
Day 117 – April 27

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

Psalms About Righteousness and Wickedness

Readings: Psalm 40, 49, 50, 73

Reflections:

- Psalm 40: A great U2 song “40” is inspired by this psalm. It begins with a beautiful and simple testimony of God’s saving grace and power: 1) Wait on God, 2) God hears and saves from the slimy pit, 3) God sets his feet on rock, 4) Brings joy and a new song, 5) Others respond by putting their trust in God. This process of salvation is repeated over and over in Scripture. The Psalm then from this place of understanding and experiencing God’s salvation goes on to highlight some key truths that again are themes of the meta-narrative of Scripture. First, sacrifices and offerings that God does not desire. God does not desire religion or ritual. He desires covenant faithfulness, “my ears you have pierced.” In other words, your grace has made me your servant for life. It is a covenant faithfulness based on love not on trying to keep the law. Well, what about the law? David writes, “I desire to do your will (because of God’s love flowing into his life), your law is within my heart.” David acknowledges that true rightness in life and relationship with God flows from the inside out based on a true and transforming experience of God’s grace, mercy and love. Out of this place of expressing his heart, he continues to cry out to God which shows that our relationship is one of ongoing daily dependence, not just one time events that take care of us for the rest of our lives.
- Psalm 49: A psalm to remind those who love money and material things that none of it lasts. David helps us ask why we should forfeit the eternal wealth of intimacy with God for the temporal and worthless stuff of the present.
- Psalm 50: This psalm captures God telling his people he doesn’t need any of their offerings or sacrifices but he points them back to heart issues like gratitude and covenant faithfulness. Here again is God telling people, “I don’t want religion! I want your heart!”
- Psalm 73: Asaph is struggling in this Psalm. At that moment in time, the wicked are enjoying the good life and he can’t understand why he as a righteous man is suffering. It is the age old question of why do bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. He confesses that this grieved and angry heart made him into a

brute beast that has no understanding. Then he remembers...Your presence is always with me, holding my hand like a Dad holding his little child's hand. He re-orientes his attention and realizes that all he really wants is intimacy with God. In that new place of just wanting God he realizes the wicked will only last a moment and then they will be gone. He can look forward to being with God forever and he delights in having Him as his eternal refuge. A great Psalm to meditate on when you are struggling. What a great vision of intimacy with our Father. Also, a good Psalm to read when you are reflecting on Habakkuk which has the same theme.