

Cultivate - PSALMS

PSALM 1:

We started Cultivate with Psalm 120 and went all the way to the end of the Psalter, Psalm 150. Now we turn to the very beginning of the Psalter: Psalm 1 is the doorway that introduces the whole of our Book of Prayer & Worship to us. If we do not submit to Psalm 1 by faith, the rest of the Psalter will not be truly understood. And this doorway into prayer is full of decisive contrasts. Verses 1 & 2: what kind of life will you live? Verses 3 & 4: what kind of person will you be? Verses 5 & 6: what kind of future will you have?

Psalm 1 is a "Wisdom Psalm," teaching us God's eternal truth. And God's truth, as we see here, is quite confrontational. Choices must be made.

There are "two ways" described in this Psalm. And that's all there is; there is no third way. At the end of the Psalm, these two ways are forever separated: one to eternal love, the other to eternal death. Let the wisdom found here shape your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Remember, this is the very first of 150 prayers and songs, given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to be offered up in praise to the Living God.

PSALM 2:

In the New Testament, when God's appointed King finally reveals himself, he quickly finds that he is opposed, hated, and rejected. And that is prophetically pictured for us right here in Psalm 2. And yet, the gracious invitation of Christ is also prophetically pictured here. In verses 10-12, the rebels themselves are invited to *"take refuge in him."*

Psalm 2 is a "Royal Messianic Psalm," pointing forward to the long-promised King of God's people. Because this Psalm is so centered on Jesus, we find that it is often quoted in the New Testament. Ponder this Psalm deeply... its fierce threats, its glorious promises, its exalted claims.

There are four "movements" in this Psalm. Reflect on each of them well: 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12. What is each section teaching? Let all that teaching form your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. The Psalms were mostly written by King David... but always with an eye to the Greater David To Come, who would reign as the Risen King of All the World. **PSALM**

3:

Do you have a need for a more vibrant certainty and sure confidence in God, so that you might face all the trials of life with a more definite assurance and faith? David did. Note how Psalm 3 works. In vs.1&2, he describes his need. Down in v.8, he rejoices in the answer to that need. Back up in v.3 he confesses his faith in who God is. In v.7 he calls on that God to deliver him. And in vs.4-6—the heart of the Psalm, to which and from which everything else flows—he finds his confidence in the Lord.

Psalm 3 is a "Psalm of Trust," in which the believer is centered again in The One Who Alone Is Worthy Of Our Trust. In one of King David's darkest hours (see the title of the Psalm), this is how he prayed. And believers ever since—in the midst of their own troubles—have prayed it

with him.

Turn to Numbers 10.35, and enjoy how, in v.7, David is echoing Moses' prayer. Perhaps you need to echo Moses yourself? Let this Psalm of Trust guide your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. King David, the human author of this Psalm, was "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13.14; Acts 13.22). How do you become such a man or woman or child? By praying prayers like this.

PSALM 4:

The centerpiece of Psalm 3 (last week's Psalm) was David's confidence in the Lord. The centerpiece of Psalm 4 (this week's call to prayer) is knowing something about God (v.3) and trusting God (vs.4&5). Do you need peace (v.8)? Do you seek relief from some affliction (v.1)? Do you need to be reassured that God is listening (v.1)? Then come to Psalm 4. Know. Trust.

Psalm 4 is another "Psalm of Trust," and we will be in this kind of Psalm for a little while, actually. There's a string of them here, and sometimes we may need to pray right through all of them. This one is particularly useful at night (v.8), when we tend to brood or fret or sulk or worry. On this occasion, it was precisely such an evening when David needed to re-center himself in the faithfulness of the Lord.

This prayer rises out of a great trial in David's life. Look at the words we find here; he feels surrounded by distress, shame, vain words, lies, anger, and the temptations of despair. Let this honesty before the Lord embolden your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. King David was known as "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Samuel 23.1), but—as we see here—that's not at all the false religious "sweetness" that genuine people despise. It's the sweetness of authenticity, resting in grace.

