

## **Cultivate – PSALMS 51-75 by Tommy Lee**

### **PSALM 51:**

Make sure you read the title to today's Psalm! If you need to review the context, go read 1 Samuel 11 and 12. Those events and this Psalm must always be bound together. Especially at this point right here: "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said to David, 'The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die'" (2 Samuel 12.13).

Psalm 51 is one of the seven classic "Penitential Psalms," and it is often considered the greatest of the seven. Why? Perhaps because with this one we know the story behind David's dark moment of self-revelation. But 51 doesn't just delve into the depths of guilt; it also explores the high reaches of forgiveness and salvation.

The last two verses show us that this Psalm wasn't just for David's personal use; it was also intended for use by all of God's people, corporately. Let this Psalm teach you deeper truths about God, sin, and salvation this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. May this Psalm remind us of our need for the cross of Jesus Christ, which was foreshadowed with some detail, in Psalm 22.

### **PSALM 52:**

Once again, we need to take note of the title. This background story may be slightly less well known than last week's; you can find it in 1 Samuel 21 & 22. Remember King Saul? At this point in his apostasy, he declares holy war on the priests of God. And Doeg the Edomite has an opportunity to get himself in good with the king...

Psalm 52 is one of the "Fugitive Psalms," which teaches us how to pray in desperate times like the ones that David experienced. One aspect of this Psalm is David's reflections on the kind of man that Doeg is, who would carve out a place for himself in this world by slander, evil, and violence. This kind of "success" will be very brief.

Another aspect of this Psalm is David renewing his trust in the steadfast love of God. Let this Psalm move you to such renewal this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. How might this Psalm prepare the Old Testament reader for the coming of Christ? How does it help you to trust in Christ?

### **PSALM 53:**

Take a quick look at Psalm 14, comparing it to Psalm 53, line by line. Do you see the big difference? In Psalm 14, vs.5-6 says, *"There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous. You would shame the plans of the poor, but the Lord is his*

*refuge.*" That is, the enemies of God's people are in great terror when they realize that God Himself is with His people. But in Psalm 53, verse 5 says, *"There they are, in great terror, where there is no terror! For God scatters the bones of him who encamps against you; you put them to shame, for God has rejected them."* God's people have no need to fear, for God will scatter their adversaries. The enemies have everything to fear; God's people have nothing to fear.

Psalm 53 (like Psalm 52) is another "Fugitive Psalm," teaching us (again) how to pray in desperate times.

The word "fool" in v.1 is the Hebrew word "nabal." You can read about David's fugitive-days interaction with a "Nabal" in 1 Samuel 25. Let this richer context encourage your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. How might this Psalm relate to the promises of the gospel?

#### **PSALM 54:**

Once again we have a title that tells us of a certain context. You can find the story in 1 Samuel 23.15-29. This is yet another desperate situation in which David finds himself. How does he respond? He responds by prayer (vs.1,2). By recounting the truths about his enemies and his God (vs.3-5). And finally, by responding to God's goodness in faithfulness and commitment (vs.6,7).

Psalm 54 is another "Fugitive Psalm," taking us again to the response of faith in difficult, dangerous, and disillusioning times. Disillusionment? Yes. Earlier in 1 Samuel 23 David had rescued one of the Israelite towns from the Philistines. But in spite of this kindness he is rejected once more, by the very people who should be grateful to him.

There is no such thing as untested faith. The question is: what will you do when your faith is tested? In this story, David turned to God. Let that mighty truth encourage your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. This too is another divinely-inspired, Christ-centered song and prayer of faith and praise. It is most worthy of taking on our own lips with joyful confidence.

#### **PSALM 55:**

If David had wings like a dove, he would be gone! *"And I say, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest'"* (vs.6-9). He's in dire straits *"day and night"* (v.10), and would gladly flee. But instead he prays: *"Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice"* (v.17). And he trusts: *"But I will trust in you"* (v.23).

Psalm 55 is yet another "Fugitive Psalm," rising out of the era of David's great distress when Saul wanted to take his life. Those who suffer will find in the Psalms a fellow-sufferer, and a guide for dealing with suffering faithfully.

