

Summer in the Psalms

The songs that Jesus sang

Will God accept me?– Psalm 15

August 14, 2022

It may not be the dominant question on your mind, but is there a more important one? Life is short, far shorter than we realise. And one day, whether we like it or not, we'll know the reality of the answer.

With this Psalm, Lewis Roderick shows us what God requires from us, and why there's joy to be found in the despair of our failure.

For personal reflection/community discussion

Read – Read the passage in its context several times. Read it slow enough to understand what God is saying through it.

- What ideas or words are emphasised, repeated or related in this passage?
- In your own words, what is the main idea of this passage? (Try to summarise these verses in 10 words or less)

Examine – Next, try to understand the specifics of what the passage is communicating.

- What do you notice about God? What has he done/is he doing in these verses?
- What do you learn about Jesus and his gospel from this passage?
- What does it reveal about people?
- How do you think the writer wanted his reader to respond to these words?

Apply - After seeking to understand God's Word in this passage, consider how he intends to use it in your heart and life today.

- As honestly as you can, admit to the Lord the reasons given in the Psalm why you cannot climb God's holy Hill. Now consider Jesus and REJOICE! He is the man who lived vv.2-5 in your place. In him you will enter in and 'never be shaken'.
- Lewis quoted Dane Ortlund and spoke of the possibility of "jumping to Jesus too quickly" and missing what God is calling us to live out in the Kingdom. The fuller quote is below, and the whole article found [here](#). Does your understanding of the gospel ever lead you to 'squirrel out from under the moral instruction'? Why is this? Why might this be faulty understanding of the gospel? Cf. Romans 2: 4, Titus 2: 11-14.

Because this psalm is heavy on instruction and apparently light on redemption, one temptation for today's "gospel-centered" generation would be to immediately find a way to squirrel out from under the moral instruction of the psalm. But there is no getting around the high calling of this psalm. Nor should we wish there to be. The summons of this psalm is a call to humaneness, to dignity, to integrity of life, to nobility, to the "glory and honour" with which and for which we were created ([Ps 8:5](#)). This summons thus lands especially on confessing believers depicting the photo negative of this psalm—deceptive, backstabbing, evil-loving, financially slippery, and so on. Why would we soften this summons? This is the kind of human living, and the kind of functioning society, each of us longs for. This is interpersonal beauty. It is shalom.

Therefore, we should not prematurely apply comfort to our own hearts or the hearts of others for the many ways we do not live out this summons. There is a kind of healthy homiletical and hermeneutical patience that lets a text ripen before bringing the gospel to bear on it. Running backs in American football are taught to be patient, waiting for the hole to open up as blockers do their job. If they try to hit the hole too soon, the play collapses. Preachers and teachers rightly enthused about the gospel of grace need a similar discipline of patience. One cannot run to the gospel or Christ too soon out of a fear of becoming moralistic. Let the play develop. Let the people hear that this is the life to which they are summoned. Let it land. If the immediate application in reading or preaching this psalm is to say, "Well, none of us can do any of this—but thank God for Jesus who did it in our stead," we are hitting the hole too early.

After all, Jesus himself did not always give the immediate balm of forgiveness to those who came to him. He paraded before the rich young ruler a handful of the Ten Commandments ([Matt 19:16–22](#)). The comfort of the redemption that is the central message of the Bible lands most deeply on those who have first felt the weight of the commandments, and it is only those who have felt their utter inability to discharge the commandments out of their own resources who will ultimately be able truly to live them out.²⁴ Penultimate despair is often a vital ingredient in ultimate deliverance.