

# Preaching The Psalms ::

Often overlooked, or used as ‘fill in’ sermons between other series, the Psalms are worthy of much closer attention. Luke Tattersall presents outlines for a number of the Psalms that he has preached on...

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## Psalm 42 & 43 – Put Your Hope in God

### 1.0 – Depression

Outlined some facts about depression.

- Symptoms of depression (from the internet):
  - Feelings of sorrow, guilt, hopelessness and helplessness
  - Crying easily and frequently
  - Loss of enthusiasm for life, losing motivation and interest in the environment
  - Lack of energy, and feelings of fatigue.
  - Irritability, hostility, anxiety.
  - Physical pains than often have no explanation such as a sore back, abdominal pains, headaches
- Symptoms seem to fit writer of Psalm 42-43
- NB 42-43 is one psalm – 3 stanzas with the same refrain (42:5, 11, 43:5). Psalm is an attempt to answer the question: Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Also an attempt to put into practice the advice: Put your hope in God.

### 2.0 – Remembering Better Days

- Don't really know the writers situation at the start ... just how he is feeling (42:1-2)
- Drought used to convey how distant god seems.
- God not only feels distant – our writer is immensely sad.
- 42:3 – KJV gets it right: My tears have been my food day and night, they say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”
- Pitiful image. His tears are taunting him.
- But he refuses to let the tears have the last word.
- He remembers back to better times (42:4). He remembers back to being part of God's people at the temple ... singing songs of praise to God ... times when he felt closer to God.
- When he remembers he asks himself the question (42:5-6)

### 3.0 – Mixed Feelings

- NB how the next stanza starts: (42:6b) “My soul is downcast within me”. Logically he knows he shouldn't feel downcast. But logic doesn't have anything to do with it. He IS feeling downcast – overwhelmed by his feelings.
- Image changes from drought to flood (42:7)
- 42:6 – geographical clue. Heights of Hermon – northern boarder of Israel – long way from Jerusalem and the temple.

- NB the writer has mixed feelings. The very fact he is praying and talking to God means that he knows God is with him (42:8). But he also feels oppressed and isolated (42:9)
  - He is among people who don't know God and taunt him (42:10).
  - *I am a Balmain supporter. I went to watch them play Brisbane in Brisbane. A crowd of 55 000 people with very few Balmain supporters. Very lonely feeling.*
  - But he is determined not to let his enemies have the last word (42:11)
- h4. 4.0 – Confidence for the Future
- Final stanza shows confidence that God can & will act (43:3-4). By the final refrain (43:5) the tone has changed.

## 5.0 – A Message for the Downcast

- Not just a psalm for those with depression.
  - There'll be times we feel isolated from God ... overwhelmed by our situation ... outnumbered by those who don't know God.
  - Advice from our writer would be:
- 5.1 – Continue to Meet with God's People**
- One thing that helps him see beyond his situation is remembering being part of God's people.
  - I don't think we can underestimate the importance of being part of a group of believers.
  - God has called us not just into fellowship with himself – but also into fellowship with others.
  - The writers problems were compounded when he found himself among the enemies of God.
  - We need to meet together to encourage others and be encouraged in our relationship with God.

### 5.2 – Continue to Remember God's Past Goodness

- In the midst of his despair the writer could still talk about “the living God and “his rock and his stronghold”. He remembers God's past goodness.
- How much more do we have to remember. We know the incredible love God has shown to us in Jesus—salvation & forgiveness. We know God's kindness every day.

### 5.3 – Continue to Put Your Hope in God

- But the final piece of advice that our writer would give us is the advice he kept giving himself: Put your hope in God.
- This is more than a feeling.
- This has to translate into actions. We need to live like we have our hope in God.
- The writer looked forward to the day he would again be among God's people at the temple.
- We look forward to the day when Jesu will return to take us to be with him forever.
- Make your plans, live your life, set your priorities as someone who has put your hope in God and his son.

