out loud. Just read it. As a musician, when I hear a song and I need to chart it for worship or something like that, there's a temptation just to listen to a little bit and then start working.

But the best thing to do is to listen to the entire song, get a feel for its vibe, and then start unpacking it. And this is what I want you to do. The first time you read through the psalm, it's all right. Just listen to it. You might come across a few very familiar verses, and it's really easy to zero in on the verse that you really, really like, and you go, that's my verse.

Don't do it. Not yet. Just resist that urge. Just read the whole thing. Take it all in.

Because your favorite verse may be part of a bigger story God's telling. For example, in psalm 42, how many of you guys turn there? In psalm 42, it begins this way. As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, o God. We used to sing this song.

As the deer panteth for the water, so my soul longeth after you. That's a great. That's a great verse. People have it hung up on their walls in their living room, but that's not the totality of this psalm. There's more to this psalm than just that.

Because by the time we get to verse nine, the psalmist is in a very different place. In psalm nine, David says this, I say to God, my rock, why have you forgotten me? Why have you forgotten me, o God? Why do I go about mourning oppressed by my enemy? It doesn't play that well on Sunday morning to sing that part, but it's there.

If you've ever felt forgotten by God, the author of this psalm has been there, too. But then at verse eleven, he comes to this amazing place. He goes, I will put my hope in God and I will praise him yet again, for he is my savior and my God. If you stop at the deer, you miss the opportunity for this song to speak and go deeper in the process of disappointment and trust. So read, first of all, with just the big picture of mind.

Just dwell on that for one day. And then day two, read it again. This time pay attention to some patterns. If you've got your bibles open there, find psalm 37, because this is the day where you get to take some notes. Those of you who are english majors, you love it.

You got your notepad and your pencil handy, going to take some notes. Because the psalms are poetry, and poetry contains patterns. So you're going to channel your inner english teacher, and you're going to look for parallels and contrast. Parallels and contrast. So in psalm 37, it's a psalm of David.

He says, do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong. What are we not supposed to do? We don't fret and we don't be envious. Those are parallel ideas. Okay, write that down, but then look for some contrast, and it's there.

Look at verse nine. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. Well, there's some contrast. Evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will be rewarded. By looking at patterns, we get a better understanding of the message that God wants to, wants to tell us.

In this instance, it's like, yes, evil. Those who are against God, they will be taken care of. Those who follow God will be taken care of as well. And then on day three, I like this. Get a little lost in the art of the psalm.

So if you're still in 37, this is a good one. The psalms are filled with these beautiful word pictures. If you think about psalm 23, you've got these still waters, you've got green pastures, you've got this tableland, you've got shadowy valleys. And so these images are used. Every poet, every songwriter uses these images to get a picture in your head.

And these pictures point us to God. So David talking in verse, in chapter, in psalm 37 is the difference. He's talking about evildoers, and he says this in verse two. They are like grass that will wither. Like green plants, they will soon die away.

We were just talking about how those petunias that we planted a week ago are looking pathetic because it's so dry, despite all the rain we've had. They are withering up the ground. The grass is getting crunchy under our feet. You got that picture in your head. Can you picture maybe your own backyard?

Wrong? May prosper for a season. It may spring up and look all green and nice, but in the heat of divine justice, it will pass away. And then David says of God in psalm 57 20, psalms over, he says this, I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. So when the heat of justice, do we need to fear?

No, because we take refuge in the coolness and the shadow of God's wings and let the disaster just play out around us. We rest secure in him. When I think about the refuge of God, I think of psalm 91. We were just talking about that back there. Where he who dwells in the secret place of the most high will abide in the shadow of the almighty.

And I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my strength, my God, whom I trust. This picture of the shadow of his wings, this amazing eagle that's got his wings spread over her young, it reminds us that we are secure and strong in the presence of God. Then, day four. You're going to do something really challenging. You're going to read it or sing it aloud.

If you've not done so, you're going to do it now. You're going to. I want to encourage you to sing it now. If you're reading your Bible, you're probably reading it, maybe to yourself, silently. That's fine.

However, the psalms were first written for public worship. They were intended to be heard. So read it out loud. You're probably by yourself, so it's just fine once you read it out loud. Try something crazy.

Try singing it in psalm 57. The little note below the psalm 57 says this. This is a psalm of David, and it's an instructional psalm, and it says this. Here's the instruction. It's for the director of the music, whoever that's going to be.

And here's the tune it needs to be sung to. Do not destroy. Now, this is the song I sing every time I leave the boys alone at home. Please do not destroy my house. It's the only one I've got.

I need it when I come home. I don't know what that tune is like. Got cannons in it, like the 1812 overture. I don't know what that tune is, but when David wrote this psalm, he intended it to be sung. So sing it.

And then day five. Now, look for Jesus, because Jesus name is all over the psalms. Now, his name is not mentioned. The psalms were written hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus was born. But each one of those psalms will in some way point us to Jesus.

Whether it's the good shepherd or that eagle with overarching wings, whether it's the judge, the king who will reward the righteous and judge the evil. Jesus is all over the psalms. They all point us to Jesus. Now, these recommendations are in no certain order. You can.

If you find Jesus on day one, that's great. If you want to sing it on day two, that's perfectly fine. But these are ways to process through the psalms and put them deeper into your heart. When reading scripture, you just need to know this. There are no points awarded for getting through it quickly.

Take your time. Take your time. Because the psalms are good for us. We need the psalms for our emotional, our mental or spiritual well being. With their open and honest assessment of life and the challenges that that life brings us.

They invite us to come in and even unpack our own worries, our own complaints. And in that way, they are better than any therapist. Sorry for any therapist in the room right now, but they're better than any therapist. And the way they repeatedly and faithfully point us back to God's goodness and his faithfulness, well, they're better than any preacher. Sorry for offending any preachers in the room.

The psalms are amazing because they repeatedly and faithfully point us to God. Here's what nt Wright said. It says the psalms are inexhaustible and deserve to be read, said, sung, chanted, whispered, learned by heart, and even shouted from the rooftops. They expressed all the emotions we are ever likely to feel, including some we hope we never feel. And they lay them raw and open in the presence of God.

And there is where we meet Jesus every time. You need the psalms. That's why we're going through it this summer. We're going to cheer in a time of communion. And I want to go back to the psalm that we read at the very beginning, psalm 100.

So I'm going to have. I'm going to have the guys put that psalm back up there and we're just going to read through it again. You can stay seated this time, but let's just, let's just read through it. And as we do, I want you to find one phrase or one thought that's going to be your thought. You're going to think about when we share in a time of communion, time of silence in just a little bit.

So let's read. Shout for joy to the Lord. All the earth worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us and we are his. We are his people. The sheep of his pasture enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever.

His faithfulness continues through all generations. Dads, as you're surrounded today, this morning by the next generation. Just be mindful of the fact that just as he is your God, he will be faithful to your next generation, too. Let's pray. Jesus, we thank you for your goodness and your everlasting love and your faithfulness.

We thank you through the work of the cross that you now call us your own. We are your sheep. The people of your pasture. Meet us now in this time of quiet communion. We pray this in your name.

Amen.

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