

## OT overview 7

### Psalms – Cries from the Heart – Leader’s version

### For an hour study, just do the starred \* questions

There is quite a lot for the leader to read out loud in this study. This is because psalms are often poetry and therefore not necessarily easy to read and understand if your literacy or language ability is not high.

**Check in** – ask everyone how they are and how they feel about studying the Bible today.

\*1. **STICKERS** What is a psalm?

*Read out the answers and then give an accurate explanation:*

*The Psalms are a collection of songs and prayers, written over 3000 years ago. They are the human heart's cry to God, revealing many different emotions in different circumstances. This was a common style of writing in OT times (not just amongst the Jews). Some Psalms are 'Messianic' (prophetic regarding Jesus) e.g. Psalm 22. Others are laments i.e. sad, mourning about something. Some are full of praise etc.*

### What does the passage say and mean?

60 minutes

Questions 2-4 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work on them in pairs.

\*2. **SDL** Are there any emotions you would not be willing to express to God in private prayer? Be honest!

\*3. **SDL** Look up the following verses. How do you think the psalmist was feeling?

(In a big group, give pairs a few verses to work on and download to the group).

| <b>Psalm</b>     | <b>Emotion</b>         |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Psalm 4 v 8      | <i>Secure in God</i>   |
| Psalm 5 v 2      | <i>In need of help</i> |
| Psalm 6 v 1-2, 6 | <i>Guilt</i>           |
| Psalm 8 v 3-4    | <i>Amazed</i>          |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Psalm 13 v 1-2    | <i>Distant from God</i>                                 |
| Psalm 13 v 5-6    | <i>Assured, leading to praise</i>                       |
| Psalm 18 v 2      | <i>Confident, safe</i>                                  |
| Psalm 22 v 6-7    | <i>Rubbish, rejected by people</i>                      |
| Psalm 22 v 15     | <i>Exhausted</i>  |
| Psalm 25 v 16     | <i>Lonely</i>   |
| Psalm 32 v 3-5    | <i>Guilt, then knowledge of forgiveness</i>             |
| Psalm 88 v 15-18  | <i>Angry at God, depressed</i>                          |
| Psalm 109 v 11-13 | <i>Angry at someone else, asking God to punish them</i> |

\*4. **SDL** Does it surprise you that it's OK to express any of these things to God? Why?

\*5. Read Psalm 103 slowly to the group.

What mood do you think the writer (King David) was in?

*It sounds like a good / positive mood. This is a prayer with no requests!*

\*6. **SHOUT-OUT** Read Psalm 103 v 8-13. What does this tell us that God is like?

*Compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, rich in love, He gets angry but His anger does not become permanent or bitter. He is merciful, His love is immeasurable, He removes our sins from us to infinity.*

\*7. **SHOUT-OUT** Read Psalm 103 v 14-16. What does this tell us that people are like?

*We are created from dust (with the breath of life from God!), we die and are forgotten by future generations.*

\*8. Although we will die, what promise do we find in v17-18?

*God's love for those who fear (recognise, love, revere etc) and obey Him is eternal.*

\*9. Read Psalm 103 v 19-22. Who is told to praise God and why?

*Everyone! Angels (heavenly creatures, God's messengers), heavenly hosts (probably angels), all of creation and finally the psalmist tells himself to praise God! We are told to praise God because He is worthy of it. We learnt earlier in the psalm about some of the characteristics of God that make Him worthy of our praise.*

10. Read Psalm 18 v 1-3. How does the psalmist describe God? Can you associate with this?

*His strength, rock, fortress, redeemer etc.*

11. Read Psalm 18 v 4-6. What do you think the psalmist might have been through to make him write this? What happened as a result?