## Psalm 44 – When Bad Things Happen

### 1.0 – A Neat Equation

- Indonesian Tsunami. Why does God allow that kind of suffering? Lots of people asking that question. Some people are saying that it was God's judgement (Muslims and Hindus were hit).

- Simple equation: Bad things happen to those who deserve it.
- Aids. Some called it the wrath of God. Bad things happen to those who deserve it.
- This psalm wants to question that equation. National disaster in Israel. Lives lost. National turmoil. So the writer is asking “Why?”
- NB this Psalm gets quoted in a way you are not expecting in the New Testament.

## **2.0 – A Psalm of Praise**

- Starts out like a psalm of praise for God’s faithfulness and for the fact God has help Israel in previous military victories (44:3)
- NB the writer says that the people are still trusting God (44:4)

## **3.0 – An Unusual Twist**

- All looks like a Psalm of praise until we get to verse 9.
- Not sure what has happened – but some disaster has come on Israel – a crushing defeat. Progressively worse with each verse
  - Vs 9 – Humbled & rejected by God. God no longer with the armies
  - Vs 10 – Forced to retreat. Plundered by their enemies.
  - Vs 11 – Devoured like sheep. Scattered among the nations.
  - Vs 12 – Sold off as slaves for a pittance.
- Why has God allowed this to happen?

## **4.0 – A Very Unusual Twist**

- Now we can be tempted to think: Things have gone wrong. Israel must have sinned. That is the pattern we see in Judges.
- But the writer says they haven’t forgotten God (44:17). He goes to great lengths to stress that they haven’t sinned (44:17-18).
- He is not saying they are perfect. What he is saying is that they haven’t broken the covenant.
- He is not saying “Come on God you owe us”. He is saying “Disaster comes because we have broken the covenant. But this time we don’t think we have. So what is happening?”

## **5.0 – A Glimpse of an Answer**

- Being the taxi for my kids is normally OK. But I hate it when I have to pick them up and I miss the final few minutes of a movie ... especially a thriller.
- This Psalm seems to be missing an ending. There doesn’t seem to be an answer.
- But we do get 2 glimpses of an answer throughout the psalm.

\*5.1 – Answer 1 – “For your sake...”\*

- Psalm 44:2 – there is a bigger picture to consider than just Israel’s suffering.
- Israel exists because of God’s grace and for God’s sake.
- When Israel do battle it is with the enemies of God ... not simply the enemies of Israel.
- This time they have walked away beaten and scared in battle. Maybe it is not punishment but simply battle scars. Maybe it is just the price of loyalty and faithfulness to God.
- It is for God’s sake that they are fighting ... not theirs.

\*5.2 – Answer 2 – “...your unfailing love”\*

- Closing verse. They may be feeling battle scared ... but they are still depending on God's unfailing love (44:25-26).
- This psalm gives no answer about suffering ... but it does say we can depend on God unfailing love.

## 6.0 – A Clearer Answer

- Romans 8:17ff – a clear answer to suffering.
- Jesus promised that following him would mean hardship. Why? Because if you are serious about following Jesus you will be out of step with the world. Loyalty to Jesus is going to have a cost.
- But look at what Paul says (Romans 8:18).
- We know God's unfailing love to us in his son Jesus. And nothing can separate us from that love (Romans 8:35-36).
- The cost of our loyalty doesn't compare to what God has in store for us (Romans 8:37-39).
- Can you think of times when your loyalty to Jesus has cost you? Can you think of times when your loyalty to Jesus has put you out of step with the world?
- I know people for whom following Jesus meant they lost their business, lost the promotion, lost their family, even lost their lives. They endured that for God's sake.
- Loyalty to Jesus may have a cost ... but it doesn't compare to God's unfailing love to us (Romans 8:37-39)

### h2. Psalm 45 – A Wedding Song

#### h4. 1.0 – A Royal Wedding

- Fascinated by royal weddings. 2 billion people watched Charles & Di's wedding. Australians were captivated by Mary Donaldson & Frederick's wedding.
- Royal weddings seem perfect ... the ideal ... the perfect bride and the perfect groom.

