

The Theology and Spirituality of the Psalms Part 2

The Name of the Lord:

1. In the Bible, a name reveals one's identity. Divine names in the Bible are integral to knowing God's identity. Who is God? And what is He like? In the Scripture, the Lord's divine attributes are linked to His name. Knowing and dwelling on His name helps us worship, trust, and be faithful to Him.
2. The focus of the Psalms is directed towards Yahweh, the Lord who has made Himself known to them and given them His name. The words, praises, and prayers of the Psalms are centred on the words and works of Yahweh. The Psalmist remembers, proclaims, praises, and calls on Yahweh.
3. The Attributes of Yahweh is known to Israel through the revelation of Scripture and the many things the He has done for them.

Example: The God who created all things

God created all things and therefore, He is the source of all things. Everything came into existence by His word, and He sustains and commands all things.

Psalms 8:3-4

³ *When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?*

1. The Psalmist contrasts the Lord's infinite creation (heavens) to His very finite and fragile work: mankind.
2. The focus of the contrast lead to this revelation: The Lord who can sustain such vast and majestic bodies in the heavens that is seen by all people is also the one who cares deeply for us who are small, fragile and finite.

Psalms 19:1-8

¹ *The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*
² *Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.*
³ *They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.*
⁴ *Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.*
*In the heavens God has pitched a tent for
the sun.*

⁵ *It is like a bridegroom coming out of his
chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.*
⁶ *It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.*
⁷ *The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul.*
*The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.*
⁸ *The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.*

1. The Psalmist invites us to see how the beauty and intricate workings of all creation. They speak of the glory, wisdom, and faithfulness of God.
2. Likewise, the law of God displays these dazzling attributes of God in a deeper and richer way.

Remembering (Meditating)

1. Remembering is an important aspect of the Psalmist's spirituality.

Psalms 19:14

*¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Deuteronomy 4:9

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

2. Do we suffer from amnesia? Do we live in world that easily forgets and are selective about what we choose to remember? Sometimes we tend to forget God and the things that He has done for us. Like Israel, our present struggles have the tendency to eclipse God's past act of deliverance. The Psalmist will not forget. He holds on tightly to these stories believing the same Lord is with him, especially in his hour of need.

Psalms 78:40-42

*⁴⁰ How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness
and grieved him in the wasteland!
⁴¹ Again and again they put God to the test;
they vexed the Holy One of Israel.
⁴² They did not remember his power—
the day he redeemed them from the oppressor,*

Psalms 106:6-8

*⁶ We have sinned, even as our ancestors did;
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
⁷ When our ancestors were in Egypt,
they gave no thought to your miracles;
they did not remember your many kindnesses,
and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.
⁸ Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
to make his mighty power known.*

3. The world also tends to forget the cause for much of the brokenness and suffering in the world. The people of God have forgotten the injustice that the weak and poor have endured under the hand of the wicked, the suffering and violence, godlessness has caused; and how that pride, arrogance and selfishness has caused so much misery. In short, people tend to forget that the world does not function well when it decides to forget the Lord and His ways. The Psalmist will not forget.

Psalms 10:2-6

² *In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.*

³ *He boasts about the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the Lord.*

⁴ *In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.*

⁵ *His ways are always prosperous; your laws are rejected by him; he sneers at all his enemies.*

⁶ *He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me." He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."*

4. Pride is the key reason why one forgets. The Lord is needed as long as there is a need. Pride requires God to always prove Himself a useful utility for achieving one's selfish ambition. While acknowledging the Lord to be the source of all blessing, the Psalmist does not simplify faith in a way where "Obedience = Rewards". The Psalmist worships the Lord for who He is, and puts His faith in the steadfast love and mercy of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:10-14

¹⁰ *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.* ¹¹ *Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.* ¹² *Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down,* ¹³ *and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied,* ¹⁴ *then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

Deuteronomy 8:17-19

¹⁷ *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."* ¹⁸ *But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.*

¹⁹ *If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed*

Psalms 84:5-12

⁵ *Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.*

⁶ *As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.*

⁷ *They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.*

⁸ *Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.*

⁹ *Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.*

¹⁰ *Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere;*

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

¹¹ *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor;*

no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

¹² *Lord Almighty,*

blessed is the one who trusts in you.

Psalms: A Compilation of Photograph to help one remembers and focus on the Lord

The scriptures invite us to recall the past so that we may remember things in light of God's work in our life. Remembering correctly is an important aspect of the Psalmist's spirituality. He will not forget all the things the Lord has done and said throughout history. The Psalmist meditates and dwells on the works and the words of Lord until the very light and presence of the Lord fills his heart.

We take photographs to remember the important moments in our life. A photograph captures more than just an image; when we look at the picture, memories of people, events, emotions, and thoughts began to flood our mind. The Psalmist, through the use of poetry, captures pictures of God's work among His people. These photographs move the worshipper to remember and to focus on the attributes of God.

Some important events that have shaped the theology of the Psalms:

1. Creation
2. God's covenant with Abraham
3. Deliverance from Egypt
4. Journey through the wilderness
5. Sinai: The covenant: God showing Himself to Moses
6. The Tabernacle/Temple
7. God's covenant with David
8. The Lord's anointed King
9. The restoration of all things under the Lord's kingship

What are the photographs we carry in our heart? Reflect the verses below.

Philippians 2:1-11

¹ Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Prayer Items

Psalms 139:23-24

*²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalms 19:14

*¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be
pleasing in your sight,*

Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

1. The Holy Spirit will move us to reflect on how Jesus has saved us.
2. We may grow in the attributes of God displayed on the cross.

Church

- An intimate desire to be in His presence in prayer and worship
- God will continue to shape our lives through His word
- God will help us touch lives for His glory in the place we are in
- To unite our hearts as a Church to care and stand together, with our resources and abilities to help the people around
- Ministries: Life Explorers, Redeeming Roses, Destiny Kids & Teens, Sunday School, Lifeline Youth, Worship Team, Pulpit Ministry & Church Leadership
 - God will help us do His work during this season
 - God will help us raise leaders
 - God will open doors for us to reach others

Covid-19

- The affected education system
- The economy, people's livelihood
- Vaccines: it will be fairly managed, and people will recover
- Wisdom and good governance
- Badly affected countries (e.g. India)

Healing

- Suba: severe headaches
- Francis: recovery from surgery
- Sis Rachel: cancer
- Adri & Ricky (Michelle's sister and brother-in-law): covid
- Elliot's family

Malaysia

- God will guide the leaders of our nation.
- Healing that brings unity. God will raise His church to be His instrument of reconciliation.
- God will restore Justice and Compassion. The leaders will look into the needs of the poor and vulnerable.
- Revival in the Church of Malaysia