Or, if you're not in the midst of suffering right now, you here find a guide for how to pray for those who do suffer (see Hebrews 13.3). Let that guidance organize some of your prayer life this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. There are some heartbreaking descriptions of betrayal here (see vs.12-14 and 20,21). Do you remember Judas? Can you see your Jesus praying this Psalm?

#### **PSALM 56:**

In v.3, David says "*When I am afraid...*". In the next verse he says, "*I shall not be afraid.*" And, again, the title provides the all-important context. You can read the background in 1 Samuel 21.10-15. And you can even read David's later reflections on this episode in Psalm 34. Whom can we trust when we find ourselves under the hostility of the enemy?

Psalm 56 has us again in the "Fugitive Psalms" of David. Think over the desperation of David's situation. While fleeing from King Saul, he discovers that he can't even trust his own people to protect him. So where does he go? To Gath. You remember Gath? It's the hometown of Goliath, the Philistine.

So, now David finds himself in a double circle of danger. What can one do? Verse 4: "*In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?*" Let that striking statement lead you into prayer this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. The Lord particularly gifted and called David to lead us in worship. The Psalter itself was largely composed out of that gift and calling. Enjoy.

#### **PSALM 57:**

Once again, note the title. To review the story, read 1 Samuel 21. David is again fleeing from Saul, and now he must take refuge in a cave. That might be kind of discouraging if we had to do that, but David sees the cave as the outstretched wings of his God: "*in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by*" (v.1).

Psalm 57 is another of the "Fugitive Psalms." Note what David is most concerned about in this Psalm. Not that he be delivered. Not that his enemy be defeated. Rather, David's heart desire in this Psalm is that God should be exalted in his glory! See the repeated refrain in verses 5 and 11.

To get a feel for the flow of the Psalm, read the first verse and then the final two verses. Let that flow from opening cry to concluding praise shape your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Give thanks to God for the Psalter-composing labors of Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, under the direction of King David (see 1 Chronicles 25.6).

#### **PSALM 58:**

Wicked rulers are failing to administer justice and maintain order (vs.1,2). David cries out to God to intervene strongly (v.6). And, by the end of the Psalm, there is joy for the righteous (v.10) and God's holy and just character is being publicly acknowledged (v.11). And in the in-between sections, vs.3-5 deals with the character of the wicked, and vs.7-9 deals with the doom of the wicked.

While still having a lot in common with the Fugitive Psalms, this Psalm is usually categorized as an "Imprecatory Psalm." And these Psalms are sometimes troubling to Christians. If you'd like to study that out, let me encourage you to read this:

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2011/10/19/how-to-think-about-curses-in-the-psalms/>

One benefit of praying the Psalter is that the Spirit builds within us a passion for justice. In the midst of a world where people just get used to the scandals of evil, this is a gift from God. Let that gift give direction to your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Praise the Lord this week for an entire book of the Bible that is an inspired collection of songs and prayers. What a gift.

#### **PSALM 59:**

We have another title that points us to the backstory; it's found in 1 Samuel 19.10-12. Psalm 59 has two parts: 1-10 and 11-17. The first half begins with a prayer for deliverance (vs.1,2), develops into a prayer for judgment (v.5), and ends with a reflection that begins with "*But you, O Lord...*" (v.8). The second half begins with a prayer for God to address the wrongs committed (vs.11-13a), develops into a prayer for revelation (v.13b), and ends with a reflection that begins with "*But I*" (v.16). And in the midst of each section we have this reference to howling, prowling dogs (vs.6-7 and 14-15).

Psalm 59 is the last of the "Fugitive Psalms." Reading the backstory, one can easily enter into this Psalm's sense of urgency, outrage ("*for no fault of mine,*" v.4), anger at those seeking innocent life (the howling, prowling dogs of vs.6-7; 14-15), and the strong joy in God's deliverance that leads to such fierce prayer.

But, again, the Psalms are bigger than their immediate contexts. Note the prayers for *"all the nations"* in vs.5 and 8. Let that world-wide vision of salvation from the enemy drive your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Compare this Psalm to Psalm 2, if you want to connect David the outlaw with David the king and with Jesus the final King.