#### h4. 2.0 – An Unusual Psalm

- Psalm 45 is an unusual psalm – about the wedding of the king.
- The Psalms are normally directed to God or are about God. But not this one.
- This is a wedding psalm ... a song for the king on his wedding. (Maybe Solomon and his marriage to the daughter of the King of Egypt. Not sure.)
- The writer is caught up with a noble theme (45:1) ... the wedding of the king.

#### h4. 3.0 – The Bridegroom

- Normally the focus of attention on a wedding day is the bride ... but not here.
- Men ... for those who are MARRIED ... if you remember back to your wedding day. I'm sure you will remember that was the case. All the attention is on the bride. Great effort goes into the wedding dress. You go and hire a suit. When photos are taken great preparation of the bride. Groom stand there and tries not to get in the way.
- Focus of attention for this wedding is the groom ... the king ... the spotlight is firmly on him.
- Impressive character ... most excellent among men ... victorious in battle (seems strange to mention that on the wedding day but I don't think it is a comment about marriage).
- Royal weddings today still have the groom wearing a sword (45:3-4). Show of courage & strength.
- But not arrogant (45:4). The king stands for truth, humility & righteousness.
- 45:6 – move from the battleground to the palace. King stands for justice & righteousness.

- The king looks good & smells great as he waits for bride (45:8)
- h4. 4.0 – The Bride
- 45:10 – focus switches to bride. Sounds a bit harsh ... but this is important.
- Her allegiance needs to shift from her father to her husband.
- Mary Donaldson is now Danish. She will still speak with an Australian accent, have a birth certificate that says she is Australian. She is married to the crown prince of Denmark. She will one day be queen of Denmark. Her allegiance has shifted.
- But the queen in the psalm will gain more than she loses. She has an incredibly privileged position. She is married to the king (45:12).

#### h4. 5.0 – Jesus & Us

### 5.1 – Solomon is God & King?

- NB 45:6 – the writer refers to the King as God. Now hang on ... that can't be right.
- And then he does it again in verse 7 (45:7).
- What does he mean “Therefore God, your God...”
- Psalms are the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament – 55 quotes.
- They are quoted because they often have what C S Lewis called a “double meaning”.
- They meant something to the original reader. But they have a meaning beyond that.
- The writer of Psalm 45 is not confused. He knows the king is just a man.
- He is not suggesting that Solomon IS GOD.
- But the fact is: Solomon is God's king, sitting on God's throne, reigning in God's city and ruling over God's people.
- The Psalmist isn't wanting to be disrespectful to God. He is acknowledging what the King symbolizes to Israel.

### 5.2 – Jesus is God & King

- But he is also pointing forward to another king.
- This was one of the great Messianic psalms for Israel.
- Gets quoted in Hebrews (Heb 1:8). The writer of Hebrews knows who the king is
- Jesus is the son of God who came to reign over all.
- He is most excellent among men, stands for truth humility & righteousness, he reigns with justice, he is God.

### 5.3 – Married to the King: A Privileged Position and a New Allegiance

- NT image of the church as the bride of Jesus.
- We have a privileged position (Eph 2:4-6) and a new allegiance (Matt 10:37-39).
- If you trust in Jesus then he should be our first priority.
- Following Jesus is a radical thing. It is not just a matter of adopting a few principles or a lifestyle change. Following Jesus is not a pastime for Sunday morning. It is a radical allegiance.
- Can you think of where your allegiance to Jesus has made a significant change: family, money, church involvement, work, relationships with others?
- What are those areas of your life where your allegiance to Jesus needs to make a more serious change to your life: family, money, church involvement, work, relationships with others?

