Psalms For All Seasons- Part One

# The Lord Knows

## (Psalms 1:1-6)

Welcome to all of you and our extended church family watching online. We’re beginning a new message series this morning entitled “Psalms For All Seasons” and I’m so excited about this series because I love the book of Psalms. In fact, I read it every day, it’s one of my favorite books of the Bible, because it’s literally a book for all seasons. In other words, it speaks to every area and in every season of our lives. The book of Psalms is a collection of songs of praise and sorrow, joy and sadness, victory and defeat, inspired by the Holy Spirit, written by many different authors, in diverse situations and seasons of life. And so, it is the all-encompassing, timeless, eternal, and irreplaceable, devotional, prayer book, and hymnal for the people of God.

If you could turn to the book of Psalms, before we begin in chapter one, I’d like to consider for a moment the benefits of reading the Bible, and how significantly the Word of God has impacted all of our lives. For example, the Bible offers the promise of longer life, that reading it will give you guidance in life, and by living out its precepts it will bring blessings and increased happiness, peace, wisdom, and hope.

As we consider the benefits of the Word of God, in Romans chapter 10, the apostle Paul tells us that it is the source of faith. That a deep and genuine faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). In other words, the Scriptures help you grow in faith and give you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the apostle Peter tells us that it is essential, he says,

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).

And so, the Word of God is our essential source of spiritual food, helping us to grow in faith, to grow up in Christ, and as he said,

“(Men and women) do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

And so, we know that as John’s gospel begins, that in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, and through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made, and in him was life, and that life was the light of all people. And so, Jesus is our Word from heaven, he is our sustenance, our guidance, our victory, and our source for answered prayer. In fact, Jesus said it this way,

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7).

My goal in reminding you of the benefits of reading the Bible regularly is to help motivate you to make it a priority in your life. Because I know that there are many of you who read the Bible every day, you make it a priority in spite of the distractions of work, kids, school, and housework.

And yet, there are still many people who don’t regularly read the Bible in spite of its numerous benefits. Some claim that they don’t read it because they don’t understand what it’s all about, or where it came from, and how it all fits together. But my hope in this series is that each one of you would discover its benefits, being inclined to read its volumes, and that as King Solomon said, that you would pay attention to what I say, listen closely to these words, not letting them out of your sight, but keeping them within your heart, because they are life to those who find them and health to a person’s whole body (Proverbs 4:20-22).

And so, what we’re going to do today is we’re going to kick off, launching at the very beginning, in Psalm chapter one, where the Holy Spirit lays the foundation for righteous living. If you have your place in your Bible, reading from Psalm chapter one, it begins with the promise of a blessed life.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Psalms 1:1-3).

“Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (Psalms 1:4-6).

Now, I read the whole Psalm, but I just wanted to focus on the first three verses as an introduction, because this opening stanza promises that if you want to be blessed, read this book. If you want to be happier, meditate on the words of this book. If you want to be a person who yields fruit in season, read this book. Because if you read it regularly, reflecting on its verses, you will be like a tree planted by streams of water, never lacking that which enables you to flourish and bear fruit in every season.

This is incredibly important for each one of us in the uncertainty of life, because the unknown is uncomfortable, but we don’t want to be uncomfortable, we don’t like to be uncomfortable. And so, no matter what season you are in, no matter where you are on life’s journey, you want a roadmap to get from A to Z. Because you want to prosper, you want to succeed, you want to get it right, but the reality is that life doesn’t always work out as planned.

And so, if your life has gotten messy, and things aren’t working out as you had planned, faith gives you the ability to move forward. Faith gives you the confidence to step into an uncertain future and we have already established that faith comes by hearing the word of God. And so, faith enables us to be willing to explore, navigating the chaos and bumpiness of life, and to be comfortable without knowing. Because what we do know, we know that,

“God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything” (1 John 3:20).

