



**Bible Reading Plan**  
*August 2023*

August 2 – Psalm 14

1. What do you think of the psalmist's blanket indictment of humankind (verse 3)? How does the knowledge that Paul quotes this verse in Romans 3 affect your answer? How do we acknowledge the theological 'fallenness' of all people without constantly assuming the worst of them?
2. What happens when a culture decides that 'there is no God' (v. 1)? What kind of actions flow from a heart that believes that?
3. Flip over to Psalm 53 and you'll see that it has an uncanny resemblance to this psalm. Why do you think *this* psalm essentially appears twice in the psalms?

August 4 – Psalm 15

1. How do you measure up when you read Psalm 15? It sets the bar high, doesn't it?
2. How does Jesus' righteousness change things?
3. Which of these characteristics do you need to work on (not as a requirement for salvation but as grateful ethical response to grace)?

August 7 – Psalm 16

1. Take a minute to pray and apply the psalmist's prayers in your own circumstances: "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing" (v. 2). "You have made my lot secure" (v. 5). "I have set the LORD always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (v. 8). "You have made known to me the path of life" (v. 11).
2. Look at Acts 2:22-28. See something familiar? Why do you think Peter quoted this psalm during 'the biggest speech of his life' (at Pentecost) and why was it such an appropriate psalm? Note too that Paul quotes this psalm in Acts 13:34-37. How does this psalm apply to Jesus?

## August 9 – Psalm 17

1. What do you think of verse 3? “Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin” (Psalm 17:3). Is the psalmist being willfully blind to his moral condition or is he legit perfect?
2. Why do some people seek only the rewards in ‘this life’ (v. 14)? How does the promise of resurrection (‘when I awake’, v. 15) motivate us to live ‘this life’ in light of ‘the next’?

## August 11 – Psalm 18

1. What does the description of God in verses 6-19 say about what He is like and His commitment to His people?
2. What do we do with David’s admissions that he overtook and destroyed his enemies in light of Jesus’ call to ‘love your enemy’ and ‘turn the other cheek’?

## August 14 – Psalm 19

1. The psalm opens with the idea that Creation itself bears witness all around the world to the goodness and glory of God. Where have you seen God’s glory expressed in His Creation?
2. How does David’s attitude toward the Law of God differ from ours/our culture’s? How can we cultivate David’s perspective in our own heart?
3. BONUS – memory verse - May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14 NIV).

## August 16 – Psalm 20

1. Years ago, a friend of mine went through a series of trials that radically altered the course of their life. I was at a loss to know how to pray for them until I found this psalm. It gives us words to pray for friends in difficult situations and looks forward confidently to the time when God will have answered them. Who can you pray these words for?
2. Is verse 4 a ‘blank cheque’ to pray for and expect anything we want? If God gives us whatever our heart desires, what desires should shape our hearts first?

3. What does verse 7 mean? ‘Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.’ What do people trust in today?

#### August 18 – Psalm 21

1. To get into the right mindset for this psalm, you need to read it as if you were one of King David’s subjects. Imagine attending a tenth anniversary coronation ceremony for David and thinking back on the years of David’s reign – his walk with the Lord, his desire for religious faithfulness among his people, the many victories God gave to him. You might very well pray Psalm 21 (scholars suspect that this is just the sort of occasion this was written for). How might reflecting on your king’s obedience and God’s consequent blessings affect your own walk with the Lord?

2. Psalm 21 has an interesting perspective. It is a psalm celebrating a faithful king and yet it clearly puts God ABOVE the king (‘How great is his joy in the victories YOU [God] give!’ v. 2). What steps can we take to cultivate the same attitude that recognizes that ‘all I have comes from the LORD’?

3. Read this psalm again picturing Jesus as the king that it refers to. What does this communicate about Jesus’ faithfulness, His glory and His righteous return?

#### August 21 – Psalm 22

1. As the NIV suggests, the psalm was probably put to music with a tune called ‘The Doe of the Morning.’ What modern song would you match with these words to complement their meaning?