#### h2. Psalm 73 – Who Do You Envy?

#### h4. 1.0 – Questioning God

- Not uncommon for Christians to doubt ... to wonder if God has our best interests at heart.

- We will often doubt when we face trouble.
- Psalm 73 begins with the writer doubting God's goodness.
- h4. 2.0 – The Statement & The Doubt
- Begins with a statement (73:1) Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.
- We'd want to affirm that: Surely God is good to those who are serious about living in a relationship with him.
- But he says he is struggling to hold onto that truth (73:2). WHY? Because that truth didn't seem to square with what he saw around him. His theology didn't match his experience.
- It looked like the ungodly (arrogant rich) were enjoying the good life.
- NB why does he doubt? Because he envies the arrogant and the wicked (73:2-3).
- He is not doubting because of trouble in his life but because of the lack of trouble in the lives of the ungodly.
- If God is good to his people then why do the ungodly seem to have it better.
- He is wondering if the price of following God is worth it (73:13).
- NB a Timeless temptation ... just as real today as it was then.
- Ever envied your non-Christian friends for the lifestyle they live – a lifestyle you have chosen not to live because you are a Christian?
- Ever been jealous of your non-Christian friends/workmates because of how they handle their money?
- Ever felt like you were missing out on things in life because you are a Christian?
- If you have then you know what the writer is saying.
- Have a look at a few of these verses and see how the writer VIEWS those people around him:

#### **2.1 – Secure**

- The arrogant wicked look secure confident (73:9-10).

#### **2.2 – Healthy & Strong**

- They look healthy & strong (73:4-5)
- You know who he is describing? The people who sit at the sidewalk cafés at Bondi beach. They have tanned, buffed bodies. They are drinking short black coffees. They have a silver Audi TT parked in front of them.
- They are the kind of people of whom you say: Nothing ever seems to go wrong for them.

#### **2.3 – Rich**

- They are rich and increasing in wealth (73: 12)
- h4. 3.0 – Not perfect ... but enjoying life
- Now he knows they are not perfect. In fact they have become wealthy because they have ignored God (73:6-8, 11)
- They are arrogant & proud ... but what it boils down to for our writer is this: Why bother being serious about God when those who ignore him seem to be doing better than me?

#### **h4. 4.0 – A Change of Perspective**

- 73:15 – the turning point.
- Went into a huge hedge maze with the kids on holidays once. Got stuck in there. Tower built beside the maze so you can direct people out. From ground level it seemed hopeless. From the tower it was clear. Change of perspective changes the way things look.
- Writer has change of perspective when he goes to the temple ... when he sees things from God's perspective (73:15-17).

- NB 2nd half of the psalm is a series of contrasts to the 1st half.

#### **4.1 – Secure?**

- The arrogant wicked are the ones on slippery ground (73:16-20). They will be judged by God.
- NB they are not judged because they are wealthy but because they ignore God.
- The writer recognises that he is not slipping because God directs & protects him (73:23-24)
- READ PSALM 73:23-24
- How much more confidence can we have when we see things from our perspective – the perspective of the cross of Jesus.

#### **4.2 – Healthy & Strong**

- The WICKED may look healthy and strong ... but when he sees things from God's perspective things look different..
- Had a friend who died from cancer but face it all with complete confidence in God.
- Look at what the writer says (73:26).
- How much more confidence do we have when we see things from the perspective of the cross (Phil 3:20-21)

#### **4.3 – Rich?**

- Who is really rich? When he sees things from God's perspective he can say "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you." (73:25) .
- And from the perspective of the cross we can say this: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Eph 1:3)

#### **h4. 5.0 – Wanting what is Good**

- The mistake the writer made in the 1st half of the psalm was that he was confused about what was good. He thought good = secure, rich & healthy by the standards of the world.
- But by the end he has figured out that good = being near God.
- Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. (73:25). Do you think you could honestly say that?
- Do you value your relationship with God above all else?