### **PSALM 60:**

Have you ever been in big trouble, but realized that the terrible situation was completely of your own making? That's the situation in this Psalm; see v.1: *"O God, you have rejected us, broken our defenses; you have been angry; oh, restore us."* The real danger that David finds himself in is not Edom (see the title). The real danger is God's anger at David, which is being expressed through Edom. Therefore, the only answer will be found in prayer. *"Oh, restore us"* (v.1).

Psalm 60 is a "Psalm of Revival," teaching us how to petition God, as we read in v.5, *"that your beloved ones may be delivered, give salvation by your right hand and answer us!"* See vs.6-8 for a strong reminder of God's faithfulness to his people, even when we are unfaithful (see 2 Timothy 2.13).

This Psalm teaches us to pray, *"Oh, grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man! With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes"* (vs.11,12). Let's pray that this week! Revisit Psalm 1, the doorway into the Psalter, and see what connections your heart may find between what we find here and the wisdom and power of God that is celebrated there.

### **PSALM 61:**

As you learn to pray the Psalms, there are certain patterns of prayer that will start to form you. One such pattern is this: a prayer that starts with strong (or perhaps desperate) *petitions* will often end in strong (even fearless) *praise*. Psalm 61 is an example of this kind of progression, as prayer begets a confidence in God that stirs the soul.

Psalm 61 is a "Psalm of Petition," in which we are taught to implore God with words like these: *"lead me to the rock that is higher than I"* (v.2). Have you ever been in great need of assurance? Security? Protection? Strength? Fellowship? Then 61 is for you.

Note the prayer for the king in vs.6 and 7. Of course, Israel used this to pray for their kings back in the days of the Davidic dynasty. But consider the abundant answer to this prayer that our God has forever granted his people in Christ, the Greatest Son of David, the Eternal and Final King of the Universe. His reign is endless, and if he is your hope, that's all the assurance, security, protection, strength, and fellowship you need. Welcome the king who ever reigns, in

prayer, this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Drop in on Psalm 2 again this week, as you rejoice in your king.

### **PSALM 62:**

Why do you think the most frequently-given command in the Bible is "do not fear?" (Not, "be good," "do this," "don't do that"... but "do not fear.") *Why is that?* Because there is MUCH in this world to fear! But God is constantly tell us not to fear, *because we can trust in him*. This is stated in vs.1&2, restated in vs.5&6, given to others for their encouragement in vs.7&8, contrasted against false trusts in vs.9&10, and founded in the sure Word of God in vs.11&12.

Psalm 62 is a "Psalm of God's Faithfulness," and it was born in the context of intense pressure. See v.3. This is not a Hallmark-inspired moment of sentimentality. This is real life. And real faith.

As the prayer continues, the confidence deepens and clarity grows. Let 62 have this effect on your faith this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. To see how this is also true of the whole of the Psalter—*that confidence deepens and clarity grows as it continues*—go read the last five Psalms (146-150) really quick. See how each one begins, and how each one ends.

### **PSALM 63:**

David knew what it was like to be in "*in a dry and weary land where there is no water*" (v.1)—just look at the title of this Psalm! But what his soul is thirsting for, what his flesh is fainting for, what he is earnestly seeking (v.1) is God. It is God's power, glory, and steadfast love (see vs.2,3) that have gripped David. To be honest, reading this Psalm makes me think that I don't love God as much as David did. But then, that's why this Psalm is given to us: that we might learn to love God more deeply.

Psalm 63 is a "Psalm of Trust," and it reminds us that when we are thrown into difficult circumstances—in which we are forced to turn to God in desperate faith—that's actually when we are at our best.

There is a strong outpouring of devotion in this Psalm. Let that devotion lift up your prayer life this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. "*I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands*" (v.4).

### **PSALM 64:**

The "problem" or "question" of evil often gets raised when people are discussing the existence of a God who is both good and powerful. "*If a good God is really ruling the world, how can [fill in the blank] happen?*" Psalm 64 provides one of the Bible's answers to this question by

asserting and affirming divine retribution. Yes, there is a just God. Therefore, there will be a day of reckoning. There will be a day of vengeance, of redress, of never-ending punishment for all who partner themselves with evil, without repentance. So. *"Let the righteous one rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult"* (v.10)!

