

## Finding hope in the Psalms – Alison Thabethe – 6.8.2023



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### Read the following passages:

Psalm 91:1-12; Psalm 57:1-11; Psalm 23:1; Psalm 118:9; Psalm 91; Ps 22; Ps 13; Ps 71:1-24; Ps 130; Ps 40:1-3

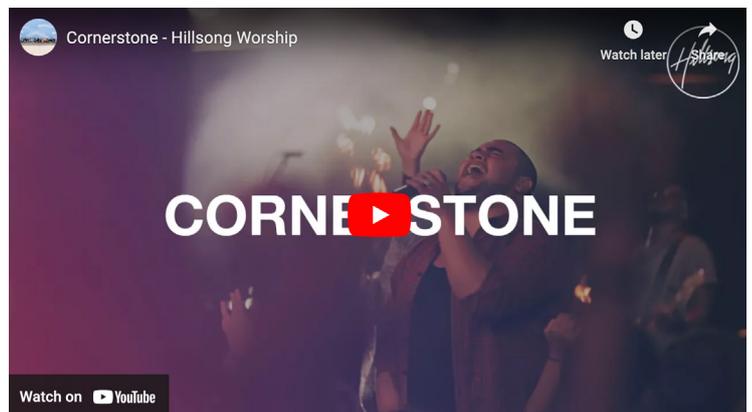
Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

### Observation

The book of psalms was originally known as Tehillim which means 'songs of praise' in Hebrew. They were written as poems and songs and many were intended to be sung. In the Septuagint, which is the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament these poems are entitled Psalmoi (meaning the sound of a harp or a song) from which the English word Psalms derives. The Psalms belong to the part of the Bible known as the Writings.

The Psalms show those who read them that it is acceptable to God to be honest with Him. They help us find words to pray when our circumstances overwhelm us. The



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Psalms include songs of sadness and grief, they express joy and praise, and they speak of God's power and might. Jesus grew up with the Psalms and often used them in His prayers (eg Psalm 22 which He prayed on the cross). They help us to be open and honest with God, inspiring us in the darkest and most joyful moments of our lives. They remind us of who God is and what He has done, of His faithfulness and His continual presence with us.

Almost half of the Psalms recorded in Scripture are attributed to King David (73 psalms out of 150). Other composers include Solomon (Psalms 72 and 127), Moses (Psalm 90), the Sons of Korah (Psalms 42, 44-49,84-85, 87-88) and Asaph (Psalms 50 and 73-83) whilst several were written by lesser known composers or are anonymous.

The writing of the Psalms spans a period of about 1000 years from the time of Moses to about the time the Israelites returned to Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon  
The psalms offer comfort and hope – except when they do not.

In the sermon, three stages were identified that are contained in the Book of Psalms:

- Orientation – they carry us through our lives and offer comfort, order and harmony
- Disorientation – they make us uncomfortable and speak of brokenness and fear which are shared human experiences.
- Re-orientation – they do not return us to our former state but move us forward as the Psalmists exclaim in surprise that God is there all the time!

*Icebreaker:*

What is your favourite poem? Why do you like it? What does it say to you?

### **Application.**

- Having read all the passages from Psalms listed above, which one speaks to you the most today? Why is that so? How does it speak to you about your current circumstances?
- How honest are you with God? Do you tell Him when you are angry? Do you ask Him to sort out the people who have offended or hurt you? How do the Psalms compare with your prayers?
- How have you found the issues covered in the Psalms compare to your own life? Do you know God as faithful? Do you trust Him to always be present and to sort out your challenges? Do you sing praise to Him when your heart bursts with joy? Do you whisper to Him in the darkest night? What could change in your life if you prayed as the Psalmists prayed?
- How do you feel about the 'ugly' passages in the Psalms when the Psalmists speak against those who are their enemies? Would you ever pray that way? Why/why not?
- 'The Psalms reveal an audacious trust in the unbroken covenant between God and His people in spite of everything that is broken in this world. The only thing that is worse is saying nothing.'

- What are your feelings about these words from the sermon?
- How can the Psalms give you hope today?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

## **Prayer**

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

## **Service**

How can you practically apply what you have discussed today in your life this week? Make a conscious effort to live and pray the Psalms and apply them in your relationships. Share with the group next week how you did this and what difference it made to you.

## **Bibliography**

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