PSALM 5:

Last week's Psalm (Psalm 4) seemed to be particularly useful as an evening prayer (see 4.8). This week's Psalm (Psalm 5) seems to be particularly useful as a morning prayer (see v.3). And praying this prayer is indeed a strong way to start the day. The centerpiece (vs.7,8) is all about God's love for us, our worship of God, and a prayer for God to lead us in paths of righteousness. This kind of life is lived in contrast to the lives described in vs.4-6 & vs.9-10. This is a life lived with confidence in the Lord (vs.1-3) and joy in the Lord (vs.11,12). Isn't that the life you want? Indeed. It is the life for which you were made.

Psalm 5 still finds us in this string of "Psalms of Trust," this one seeking to order our whole lives around the trust we are to have in God. David prayed this prayer of trust in the very shadow of his enemies, and we need to do the same. Look at how David refers to God in the middle of v.2. Can you pray that with the same passion? That's what this Psalm teaches us to do.

The sense that you have here is David turning full-face to God, giving him the praise due his name, alternating with strong denunciations of those who have dared to denounce their Creator. Let this fullness of godly passion bring vitality to your prayers this week. We'll pray it

together on Sunday. David is described as a prophet in Acts 2.29,30. These Psalms are our invitation to pray with the power and devotion of a prophet.

PSALM 6:

David is still praying in the dark shadow of foes, workers of evil, and enemies (vs.7,8,10). This is a man who is languishing; he feels like his very bones are sick (v.2). His soul is greatly troubled (v.3), and he is weary with his moaning (v.6) and grief (v.7). Have you ever been at this kind of low ebb? Have you ever suffered this kind of depression? Then pray with David: "Be gracious to me, O Lord" (v.2)!

Psalms 6 is one of the seven classic "Penitential Psalms," alongside 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, & 143. These are Psalms to pray in the midst of deep trouble, weeping, and the desperate need of God's cleansing, healing grace. And note how it ends, in vs.8-10: with a defiant outburst of faith. God has heard. The enemies will be turned back.

Sometimes we are so weary in our sorrows that we can't even find the words to pray. This Psalm gives you the words! Let these words of faith fill your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. "The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me," David once said; "his word is on my tongue" (2 Samuel 23.2). And now, because of the way the Psalms work, his words can be on your tongue as well.

PSALM 7:

We don't know exactly who this man Cush was—referred to in the title words of the Psalm. But he obviously made an accusation against David, and David found the accusation to be slanderously false. He has a clear conscience before God. Have you ever been there? If so, this Psalm is for you. If not, this Psalm still has a lot to offer. Pray through every cluster of verses, refusing to let go, until you have a blessing (like Jacob in Genesis 32.26).

With Psalm 7 we are back to this string of the "Psalms of Trust" in 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, & 10, sometimes referred to as "The Golden Chain of Trust." Here we are learning how to trust God for justice, in the midst of an unjust situation. And the flow of the Psalm is from the pain of betrayal, through the conviction that God is the judge of all the earth, all the way to the certainty that evil is pitifully self-defeating.

For all the anguish of the situation, the Psalm ends with grateful confidence and the clarity of sincere, heart-felt praise. Let that confidence and praise color your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Do you have a "words of Cush" situation in your life (see the title)? Do you need to deal with that before God with confidence and praise? Start right now.

PSALM 8:

The central theme of Psalm 8 seems to be found in these words: "*O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*"... for these are the words that act as bookends to the whole Psalm (see v.1 & v.9). If you were to try to describe the majesty of God's name and character, what would you emphasize? What character traits would you ponder? To what surprising choices of God would you draw attention? What would you highlight, to express the

great power of God?

Psalms 8 is yet another "Psalm of Trust," and it's teaching us to trust God in yet another magnificent way. Both God's glory and grace are here celebrated. He is praised here for both who he is and what he has done. God's relation to both humanity and the galaxy are here defined. And all of this is presented with beautiful poetry, humble joy, and reverent awe.

The question "*what is man?*" is explicitly dealt with a handful of times in the Bible, and this is one of those times (see v.4). And the answer is astonishing. Let that astonishment animate your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. God's people throughout all ages have particularly delighted in this book of the Bible. Are we starting to understand that, more and more?