Psalm 64 is a "Psalm of Petition," asking the Lord for protection.

Note the elaborate scheming of the wicked in vs.2-6. And then note the decisive brevity of God's judgment in vs.7-8a. It's all over in a verse and a half. Let that sense of strong assurance inhabit your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. (Also note that the wicked are destroyed by their own weapons. Scary. And fitting.)

#### **PSALM 65:**

Here's the apparent background to 65: there has been a notable answer to prayer (vs.2,5); sin had recently seemed overpowering, but God was faithful (v.3); God had shown himself capable of *"awesome deeds"* (vs.5,7); and now God's fame and power are known throughout the world (vs.2,5,8)! Also, the harvest has been particularly blessed with abundance (vs.9-13). Bible scholars suggest Isaiah 36-37 as an illustration of this kind of situation, but offer 2 Samuel 21.1-14 as a possible background within the life of David (see the title).

Psalm 65 is one of four "Temple Songs," and they all come in a row: 65-68. See all the temple imagery in vs.1-4? God is being praised in corporate worship! And when you read the rich and vivid climax of this Psalm, where all the harvest joys are celebrated, you can't help but want to join in!

But again, it's not just in his temple courts (vs.1-4), but in his vast dominion (vs.5-8), and out among the hills and valleys (vs.9-13) that God's praise is known. Let that praise fill your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. With God's vast dominion in mind, visit the shortest Psalm in the Psalter: Psalm 117. It's only two verses long, but it's an international doxology, blessing God for his covenant faithfulness. See how Paul used that Psalm in Romans 15.9. If you're a "Gentile," you'll find yourself there. Give glory to God.

#### **PSALM 66:**

In verses 1-7 the whole of the earth is invited to consider what the Lord did for his people at the Red Sea, and then to join his people in rejoicing before him. Let us no longer exalt *ourselves* with rebellious hearts (see the end of v.7); let us give to *God* the glorious praise that is his due (see v.2).

Psalm 66 has us in the second of four "Temple Songs," that all come together, one after

another. Here the temple imagery is especially found in vs.13-15, but note how the language of the Psalm goes back and forth from the corporate worship of all of God's people to the voice of the one individual.

This is quite appropriate because God is the God of all the earth (see for example, v.1, etc.), but he's also the God of the many (see the us / our language of vs.8-12, for example); but, very importantly, he is also the God of the one (see, for example, the I / me language of vs.13-20). This Psalm has so much to offer our prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Interestingly, the two "middle verses" of the Bible are Psalm 118.8 & 9. Read them and remember again how central the Psalter is to the message of the Bible.

### **PSALM 67:**

Imagine living in the ancient agrarian culture of Israel, at harvest time. The harvest this year has been abundantly blessed by the Lord (v.6), so we gather to worship on the Sabbath, our hearts full of thanksgiving! The pastor calls out verses 1 and 2. The congregation responds vigorously with verse 3. Now everyone, all together, calls out verse 4. The pastor calls out verses 5 and 6; the congregation responds again with verse 7. Notice that verse 4 is the heart of everything—this prayer that the whole world would delight in the gracious rule of Israel's God.

Psalm 67 is the third in a series of four "Temple Songs," calling us into worship and expressing the missionary hope that the blessing we know will come to all.

Remember God's covenant promise to Abraham, that he himself would both be blessed by the Lord AND made into a channel of God's blessing for others. That is the heart and spirit of this Psalm. May that heart and spirit guide our prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. If you are starting to get a taste for the joy and pleasure of the Psalms, take a brief trip to Psalm 119 and try to get a sense of what it's all about, in just a quick minute or two. More about that in this space next week.

### **PSALM 68:**

Before jumping into Psalm 68, first go read Numbers 10:35,36. That's what Moses would say as the ark of God led the people of God on their march from Mt. Sinai to Canaan. Now, read v.1 of Psalm 68. Keeping that background in mind, enjoy the whole of Psalm 68... as former prisoners (v.6) are lead out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. As God carries his people through the desert (v.4), promising to be their Father and Protector (v.5). And continue to reflect on each line of the Psalm that way, seeking to find all the connections between these two parts of the Bible that you can... while prayerfully exploring its application to you today.