### **6.0 – Wanting to Tell the World**

- I love the way this psalm finishes (73:27-28).
- The writer moves from disappointment with God through to complete confidence and absolute trust.
- More than that – he wants to tell others.
- We know what God has in store for us through Jesus. We should want to tell others.

## **Psalm 95 – Something Worth Singing About**

### **1.0 – Something Worth Singing About**

- A friend went to the 5th test match when England beat Australia. Australia had already won the first 4 tests – but the poms won the last. He said the singing of the crowd following the game was amazing.
- They had something to sing about and they were going to sin.

- Singing isn't really part of Australian culture. But it certainly was for God's people Israel. Many of the psalms are songs praising God (eg Psalm 150).
- We have a God worth singing about. Psalm 95 is a song of praise to God.

## **2.0 – Praise God For What?**

- Well what is it that we are to praise God for? What is it that we have to sing about?

### **2.1 – Our God is the Creator**

- Praise God for his creation (95:4-6). We should be in awe of God for the creation.
- We marvel so easily at the things man does (technology, science, space travel, etc) but we live in a creation that outshines all that.
- God has made a world more intricate and complex than our computers.
- We marvel at structures made by man – but think about what God has put in place. We marvel at the beauty or art – but think about the beauty in creation. We are impressed by the space shuttle or Hubble telescope. We should be more impressed by the universe they're designed to explore.
- God is worthy of our praise because of his creation. Revelation 4:9-11 says the same thing.
- We do have a God worth singing about.

### **2.2 – A God Who Saves**

- But he is also a God who saves (95:1) a God who chooses, rescues and cares for his people (95:7)
- As people who trust in Jesus we can echo those same words.
- And as people who trust in Jesus we can ECHO THOSE SAME WORDS. We have Jesus as our shepherd. We have been rescued by him. We have been made his flock.
- That is worth singing about.

## **3.0 – Listening to God**

- Simply praising God is not where it ends. We have an ongoing duty to listen to God (95:7c).
- The writer is not saying "Wait to hear an audible voice". The Bible never says we should all expect to hear God speak to us individually.
- But the Bible does say that he has clearly spoken and revealed himself (Heb 1:1).
- God has SPOKEN CLEARLY. That was what they needed to listen to.

## **4.0 – A Lesson from the Past (Exodus 17 & Numbers 14 & 20)**

- The 2nd half of the PSALM is taken up with the reminder and a warning from Israel's history. Reminder
- Psalm 95:7c-9 – recalls a few incidents from Israel's history.
- Exodus 17 – God has dramatically rescued Israel from Egypt, dramatically provided for them, but now they are grumbling with God & Moses.
- Exodus 15 they are singing God's praises. But by Exodus 17 they are whinging against God.
- Listening to God's voice is not about finding a quiet place and waiting for a message from God.
- Listening to God's voice means being obedient to what God has clearly revealed (Exodus 15:25b-26).
- God spoke through the prophets to Israel. He has spoken to us through his son (Heb 1:1-2, see also Mark 9:7).



- We live at a time when we know even MORE CLEARLY what it is that GOD HAS TO SAY.
- Jesus is the one we are to listen to, obey & conform our lives to. It is not a matter of following commandments. It is a matter of following Jesus.

## **5.0 – Today**

- The “today” that the writer is referring to is any day ... in fact every day. We need to make sure that we don’t neglect what God has said (Heb 3:12-13).
- It seems incredible that Israel could grumble after all that God had done for them. But we can be the same. God has done so much for us.
- I remember hearing that the greatest morale problems during war were not on the front lines. The greatest morale problems were with those well away from the lines. The soldiers who were sleeping in the mud, had no shower, ate tinned food and faced death were not the ones complaining. The complaints came from those who were safe – well away from the fighting. They complained that the beds were not comfortable enough, the showers were not hot enough, the food was terrible.
- I think that the SAME THING can be true in the Christian life. The greatest grumbling is not from those in the front line ... those who are serious about serving God. The grumbling doesn’t come from those who are getting on with the job.
- We have a God who is worthy of our praise ... and a God we should be listening to.
- We have a God who has saved us through his son Jesus and called us to follow him.