PSALM 9:

In Psalms 9 and 10, faith is wrestling with the realities of a fallen world. In 9.1-12 faith is confident and calm. Enemies are present, but God is clearly on the throne. But by the time you get to 9.13, the mood has changed. The calm has passed, and faith is now in a fight (and that fight will extend into Psalm 10). Life is chaotic, we're crying to God for his grace (v.13), and pleading with him to DO SOMETHING NOW (v.19). Have you felt that way recently?

Psalms 9 & 10 are the last in this string of the "Psalms of Trust" we find in this part of the Psalter. Yes, God is on his throne. He is the king. But, until the world is made new, wickedness and evil will have some temporary victories. Welcome to the life of faith.

Putting 9 & 10 together, you move from the *calm* of faith to the *fight* of faith to the *prayers* of faith... but we'll get to 10 next week. Let these changing circumstances of the life of faith propel your own prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. In doing so we are joining our voices with the faithful among all nations, throughout all history.

PSALM 10:

We said last week that in Psalms 9 and 10 we see faith wrestling with the realities of a fallen world. And when you put them together—which there is good reason to do, as the two Psalms together form something of an alphabetical acrostic—it moves from the *calm* of faith (9.1-12), to the *fight* of faith (9.13-10.6), to the *prayers* of faith (10.7-18). In 10.7-11, the problem of wickedness in this world is identified and described. In 10.12-16, strong prayer is made to God, that he might deal with wickedness justly. And in the final two verses (17,18), we enter into the triumph and assurance of faith: God has heard; salvation is guaranteed.

Psalm 10 is the end of this "Golden Chain of Trust" that consisted of Psalms 3-5 and 7-10. When your trust in God needs to be refueled, open up your divinely-given prayerbook and just pray straight through all seven.

This is a fallen world, and you're going to need to pray prayers like this from time to time, if you want your faith to grow and not wither. May the trust in God that you find here fill your own

prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul" (Psalm 25.1).

PSALM 11:

The title tells us that David was the (human) author of this Psalm (inspired by the divine Holy Spirit). Remind yourself of what David's life was sometimes like: take a moment to read through 1 Samuel 18.8-19.7. It was against such a danger-infested background as you read there that David was moved to pray and write this Psalm. Do you need the Lord's protection and favor? Then this Psalm is for you.

Psalm 11 is one of eight "Fugitive Psalms" that we find in the Psalter. It comes straight out of a crisis. What's your first reaction in a crisis? Is it prayer? "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray" (James 5.13).

Notice the flow of this Psalm, from the trouble that is at hand, to what is true of the Lord, to prayer, to the assurance of his favor—freely given to all who come to him in faith. May the face of the Lord (v.7) be upon you as you pray this prayer this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. God himself has given you this precious gift of a Psalter: worship book, song book, & prayer book. Use it well.

PSALM 12:

Every moment of every day we have to decide which words we'll find most persuasive. There are the words of man, which are often characterized by lies, flattery, and doublespeak (v.2). (This includes—by the way—our own words to our own selves.) And there are the words of God, which are pure, valuable, and perfect (v.6). That is your choice. Every moment of every day.

Psalm 12 is a "Psalm of Lament." And one of the chief things being lamented here (that is, being "grieved" over here) is the menacing and abusive way that human words are often used. Have words been used that way toward you? Or have *you* used words in that way? If so, we need to spend some time praying through Psalm 12.

Notice the pattern found in this Psalm. It starts with prayer (vs.1-4), then flows into promise (vs.5,6), and then returns to prayer (vs.7,8). And even though the outward circumstances haven't noticeably changed by the end of the Psalm, prayer and promise have done their work upon us and within us. Let that work advance in your heart as you pray this prayer this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. What if we began to "address one another in Psalms" (Eph.5.19)? What kind of people might we become?

PSALM 13:

Do you ever feel like you're surrounded by afflictions? That was David's experience here, but the afflictions are strong enough to be called "my enemy" and "my foes" (v.4). There are three parts to this Psalm: prayerful *questions* that rise from this stress (vs.1,2); prayerful *supplications* that rise from this stress (vs.3,4); and finally the *trust, joy, song, and thanksgiving* that come from prayer in the presence of the Lord (vs.5,6).