Psalm 68 is the final of the four "Temple Songs," seeing us all through our journeys in life, that we might arrive in the sanctuary of God, through his power and care (v.35).

This celebration of God's victory march, taking his people from Egypt to Mt. Zion, is an early picture of the later "ascension," when Christ leads his people to the very throne of God (see v.18; Ephesians 4.7-16; Acts 2.33). Let that gift give wings to your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Last week I invited you to take a small taste of Psalm 119, one of the most magnificent gifts of the Psalter. It's an acrostic, where the 8 verses of each section begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet, moving successively from A-Z. And the theme of all 176 verses is a celebration of the beautiful excellencies of the Scriptures.

### **PSALM 69:**

David is in a crisis. Enemies hate him without cause and want to see him destroyed (vs.1-4). All those who trust in the Lord with him are being dishonored (v.6). Even his own family is falling apart because of the strain (v.8). The practice of his faith is itself the focus of mockery (vs.10-12). He is worried that the Lord Himself has turned away (v.17). He is broken-hearted and friendless (v.20). And you know what? Jesus, the Greater David, lived out the experience of much of this: see v.4 in John 15.25; v.9 in John 2.17; v.21 in John 19.28.

Psalm 69 is a "Psalm of Lament," and the next time you find yourself in need of healthy, prayerful lamentation before God, perhaps you can work through your grief right here.

David here reminds us that we are not men or women of steel. We *feel* the pain of slander and betrayal and even self-accusation (v.5). Let that vulnerability of our humanity urge us into a greater dependence on prayer like this in the coming week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Remember the Psalter is made up of five "books." The first two books (Psalms 1-72) center on the golden age of the united monarchy under David & Solomon. Laments in these books (like 69) always conclude with praise.

### **PSALM 70:**

Remember this song, by The Beatles? *"Help! I need somebody. Help! Not just anybody. Help! You know I need someone. Help!"* That's the sense here. Psalm 70 is much like Psalm 69, only much briefer. As one commentator put it: "It's good to have such a written prayer available for times of pressure when our thoughts cannot focus and our extremity confuses our powers of expression."

Psalm 70 is a "Psalm of Petition," and the fact that it is nearly identical with Psalm 40.13-17 shows us that there are times, in this fallen world, when we will desperately need to pray these petitions.

In some situations we'll need to cry out to God with great urgency and great power. Let those situations push us to Psalms like this one. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Last week we briefly commented on Book One of the Psalter (1-72), mostly written during the time of David. Note that Psalms 2 & 72—at the beginning & at the end of Book One—teach us to pray for a king who will extend the rule of God to the ends of the earth. Jesus, the Son of David, is that king.

#### **PSALM 71:**

David is an old man in this Psalm (vs.9,18), but he has known the Lord since the earliest days of his youth (vs.5,6,17). He still has enemies (vs.4,13), and he still responds to this reality with prayer (vs.1-9; 12,13) and praise (vs.8,14,22-24) and faith in God (vs.19-21). And he is certainly still mightily concerned to send a faithful witness into the next generations (vs.17,18). As we age, what will be our hopes? A life of luxury, indulgence, and ease? No. May that never be our greatest hope. *"Let us love the Lord who bought us."*

Psalm 71 is a "Psalm of Revival," and it is a wonderful Psalm to read, perhaps even memorize, but surely pray through frequently as we are aging.

Over against the failing strength of advanced age, this Psalm teaches us to set a life-long memory of God's faithfulness. And a still-maturing hope in his *unfailing* strength. Let that hope give shape to our prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. We are nearly to the end of Book Two of the Psalms. Book Three will begin with Psalm 73. One trait of Book Three is that it is darker than the other Books. It begins with a reflection of the suffering of the righteous (73). It ends with a lament that the Davidic Covenant seems to have failed (89). And in Psalm 88, you have the one and only Psalm in the whole of the Psalter which has no praise at all.