# **Psalm 103 – A Very Australian God**

## **1.0 – A Very Australian God**

- Australians are good at overlooking the flaws in other; Waltzing Matilda, Ned Kelly, Bob Hawke, Dawn Fraser, etc
- We are happy to say “they are only human” or “nobody’s perfect”.
- Psalm 103 shows us a forgiving God who is willing to forgive the things we have done. He doesn’t treat us as our sins deserve – a God who is willing to show love and compassion.
- David can testify from Personal experience.

## **2.0 – Count Your Blessings**

- David begins by singing God’s praises (Psalm 103:1-2). He wants to praise God with every fibre of his being.
- What seems to have prompted the psalm is that he has been thinking about the benefits he has from God (103:2).
- “Count your blessings – name them one by one” is an appropriate name for the psalm.
- And look at the list of blessings (103:3-5)
- David knows that from personal experience.
- One line stands out: “who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion” (103:4) Here is the King of Israel saying there is a greater benefit than having the crown as the King of Israel. The better crown is the one of love & compassion God has placed on his head. Better than being the King of Israel is to know that God loves him.

- It is sad that we often take that for granted ... that God loves us. It is sad that we often see it as a small thing.
- I remember hearing about a young Aussie girl who visited one of the black townships in Cape Town. She was struck by the poverty. But she was also struck by the profound faith of some of the people. She wrote a postcard home that said: "Today I met some people who are very poor ... but think they are rich because they know Jesus. I think they are right."
- We need to make sure we count our blessings.

### **3.0 – Experience Confirmed**

- Personal experience is hard to confirm. But David's confidence is not just based on personal experience.
- Israel's history confirms that God is gracious, compassionate and loving.
- 103:8 – This is an expression that is used a number of times in the Bible: "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." The first time it is used is Exodus 34.
- God has rescued Israel from Egypt, brought them to Sinai and they have started worshipping other gods. What should God do with people who turn their back on him?
- But look where the quote comes from (Ex 34:4-9). God doesn't treat them as their sins deserve.

### **4.0 – Eternal God Vs Mortal Man**

- Amazing contrast between mortal man and the eternal God (Psalm 103:15-16).
- Population of the earth: 6 billion. Total number of people who have ever lived: around 100 billion. And you are just one of them. Has that "blade of grass" feel about it ... doesn't it.
- But the remarkable thing is that God wants to KNOW YOU. He wants you to know his fatherly care and compassion. He wants you to know his everlasting love (Psalm 103:11-13).

### **5.0 – A God Who Forgives**

- But what stands out most to David is that God is willing to forgive (Psalm 103:2-3, 10).
- Napoleon Bonaparte during his time as emperor of France. A young army deserter was brought before him. Napoleon ordered that the man be shot – that was what happened to deserters. It was clearly what the man deserved. But the young man's mother came forward and begged for her son's life. She pleaded with Napoleon to have mercy on him. Napoleon said to the woman: "He doesn't deserve mercy." To which the woman replied: "If he deserved it, it wouldn't be mercy."
- God showed mercy to hard-hearted and stiff-necked Israel. But they were no more or less hard-hearted stiff-necked than us.
- We know even more clearly than David how gracious God is. We see it in the death of his son.

### **6.0 – Count Your Blessings**

- David closes by calling on the angels to praise God (Psalm 103:20-21).
- And finally he calls on the whole of creation to praise God (Psalm 103:22).
- We need to regularly count our blessings.

