

psalm 32

a psalm of thanksgiving

- ¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
- ² Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- ³ While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
- ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*
- ⁶ Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress,
the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.
- ⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. *Selah*
- ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- ⁹ Do not be like a horse or a mule,
without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.
- ¹⁰ Many are the torments of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.
- ¹¹ Be glad in the Lord and rejoice,
O righteous,
and shout for joy,
all you upright in heart.

your responses and thoughts

Use this space to respond to God and to the psalm, or to collect your notes.

praying a psalm

Dwelling in the Psalm

- The goal of praying a psalm is to seek God's voice and presence through the psalm—it is *not* to write a scholarly commentary afterwards.
- Read the psalm all the way through. It's okay if you find yourself stopping in a certain place. Dwell there, listen to what God might be saying to you through that part, or what you might need to say to God. Try reading out loud.
- This isn't the time for analysis. Read the psalm like you might watch a sunset... drink it in, rest, breathe deeply. Read what the psalm has to say to you with trust and expectation.
- You are listening to the voice of God through the voice of the psalmist. God may speak in many different ways: through words, through verses of the psalm, through images, through a memory. Might be hard to hear God at first, but as we pray together over the next few weeks, I hope that God's voice in these psalms becomes clearer to you.
- Pay attention to the phrases and images that resonate with your life.

Focusing on the Psalm

- Look at repeated words. Is there anything important happening with those words in the psalm—and in your heart?
- Look at the structure of the psalm. Is there any significance in how the psalm begins and where the psalm ends? Is there an emotional journey? Does it resonate with your own life's journey? Are there different sections to the psalm?
- Do you agree or disagree with parts of the psalm? Why?

Responding to the Psalm

- Re-read the psalm. After each verse or section, acknowledge God's voice in those words, speak to God, and write your own responses.
- Write. Speak. Sing. Draw. Listen.
- How is this psalm your own prayer? How can you pray for your friends and family, loved ones and enemies?

three kinds of psalms

Hymns and Praise. Psalms of Orientation.

1, 8, 19,
29, 33,
47, 48,
65, 66,
68, 78,
87, 93,
95, 96,
97, 98,
99, 100,
104, 105,
111, 113,
114, 117,
122, 134,
135, 145,
146, 147,
148, 149,
150.

- The “Hymn” is an expression of praise and worship for who God is and for the great things God has done and given. The hymn usually speaks of God in the third person, and praises God broadly within the community for who God is and how God characteristically acts.
- How is God acting in your community? How is God moving in your life? What is right, good, and blessed in life right now?

Lament. Psalms of Disorientation.

Person
6, 10, 22,
26, 31,
38, 39,
40, 42,
43, 54,
55, 56,
57, 58,
59, 64,
70, 71,
86, 88,
109, 120,
141, 142
Group
12, 44,
60, 74,
79, 80,
83, 85,
89, 90,
94, 106,
123, 126,
137, 144

- Laments cry out in pain. Things are not right in the world. Life is broken, and it can longer stay this way any longer. Restoration, justice, healing, and deliverance are all needed right now. This brokenness is unacceptable, and we need God to fix things.
- Common Structure: Invocation of God, Recollection of God’s deeds in the past (painful but hopeful), Lament, Confession of trust, Plea, Vow of praise, Transition to praise.
- How does this psalm give your own pain words? What part of your life needs healing? What injustice is being done in your community? How can God fix this? Can you find a way to praise God through your pain? What statement of trust can you say right now?

Thanksgiving. Psalms of Reorientation.

9, 18, 30,
32, 34,
73, 92,
103, 107,
116, 118,
124, 136,
138

- We are in distress, we cry to God, he delivers us, we thank God. “declarative praise”—praise that declares what God has done for you. Such praise begins in life and is personal but it must become public (testimony).
- Common Structure: opening praise, recollection (experience of affliction, prayer, God’s response), renewed commitment and invitation, praise.
- What has God done for you? What acts of redemption have you seen around you? How has God delivered you? What are you thankful for? What commitment can you make to God, to yourself, and to your community in response?