2. What can this psalm teach us about what to do when God seems absent? Does God ever actually forsake His people?

3. Psalm 22 seems to have been on Jesus’ mind in the hours leading up to His crucifixion. He quotes verse 1 directly on the cross, implying that he was thinking about the whole psalm since “citing the first words of a text was, in the tradition of the time, a way of identifying an entire passage.”<sup>1</sup> I wonder if He was processing what was happening to Him through the lens of Psalm 22. If so, what comfort does Psalm 22 offer?

<sup>1</sup> James Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation Commentary), page 105.

4. The Gospel writers also saw Psalm 22 coming to life in Jesus' life and death, quoting or alluding to Psalm 22 five different times (v. 1 = Matthew 27:46; v. 7 = Matthew 27:39; v. 8 = Matthew 27:43; v. 15 = John 19:28; v. 18 = Matthew 27:35). How does knowing that Jesus experienced suffering like this affect our experience of suffering?

#### August 23 – Psalm 23

1. Psalm 23 is one of the best known and most loved passages in all of the Bible. What has been your experience with the psalm? How has it impacted you?

#### August 25 – Psalm 24

1. Our default attitude as human beings seems to be that 'we are our own people' and that 'all we have is ours because we've worked for it.' Psalm 24:1-2 would beg to differ. How do these verses challenge our worldly assumption?

2. The first verse of this psalm used to be painted in the archway at the front of Langford's sanctuary. There's a painting in the vestibule with the same verse that was commissioned for our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Why do you think our predecessors chose to put it front and centre in our church?

3. It might be helpful to think of this psalm as a journey into the king's throne room. Stage 1, you're walking through the fields that approach the castle, marvelling at all that you see, realizing that it all belongs to the king. Stage 2, you're at the front gates, asking 'who is worthy to approach a king like this?' Answer: 'Those with clean hands and a pure heart wholly devoted to this king and no other.' Stage 3, you're in the very presence of the king, realizing that this is not just the king but the King of Glory, the LORD who blesses His people!

4. The part about 'lift up your heads you gates' is a metaphorical reference to the doorframes of the Temple. The idea is that the LORD is SO big, SO all-encompassing that the entrances into the Temple have to expand in order to welcome Him in.

#### August 28 – Psalm 25

1. Psalm 25 is an acrostic poem, meaning that each line begins with the successive letter of the alphabet (or *aleph-beth* in this case). The acrostic format may have been used to help with memorization; it may also have been used to teach children to read and write, incorporating God's words into their instruction.

2. Because of the acrostic format, this psalm has a lot of unique ideas rather than one comprehensive theme (for example: guidance and instruction, the sins of my youth, God's character, a cry for help). Which of these ideas resonates most with as you read?

#### August 30 – Psalm 26

1. What does a blameless life look like according to this psalm? How might we tweak our description in light of the Cross?

2. According to verses 4-5 (and Psalm 1 for that matter!), those who live a blameless life 'do not sit with deceitful men or consort with hypocrites' and yet Jesus was constantly doing exactly that. How do we shine like lights for Jesus in the world without being affected by its corrupting influences?

#### September 1 – Psalm 27

1. When you read Psalm 27, try reading it as David's self-talk (or David 'preaching to himself' if you like). Often when we read Scripture, we read it as if it was just 'words on a page' and forget that someone was going through something significant when they wrote it down.

I wonder if David was in a tight spot (eg. verse 12) and he wrote this psalm as a way to refocus his attention on God. Given his situation and his enemies, he might very well have been afraid; to deal with that subjective fear though, he walked himself through the objective truths about who God is. 'THE LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?' ('No one!'). 'In the day of trouble, he will keep me safe.' 'Even if my closest relatives forsake me, THE LORD will not.' 'Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart.'

Read this way, what does Psalm 27 teach us about 'preaching to ourselves' when things are tough (ie., applying the objective truths of God to our subjective feelings about the situation)?

2. Verse 14's 'be strong and take heart' echoes a command that God issued time and again in the Old Testament. It literally says 'be strong and make courageous your heart.' In Deuteronomy 31:6,7, Joshua 1:6,7,9,18, Joshua 10:25, 1 Chronicles 22:13 & 28:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:7, the same command – 'be strong and make yourself courageous' - is given. Why is that such an important reminder?