#### **PSALM 72:**

Only this Psalm and Psalm 127 have titles referring to King Solomon, David's son. And indeed, much of this Psalm brings the reign of that "royal son" (v.1) to mind. Verse 10 can be seen in 1 Kings 10.1-13. Verse 15 can be seen in 1 Kings 10.22. But. This Psalm also reaches far beyond anything that could be attributed to *any* merely earthly king. Read it and see if you agree. Ultimately this Psalm points us toward the endless reign and limitless realm and boundless blessing of another King... another Son of David... a Perfect King.

Psalm 72 is a "Royal Messianic Psalm," and if you want to see how the church has understood and interpreted it, visit these two mighty hymns of old: *"Hail to the Lord's Anointed"* and *"Jesus Shall Reign."* Meditate on those lyrics. This is the righteous and compassionate king we

worship.

Take this Psalm and set it next to Isaiah 11.1-5. Then set it next to Isaiah 60-62. Let that messianic hope drive you to King Jesus in prayer this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Make it a goal in life to enter more deeply into the breadth of the Psalter. Praise, lament, thanksgiving, confidence, remembrance, wisdom, kingship... our God teaches us so much here, and he does it so beautifully.

### **PSALM 73:**

The Psalms do not hide from the hard questions of life. Rather, they often crash head-on into them, running full speed and with every intention of follow through. Such is the case here. Note that this is the beginning of Book 3 of the Psalter. Book 1 opened by confessing that the godly one will prosper (Psalm 1.3). But Book 2 opened by admitting that the experience of the godly in this world won't always be perfectly comfortable (Psalm 42.3,5,9-10). And now Book 3 opens by working through a clearly disheartened cry, *"All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence"* (v.3).

Psalm 73 is a "Psalm of Trust," which is an excellent reminder that our trust in God is not tested nor strengthened during our happy times of cheerfulness and contentment. Our trust in God is tested and strengthened during our seasons of bitterness and our temptations to despair.

But—like with Job and Jeremiah and Jesus and Paul and so many others in the Bible that we could name—the time of testing ends in great reward for the faithful. The hard questions of life are not unanswerable. If you meditate upon this Psalm carefully, you'll find one of the hardest of life's questions answered perfectly. Let that discovery fuel your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Give thanks to your God for Psalms like this.

### **PSALM 74:**

If you want a fuller background to this amazing Psalm, go read 2 Kings 24 & 25. What the Psalmist is remembering here—as if reliving a nightmare—happened in 587 BC. The Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (v.3) by the Babylonians. Where once God's Word was heard, all one could hear now was the roaring of the enemy (v.4). Can you see them swinging their axes and hatchets and hammers (vs.5,6)? This is a terrible thing. And the counsel here is not *"well, it's going to be okay, don't worry about it."* Rather it's *"Call on God to enter this terrible thing with you"* (v.3)! Which God? The God robustly described in vs.12-17.

Psalm 74 is a "Psalm for a People in Decline." When disaster strikes and your life feels completely disoriented, this is how God invites you to pray to him.

Reflect for a moment on the breaking in of vs.12-17 in such a prayer. Does praise make a prayer like this less urgent? No. But it does make it more confident. Let that confidence shape your prayers this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. The Psalms exhort us to praise our God at all times, and give us thousands of reasons to do so.

**PSALM 75:**

Take a moment to reflect simply but deeply on v.1. This is the one of the great beauties with which God has graced his world, fallen into the unhappy miseries of sin and ingratitude: a world-wide community of people who gather with one another to give sincere thanks to God. For, as this verse says, his deeds are wondrous, and his name is near.

Psalm 75 is a "Psalm of God's Faithfulness." The previous Psalm ended (74.22,23) with this plea: *"Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day! Do not forget the clamor of your foes, the uproar of those who rise against you, which goes up continually!"* Read 75 as an answer to that prayer.

Here the God of unexpected reversals says, in v.7, that he puts down one and lifts up another. See similar descriptions of God's work in the songs of Mary (Luke 1.46-55) and Hannah (1 Samuel 2.1-10). Let these songs guide your praise of God this week. We'll pray it together on Sunday. Let the church adore God for who he is and what he has done.