Psalms 13 is another "Psalm of Lament." And it's one of the most poignant laments in all of Scripture. "*How long...?*" That question is asked, in different ways, four times. It's asked with reference to God, with reference to self, and with reference to the enemies.

Verse 5 is the high point of the prayer, and David shows us that we can reach it, even in the most depressing of circumstances. Let that high point draw your prayers to God this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Sing these Psalms, with thankfulness in your heart to God (Colossians 3.16).

PSALM 14:

This Psalm has some sort of encounter with atheism in view (v.1). But when you read of this kind of atheism in the ancient world, it's generally more of a "practical atheism" than a "theoretical atheism." That is, it's more a denial of God's *relevance* than a denial of God's existence. (The theoretical atheism which denies God's very existence is a strange thing indeed, by the way: not even demons deny that; see James 2.19.)

Psalms 14 is another "Psalm of Lament." God's law is being scorned and disregarded (vs.1-3); God's people are being oppressed and harassed (vs.4-6). This is the fruit of a world which holds God in contempt.

But take a look at v.7! And if you want to fill out v.7 a bit more, hold it up to the light of Romans 8.19-25. Let that light fill your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Keep in mind, as you meditate on this Psalm throughout the week: this Word comes to you from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

PSALM 15:

This Psalm begins by asking who will "sojourn" with the Lord? Who will "dwell" with him? A more important question cannot be imagined. Hebrews 12.14 says that without holiness, no one will see the Lord. And that's what this Psalm is teaching as well, extending that holiness into our lives, our conduct, our speech, our relationships, our values, our integrity, our financial stewardship, etc. The house of the Lord is holy. Will you honor him, as his guest?

Psalms 15 is a "Wisdom Psalm." We saw that Psalm 1 was also a Wisdom Psalm, acting as our entryway into the Psalter itself. But now *this* Wisdom Psalm is not just inviting us into the Psalter, but into God's own tent (v.1).

Let this Psalm search your conscience, leading you into deeper repentance and renewed faith in Christ. Let that sense of sweet renewal fill your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Make it your joyful ambition to meditate carefully upon the Psalms your whole life long.

PSALM 16:

This Psalm opens with a plea for preservation, security, refuge (v.1). It closes with the declaration of that preservation, security, refuge as a present possession and future certainty, even beyond the grave (vs.9-11). And in between (vs.2-8) we have a strong, beautiful, profound

proclamation of what that blessing looks like in a human life. There is rich reward in deeply meditating on this Psalm for a week.

Psalm 16 is a "Psalm of Trust." Its power and passion is found in this: as we pray it sincerely, it centers our loves and affections upon God. If your loves and affections are not centered upon God, they will all be disordered and disjointed. The sorrows of such a life will only multiply (v.4).

There are many voices in this world, calling out for your loyalty. Which will you choose? Let loyalty to God through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit infuse your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Thoughtfully and engagingly praying the Psalms is one of the very best spiritual disciplines you could cultivate.

PSALM 17:

Take a look at 1 Samuel 23.19-29, reminding yourself of that episode in David's life. Perhaps that was the background (or one very much like it) in which David first prayed this prayer. But the Lord himself inspired this prayer within David, including it in holy Scripture, so that *you* might pray it as well. There are three major movements in this Psalm, marked by three appeals: "Hear" in v.1, "incline" in v.6, and "Arise" in v.13.

Psalm 17 is a "Psalm of Lament." It is lamenting the hostility of our enemies, and appealing to God for justice, for protection, and for the overthrow of vicious adversaries.

But when you pray your way all the way down to the final verse, you find that you are now praying in confidence and assurance. The darkness shall not win. Eternal Morning shall come, and we will be satisfied with God's likeness. Let the anticipation of that Morning give heart to your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. The Psalms are full of meaning—for the original author, for worshipping Israel, for Jesus, for the worshipping church... and for you. Personally.