And so, maybe you’re brokenhearted, maybe you’re going through a season of suffering, and you’re wondering how long. Maybe you feel like you’ve been giving and giving, sowing and never reaping, and you’re wondering if you’ll ever see a harvest. And I don’t know the answer to that, I don’t know when, I don’t know how, but I do know that God has a Psalm for every season, and he knows everything.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon said, “This too, I carefully explored, even though the actions of godly and wise people are in God’s hands, no one knows…” No one knows when, how, or “whether God will show them favor” (Ecclesiastes 9:1, NLT). But we can trust God knowing that he is in the driver’s seat, he is holding the wheel, and so we can trust his plan and his strategy not being worried about where we are on the journey.

We don’t need to fuss and whine and complain like our children in the backseat of the car, “Are we there yet?” We can trust the one who is in control, we don’t need to know everything, in fact we couldn’t handle knowing everything, but we can trust the one who does. We can trust that God knows all things, he knows when, he knows the timing, and so we can rest in him.

Just before his crucifixion, Jesus told his disciples,

“Everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

In other words, Jesus said, “What I have heard, what I have learned, what my Father has told me, I have made known to you. And so, it’s entirely possible to be intricately connected to God, to be serving God, and still not know when. To be asking,

"Lord, are you at this time going to …?" (Acts 1:6).

And you could be going through a season of waiting, through a process of healing, or reconciliation, or restoration, and you know that it’s coming, but you don’t have any idea when. That’s why it’s so comforting to know his Word, to know that whatever you are going through, whatever season you are in that those secrets,

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

And so, Jesus said, everything that I have learned from my Father, I have made known to you, but not everything needs to be known. We may think so, but we couldn’t handle it, we would mess it up, but we can trust that whatever we are going through, it’s not always going to be this way. Because God has set a date, he’s not making this up as he goes along, and like Job we can say with confidence,

“The Lord knows the way that I take… My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside… when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10-11).

You see, Job knew that he was in at the mercy of fate, he wasn’t at the mercy of his friends or critics, but that he was at the mercy of God’s timing. And so, he knew that he might not come through it today, or as James said,

“You do not even know what will happen tomorrow” (James 4:14).

And he may not even come forth next week or next month, but he said, “I know how the story ends, when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold”. And I love his example, because he didn’t know how long, he didn’t know when it would be over, but he knew that there was a purpose, that he was being purified. And so, he knew that whatever God had allowed, he was just burning off the dross, removing the impurities from his life, and when he had been tested, he would come forth as pure gold.

What we discover in the Scriptures is that there is a consistency of understanding that God knows when, that he has set the date, there is an appointed time, and he is watching the calendar. In fact, Jesus said to the church in Smyrna, he said, “I know what you are going through.”

"I know your afflictions and your poverty… I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you; the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days…” (Revelation 2:8-10).

Now, I personally find that to be a comforting thought, and maybe 10 days doesn’t sound like good news to you, but Jesus told them when they were going to come out before they even got into it. He gave them the schedule and there may be some of you here who are on your ninth day. And you’ve been tested and tried, and you need to know that you’re going to survive, you’re going to make it, because the Lord put it on the calendar. He said,

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

And so, from Genesis to Revelation the same thing is being said. From beginning to end, there is a time, there is an appointed season as Solomon declared,

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Now, for some of you, life may be pretty chaotic, but everything is on schedule. The Bible tells me, that I am right where I am supposed to be when I am supposed to be. I am going through what I’m supposed to be going through, at the time I am supposed to going through it, because God has a time and a season for every activity under heaven.

Can I encourage you today to stand firm, to persevere, to be faithful in whatever season you are in? Because when you do what you’ve got to do in your season, and it is just a season, there is going to be a time, there is going to be a when. And that can be comforting, because we just don’t know, you turn on the news and you never know what you’re going to see. You just don’t know what’s going to happen, what sort of calamities we are going to experience, and so there is a feeling of uncertainty. But when you’re on edge, not knowing what’s going to happen next, you need to remind yourself that God has a schedule, God is in control, and that he has a plan in every season.

Now, I am a morning person, and so for me that is when I prefer to seek God. The morning is when I spend time reading the Word of God and have prolonged periods of prayer. In fact, one of the verses I read recently that settled in my soul was in Psalm chapter 143, verse eight. David says,

“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Psalms 143:8).