- Back in the middle ages people believed that the sun was the centre of the universe. The theory seemed to work reasonably well. They could make sense of the sun and the moon and their movements. It made sense to think that the earth was the centre. But they couldn't figure out about the planets. They seemed to move around all over the place. In fact that is why they are called "planets". It comes from the Greek word meaning "wandering ones". But then Copernicus and Galileo put forward the theory that everything revolved around the sun. They couldn't prove it. But it explained everything. It made convincing sense.
- Knowing God makes sense of the universe.

## **Psalm 116 – Saying Thank You**

### **1.0 – Saying Thankyou**

- Teaching children to say "thankyou" is a difficult thing.
- There was a story an American soldier in the WWII who had been serving on the front line. He had been given a time of leave and went to one of the rest camps that General Patton had established for the soldiers to be looked after while on leave. On his return to the front he wrote a letter to Patton expressing his thanks. Patton wrote back to the soldier. He said that in his 35 years in the army he had sought to care for and look after the soldiers under his care ... but this was the 1st letter of thanks that he had ever received.
- How do you say thankyou to God? That is what this Psalm deals with.

### **2.0 – There Are No Atheists in Foxholes**

- Old saying: There are no atheists in foxholes. (NB there is an organisation called The Military association for Atheists and Free Thinkers who would dispute that).
- When people are faced with great trouble they will often turn to God. And that is only natural. When you are faced with a situation bigger than you can handle ... when it is beyond your control ... you like to think someone has it under control.
- The writer of the psalm is in serious trouble (Psalm 116:3). Not sure exactly what he trouble is.

### **3.0 – I Believe...**

- He has come to the point of knowing that God is the only one who can be relied upon.
- Psalm 116:10-11 seems a bit contradictory. Both statements point to the same thing. He realises that he can only trust God. Because he believes he calls out to God. Because he believes he knows that only God can save him (cf Romans 3:3-4)
- We can probably know that experience ... being let down by friends. They can be the moments when you really do rely on God and place your trust in him. You believe because in the clear light of day you see that God alone can be trusted.

### **4.0 – But What About Those Who Keep Suffering?**

- But what about the people who are still suffering? What about those who know God, who pray ... but they don't seem to be rescued by God?
- Psalm 116:1-2 seems to imply that he will live for God because God answered his prayer. The implication could be drawn "If he doesn't answer your pray don't live for him"
- Psalm 116:15 – God does care for his people. Even those who die are precious to him.

## **5.0 – Saying Thankyou**

- What stands at the heart of this Psalm is this: “How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?” (116:12)
- 3 people swept out to sea at Philip Island. Rescued by a female swimmer. How could they thank her for what she did.
- How do you repay God for what he has done?
- It is not a matter of a bunch of flowers or a nice card. The writer says that lifelong devotion would be an appropriate response to God (116:1-2)
- But the right response to God’s salvation is also there in the Psalm: “ For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living” (116:8-9).
- God wants us to walk before him – live faithfully with him.

## **6.0 – Our Gratitude**

- But let me come back to the ORIGINAL QUESTION: How do you say thankyou to God?
- 1990 – Kerry Packer had a heart attack at a Polo game. Was resuscitated with a defibrillator. Packer was indebted to those who saved his life and the machine they used. He put up the money for ½ of the ambulances in NSW to get one.
- We have more to be grateful for than Packer.
- So how do you say thankyou to God?
- How can you repay the Lord? Well the answer is you can’t. There is no way that we could repay God for the forgiveness he has given us in his son.
- But there is another sense in which God isn’t expecting us to repay him. He didn’t send Jesus so we could pay him back.
- He sent Jesus so we could live in a relationship with him.
- We should be living lives of thankfulness (Romans 12:1).

# **Psalm 139 – Invasion of Privacy**

## **1.0 – An Invasion of Privacy**

- Privacy laws in this country are going crazy. Should shops be allowed to use hidden video cameras?. Should bosses be able to read your emails?
- We don’t like the idea of people knowing our private details. We’d like to think that there were things that only we know about ourselves.
- Civil Liberty Groups and the NSW Privacy Council are doing everything to protect our Privacy.
- Here is a Psalm that would have both those groups up in arms.

