BIBLE STUDY

**Becoming A Person of Prayer**

**Lesson 6D: Prayers from the Bible: Psalm 102**

**DISCUSSION**

A young lad was accompanying his mother to church. They stopped for a quick sandwich along the way. The child ran out of time before he ran out of sandwich. His mother insisted that they had to leave, or they would be late. He stuck the sandwich in his pocket to be finished later. That evening the preacher spoke about the ability of God to be present in all places at each and every given moment. The boy bowed his head drying the sermon and prayed, “God, if you are in my pocket, please don’t eat my sandwich!” – Michael Hodgin

Psalm 102 is one of seven poems called “penitential” psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).

Penitent: feeling or expressing sorrow for sin or wrongdoing and disposed to atonement and amendment; repentant; contrite.

* Penitence - regret for one's wrongdoing or sinning; ***contrition***; repentance.

Psalm 51 is a prayer of **repentance**. David appealed to God’s love and compassion as he sought forgiveness and cleansing from his sin.

Psalm 6 is a prayer for **relief**. David appeals to God to relieve him of the great suffering that he is experiencing.

Psalm 38 is a prayer for **remembrance**. David prays that God will not forget him in his tremendous suffering.

Psalm 102 is a prayer for **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. The psalmist’s lament is that God would quickly deliver him from his suffering.

**DISCOVERY**

**Psalm 102**

Superscription:

*A prayer of a suffering person who is weak and pours out his lament before the Lord.*

This psalm is both penitential and Messianic.

**vv. 25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12**

\*What does Messianic mean?

The author of this this psalm is unknown.

It is speculated that this psalm was written long after the destruction of Jerusalem, as indicated in verses 8, 14, & 16.

The Psalmist’s Prayer (vv. 1-2)

What we do know is that the author desires to be rescued, and that very quickly.

**vv. 1-2**

The psalmist prayed earnestly that God would hear him and not hide His face. (v. 1)

**Psalm 27:9, Psalm 143:7**

In his distress he urged the Lord to answer him quickly. (v. 2)

\***What feelings do you experience when you desperately need God and He is slow to respond?**

The words *“do not hide your face…”* and *“listen closely…”* are anthropomorphisms. That is a figure of speech which assigns human features to God.

* hand of God - Psalm 89:13
* eyes of the Lord – 1 Peter 3:12
* heart of God – Genesis 6:5-6
* nostrils – Isaiah 65:3-5

Why is this important? Ascribing these anthropomorphic features to God (He is Spirit – John 4:24) reveals to us that God is **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** to us.

**Nehemiah 1:11; Isaiah 65:24**; **1 John 5:14**

**\*How can your prayer life be transformed knowing this?**

The Psalmist’s Plight (vv. 3-11)

In these verses (3-11) the psalmist describes his lamentable condition. What is his condition?

This has taken an \_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** toll on the psalmist.

* v. 3 “For my *days vanish like smoke*, and my *bones burn like a furnace*.”
* v. 4 “My *heart is suffering*, withered like grass; I *even forget to eat my food*.
* v. 5 “Because of the sound of my groaning, my *flesh sticks to my bones*.

The writer has no appetite and is emaciated.

The writer feels an extreme loneliness and desolation (vv. 6-7) like a mournful-looking owl or a bird sitting alone.

His strength was gone, he was inwardly depressed, and it appears that he had lost his will to live.

Adding to his distress is the daily taunts (ridicule) directed at him from his enemies. Can you identify with the psalmist, at all?

To “eat ashes like bread” means to have ashes on one’s head as a symbol of mourning.

The psalmist’s mourning and weeping were so continuous that they were like his daily diet.

Psalm 42:3

Verse 11 gives us the sense that the psalmist feels like his life is going to end soon. He says, “My days are like a lengthening shadow…”

The imagery is that of a sunset. The sun is setting in his life (thus the lengthening shadow).

The Psalmist’s Perspective (vv. 12-17)

Though the psalmist has lodged his complaint in the previous verses, he shifts in these verses and expresses his **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** that God would answer his prayer.

**\*When you are experiencing hard struggles is it difficult to maintain your confidence that God will hear and answer your prayers?**

This is a radical shift in focus from **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** to **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** – from his dilemma to God.

**Isaiah 26:3**; **Colossians 3:1-2**

(v. 13) The mention of “Zion” – the “city of God” – recalls the favor that God has shown to his people in the past and forecasts the favor which is to come.

The psalmist is confident that God would not forsake those who love Him – those in Zion.

The psalmist states that the LORD will:

* rebuild Zion
* appear in His glory
* pay attention to the prayer of the destitute

**DIRECTION**

**Find three Bible verses that give the assurance that God will hear and answer your prayers.**

**Read Psalms 32, 130, 143**