And so, I connected with that, I recognize the power of the quiet morning, and the value of putting God first. Now, I know that there is no time of the day that is more spiritual than any other time, but I find if I start the day with God, I am much more likely to keep my mind set on the things of God throughout the day. And so, when the Bible says,

“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love” (Psalms 143:8).

This is encouraging to me because there are so many things that fail in this world, but God’s love is unfailing and perfect in every way. In fact, there is nothing that I can do to cause God to love me more and there’s nothing I can do to cause God to love me any less. Because the Bible says,

“God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God… and by this is love perfected with us…” (1 John 4:16-17, ESV).

And so, my love is so much less, but God’s love is perfect, and not only that, it’s unending. Nothing can separate us from God’s love, and the Bible says, “even if we are faithless, he will remain faithful” because his love never fails (2 Timothy 2:13). Love is not something that he does, love is who he is.

God is love, and so David said,

“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you…” (Psalms 143:8).

Now, that is a really big statement of faith considering all the David went through. I mean, he was often found running for his life, hiding in caves and among the rocks. Attempt after attempt was made on his life, but he says, “I have put my trust in you.”

His words make me to pause, making my heart tremble, because often I would like to believe that I am trusting in God, but the reality is that so many times I am actually trusting in my own abilities, in my own strength, in my own intellect, or my own resources. But here David declares in the Spirit, for all time and eternity,

“I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Psalms 143:8).

What an amazing faith, what an amazing thought, because I always find myself making decisions without stopping to say, “God show me the way I should go.” You know, I get in such a big hurry that it is as if I think I can’t spend the time to pray and listen to God for an answer. Of course, I should and I could, but so often I make my own decisions, trying my own strength to figure out what to do, instead of stopping and asking God to show me.

And honestly, most of us are familiar with Psalms 23, and so this shouldn’t be a big thing. David said in the most well-known song in the world,

“The Lord is my shepherd” (Psalms 23:1).

And so, he declares that the Lord makes the sheep lie down in green pastures, he leads them beside quiet waters, he restores their soul, he guides them in paths of righteousness for his namesake.

And Jesus teaches us over and over and over again in John chapter 10 that he is the good Shepherd. That he leads the sheep and the sheep listen to his voice. He said, “The good Shepherd calls his sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (John 10:3-4). And so, the sheep recognize the shepherd’s voice and you and I are the sheep, and he is the shepherd, and so we have the ability to recognize his voice, but do we believe and take the time to listen?

Now, I may not always hear his audible voice, but it’s always crystal clear, and it’s always black-and-white in God’s Word. The Scriptures are God’s eternal truth to us, they are unchanging and trustworthy, because…

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the (man or woman) of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

And so, as one of his sheep, you and I have the ability to pray to God, our spirit is connected to his Spirit, we are in him, and he is in us. And at any point God can prompt us, he can speak to us through circumstances, he can speak to us through people, he can speak to us through his Word, and sometimes he will speak to us audibly with his voice.

Jesus is the good Shepherd and if we are his, if we are his sheep, our responsibility is to follow the shepherd as he leads us. I find it comforting to know that he leads, he shows me the way, and my responsibility is to simply follow him. In fact, if I have a question, if I don’t know, it’s my responsibility to ask him because the Bible says,

“You do not have, because you do not ask God” (James 4:2).

There may be some of you here, some of you listening, who have a decision to make. And if you don’t know what to do, maybe it’s because you haven’t stopped to ask God. David said,

“Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Psalms 143:8).

In other words, show me where to walk, for I give myself to you, I entrust myself to you, give me hears to hear what the Spirit says. And so, this isn’t a halfhearted commitment, this is full on surrender, saying, “You are the one who brings me your word, you are the one who has unfailing love, you are the one that is always faithful, and to you I entrust my whole life.”

If you’re in a place today where you are trying to figure out which way to go and you have a decision to make, I pray that God’s Word would come alive to you this morning. That you would be filled with faith because of his faithfulness and because of his unfailing love. I want to pray that the good Shepherd would speak to you and you would believe and follow. And so, let’s pray.

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