## **2.0 – The God who Knows Everything (1-6)**

- God knows everything about you. Writer starts with this: “O LORD, you have searched me and you know me”. (139:1)
- To begin with that feels like an invasion of privacy for our writer.
- He lists off everything that God would know (139:2-4). There nothing that escapes God’s attention.
- David feels threatened and even claustrophobic with this idea (139:5-6).

- NB “hem me in” is battle language – besieging or surrounding a city.

### **3.0 – There Is No Escape (7-12)**

- When cornered people experience the “fight or flight” response. David considers the “flight” option.
- He considers how he might escape from God’s view.
- When you are being watched by someone it is natural to want to move somewhere out of their line of sight.
- But God is not only omniscient. He is also omnipresent (139:8-10)
- He considers all the possibilities – up, down, east, west. It doesn’t matter where he goes God will be there. Even the darkness won’t hide him (139:11-12)

### **4.0 – A God Worth Praising (13-18)**

- But it is not as though God is Big Brother with a hidden camera watching you. God is not spying.
- God knows everything because he is the creator of everything (139:13-16).
- The world that GOD IS WATCHING is his world. The people that GOD IS WATCHING are his people.
- It is no wonder God knows everything. He is the God who made us – knit us together.
- This is not an invasion of privacy. We belong to God.
- Progression: Feeling like God is poking his nose in. Wanting to run. Now realising that God made him.
- The tone now changes. He stands in awe of all that God has done.
- God knows the first day and the last day of my life ... and every day in between (139:16)  
The Fear of God has been replaced by a comfort in the idea that God knows everything.

### **5.0 – Seeing Things from God’s Perspective (19-24)**

- Last stanza doesn’t seem to fit. Why does he want to slay the wicked? (139:19-22)
- But these verses do fit.
- David has come to realise that if God knows everything about him then he knows everything about everyone ... even the ungodly.
- Movie – What Women Want. Mel can hear what women are thinking.
- David realises that God can hear what everyone is thinking. There are those who hate God – those who are God’s enemies. God hears what they are thinking.
- David is no longer wanting to flee from God. He is on God’s side. He is saddened by what God has to put up with. He hates those who hate God.
- He thinks that it would be best for wicked men to be removed so God didn’t have to see their evil deeds and hear their evil thoughts & words.

### **6.0 – Search Me**

- Psalm began with David being worried about God searching him and knowing him.
- Psalm closes with a call for God to search him (139:23-24). Moved full circle.
- How do you react to the idea that God knows everything about you?
- How do you feel about God knowing everything you think and say?

- How do you feel knowing there is nowhere you can hide from God?

### **6.1 – Thank God that he Knows Us That Well – Thank God for Jesus**

- My initial reaction is a bit like David's initial reaction. Feels like an invasion of privacy. It means God sees my faults, the things I do in secret, things I'd be embarrassed if others knew.
- The reason we fear the invasion of privacy is that we are worried people will use the information against us.
- God knows us but he doesn't use the information against us. He knows us and acts in our best interests. (Romans 5:6-8)
- We should be thankful that God knows us.
- He knew exactly what we needed. That is why he sent Jesus.

### **6.2 – Motivation for a Changed Life: Your Heavenly Father Knows**

- When we know that God knows us that well ... when we appreciate that he sent his son for us ... then we should want to live changed lives. We should want God to continue to "search" us as well.
- When I was a kid there were things I would NOT DO if my parents were watching. It wasn't fear of punishment. I just knew how much they loved me and I didn't want to disappoint them.
- Our heavenly father sees everything we do. That should motivate us to live a godly life. (Titus 2:11-13)
- We are not motivated by guilt or fear. We are motivated by the fact that we have a heavenly father who loves us enough to send his son to die for us.