PSALM 18:

This Psalm is full of the kind of dramatic imagery that we associate with stories from Bible books like Joshua or Exodus, where mighty miracles and breathtaking deliverances take place. And yet, when we look at the title, we see that this Psalm is expressing what the Lord did for David. We scratch our heads, not remembering those sorts of signs and wonders in the story of David. And we're right... supernatural sights are not part of the David story. But the Supernatural God stands behind everything in the David story. Just like he stands behind your story.

Psalm 18 is a "Psalm for Times of Trouble." And the next time you find yourself in some trouble, perhaps you should turn to this Psalm and attempt to outline it. What is the structure of the Psalm? Where does it start? Where does it end? How does one part flow into another?

In Romans 15.9, Paul takes verse v.49 of this Psalm and tells us that it's really pointing prophetically to Great David's Greater Son—the Lord Jesus Christ. Let this Psalm point you to

Christ in your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. The Psalms helped David remain steadfast and loyal to his Lord; they will do the same for you.

PSALM 19:

It wasn't too long ago that I preached a sermon on Psalm 19 at DPC, entitled "Three Books." The title made reference to what we called "The World Book" (vs.1-6, celebrating the revelation of God to us through the creation, the universe, the world), "The Word Book" (vs.7-10, celebrating the revelation of God to us through his Scriptures, the Bible, the Word), and "The Prayer Book" (vs.11-14, reminding us that one of the chief reasons the Psalms were given to us was so that we might learn to pray through them).

Psalm 19 is a "Psalm of Revelation." And referring to the outburst of revelation of which this Psalm speaks, Charles Spurgeon once said, "He is wisest who reads both the world-book and the Word-book as two volumes of the same work, and feels concerning them, 'My Father wrote them both.'"

See Romans 10.18 and Romans 1.18-23 for some Biblical application of the theology of Psalm 19. Let that theology form your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. This is a wonderful example of how the Psalter provides us with a worship handbook that tells us what we need to know to understand God truly and relate to him faithfully.

PSALM 20:

This Psalm was originally a liturgical service of prayer and sacrifice on the day before a great battle. There are two voices speaking: one is the voice of the people, describing their prayers for their king (vs.1-4, 5c, 9a). The other is the voice of the king himself, heard in vs. 5a and b, 6-8, and 9b. Tomorrow was going to be a "day of trouble" for them (v.1), and they were encouraging one another's faith and pleading together for the Lord's help and protection.

Psalm 20 is a "Royal Messianic Psalm," as was Psalm 2. And though it may at first seem somewhat anachronistic and irrelevant to us, because we don't have a king... it's actually both pertinent and stirring to our faith. Because the truth is we do have a king; his name is Jesus, and we should wake up every morning expecting to be in a fight, if we are enrolled in his army.

Issues of life and death are found in this Psalm. Let that sense of urgency spur on your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. This is one of those Psalms that beautifully teach us how to speak both to God and to one another.

PSALM 21:

We saw last week that Psalm 20 was prayed by the king and his people on the eve of a great battle. Well, that battle is now over; the Lord graciously granted his people their prayers. And here in Psalm 21 the king is rejoicing and exulting (v.1) and giving God all the glory (v.5). Note that vs.1-7 are praising God for that particular victory. But vs.8-12 seem to look forward to Another Victory, one yet to come. But when it does come, it will be total, decisive, final, and absolute. Yes, Christian. That day is coming...

Psalm 21 is another "Royal Messianic Psalm," in which King David's victory is something like a sonogram image of King Jesus' future victories. This is a jubilant Psalm, reminding us that salvation belongs to the Lord.

Putting the opening and closing verses of Psalm 21 together, we see that the Lord's strength is the theme of these praises. Let that theme carry your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. The entire range of the Christian life is covered in the Psalter; this particular Psalm teaches us that there are times when the Christian needs to rejoice in God's strength.

PSALM 22:

No experienced Christian who has spent time pondering the crucifixion of Jesus for our salvation can possibly read the first verse of Psalm 22 without going there immediately in his or her mind. Indeed, Acts 2:30 explicitly says that King David (the human author of this Psalm) was a prophet! And Psalm 22 is perhaps the crown and summit of his prophetic utterances. In his own mind, David may have been *poetically* describing some great personal suffering of his own, but what he ends up *literally* describing is an execution! The execution of the promised one, who would be born in his family line... who would be sacrificed for our sins.