*Some sort of life-threatening situation. God heard the psalmist's cry.*

*(Psalm 22 is repeated almost in entirety in 2 Samuel 22, immediately after David almost died in battle (2 Samuel 21 v 15-22) and refers to David's victories in 2 Samuel 8 v 13-18).*

12. Read Psalm 18 v 7-15. Psalms are often poetry, using word-pictures, rather than eye-witness accounts of something that happened. What is this passage telling us about God's response to the psalmist's cry for help?

*The literal description seems to be an earthquake, a terrible storm and a tsunami! We don't read of any of this happening in David's time, so we take it that this is a poetic description of God's response. God is responding in majesty and His anger at the suffering of His child is made clear. God deals with the threat to His child.*

13. Read Psalm 18 v 16-19. What did God do for the psalmist?

*Again, poetry is not meant to be taken literally. Think about the meaning behind the words, don't get caught up in over-analysing.*

14. The psalms are not just records of other people's prayers. They teach us about God and give us promises to hold onto in every situation. What promises can you hold onto from Psalm 18 v 16-19?

*Encourage the group to think about whether they recognise that God has already worked in this way in their lives. Think about what a spacious place may be – it's not necessarily the other side of the prison walls. There can be a spacious place in our hearts and our minds as we know the freedom of forgiveness with Christ and peace with God.*

15. What do you think the ultimate 'spacious place' (v19) is?

*Heaven. A chance to explain how we can be assured of our salvation.*

\*16. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm. Every single verse mentions God's law (/precepts, word, statutes, commands etc). Read Psalm 119 v 9-16. How can we know what God's word is in order to follow it? (esp v15-16)

*We need to study it and engage with it. Not just know it but live it. Use this as an opportunity to challenge the group about how much they engage with Scripture, and how much difference it makes in their lives.*

## **How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

20 minutes

\*1. In what ways has studying the psalms today made you think about the content of your own prayers, and in what way might your prayer life develop in the future?

\*2. **CHALLENGE** for during this week – see if you can write your own 'psalm' – just get what is inside you down on paper, and, if you've written it to God, you have a psalm!

### **3. MEMORY VERSE**

**'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.' Psalm 119 v 105**

As a group, learn this memory verse (it is important to learn the reference as well as the verse). Encourage the group to remember it for next week. You may like to provide cards with it printed on for them.

**TIME-LINE** if you are making a time-line, do the next part of it now – ask the group to add what they have learnt today in the appropriate place. See the time-line on the TFC website for guidance of dates.

**Check out** – ask everyone, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

**OT overview 7**

**Psalms – Cries from the Heart**

1. What is a psalm?

**What does the passage say and mean?**

2. **SDL** Are there any emotions you would not be willing to express to God in private prayer? Be honest!

3. **SDL** Look up the following verses. What emotions is the psalmist expressing?

| <b>Psalm</b>     | <b>Emotion</b> |
|------------------|----------------|
| Psalm 4 v 8      |                |
| Psalm 5 v 2      |                |
| Psalm 6 v 1-2, 6 |                |
| Psalm 8 v 3-4    |                |
| Psalm 13 v 1-2   |                |
| Psalm 13 v 5-6   |                |
| Psalm 18 v 2     |                |
| Psalm 22 v 6-7   |                |
| Psalm 22 v 15    |                |
| Psalm 25 v 16    |                |

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Psalm 32 v 3-5    |  |
| Psalm 88 v 15-18  |  |
| Psalm 109 v 11-13 |  |

4. **SDL** Does it surprise you that it's OK to express any of these things to God? Why?

5. Psalm 103

What mood do you think the writer (King David) was in?

6. Read Psalm 103 v 8-13. What does this tell us that God is like?

7. Read Psalm 103 v 14-16. What does this tell us that people are like?

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### **How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

1. In what ways has studying the psalms today made you think about the content of your own prayers, and in what way might your prayer life develop in the future?

2. **CHALLENGE** – see if you can write your own 'psalm' – just get what is inside you down on paper, and basically, if you've written it to God, you have a psalm!

3. **MEMORY VERSE** 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.' Psalm 119 v 105