Psalm 22 is a "Psalm of Lament," one that takes us into the deepest and darkest trial that the universe has ever witnessed. Remember, your High Priest is able to sympathize with your weaknesses; he has been tempted in every respect as you have been, yet without sin (Hebrews 4.15).

There are many verses in Psalm 22 that point to Christ, the Greater King (see Psalm 22.22 & Hebrews 2.12, for example). Can you find more? Let all these references to Christ throughout Psalm 22 enlarge your love for him in prayer this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. *"Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, [King David] foresaw and spoke about... the Christ" (Acts 2:30,31).*

PSALM 23:

This is perhaps the most famous and beloved of all the Psalms, and justly so. There are three "testimonies" borne in this Psalm, all starting with the phrase "I shall" or "I will." Find those testimonies, and meditate deeply upon the gifts of a gracious God, so freely poured out on his children. What assurances does God want you to have here? If you've never memorized Psalm 23, now is a great time to do so.

Psalm 23 is a "Psalm of Trust," reminding us that we have a Good Shepherd (see John 10.1-18), who spares no effort in caring for his sheep. From one perspective, this is a very "simple"-sounding Psalm. But take a deeper look, and you'll see the fearful darkness and the threat of attack. We need this Shepherd. We need this Psalm.

Reflect on the last verse until your heart is ready to burst with joy! The climatic goodness and

mercy that is given to us is nothing less than the Lord Himself. Let that joy shape your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Athanasius (296-373 AD) reminds us that the Psalter *"embraces the whole life of man, the affections of his mind, and the motions of his soul."*

PSALM 24:

This Psalm has three parts. The first part (vs.1,2) affirms the majesty and mastery and power of the Lord. The second part (vs.3-6) raises the question: if the Lord is that mighty, who can possibly ascend to his holy place to meet with him? Who dares to stand in his presence? The third part (vs.7-10) reverses part two. It's not about us coming to the Lord; it is rather about this Lord coming to us. Will we lift up our heads and recognize him for who he is?

Psalm 24 is a "Psalm of Revelation," telling us who the Lord is and calling upon us to respond to that revelation faithfully. This Psalm has inspired some great hymns, such as *"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates,"* which is traditionally sung around Palm Sunday, commemorating King Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. But it could also point to Advent... or Ascension Day... or the events in 1 Samuel 5, 6, and 2nd Samuel 6. It is the coming of God.

The questions raised in Part 2 of this Psalm are the most important questions in the world. Let the great significance of those questions lead you into deeper prayer this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Our friend Athanasius (296-373 AD) assures us that one may find *"a Psalm suited to every occasion, and thus he will find they are written for him."*

PSALM 25:

There are 22 verses to this Psalm, and whenever a chapter of the Old Testament has 22 verses, look around in the footnotes & such to see if this is an "acrostic." An acrostic, in this setting, means that each verse begins with the next, successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet—which has 22 letters! This Psalm is indeed an acrostic, but it is a "broken" acrostic—meaning that the A, B, C, D, E pattern isn't exactly perfect. And in Hebrew poetic thought, that in itself has meaning. Here it seems to be a reflection on the way that the troubles of this fallen world interrupt and break the patterns of our lives.

Psalm 25 is a "Psalm of Petition," calling out to the Lord in the face of enemies and confusion and guilt. Sometimes this kind of Psalm will end with an explosion of joy and relief, but notice how this one does not. It remains somewhat subdued throughout. There is no burst of blissful elation; rather, there is a steadiness of patient hope in the Lord. And sometimes that's the most beautiful prayer of all.

What David has prayed and petitioned for himself in verses 1-21, he prays and petitions for all of Israel in the last verse. Let that kind of transformation of prayer (from yourself to the whole of God's people) mark your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Our friend John Calvin (1509-1564 AD) once called the Psalter *"the anatomy of all the parts of the soul."* What you find here in Psalm 25 is part of the very "bodily structure" and internal workings of your soul. Use it well.