



**M o n d a y**

**Psalm 40, Psalm 113**

David was known as a man after God's own heart, and yet David's sins were probably greater than any of ours; (when was the last time you asked someone to make sure your lover's spouse was killed?) Here we see him, in the midst of his sin, crying out to God. He realizes that sacrifice, or offerings (or "works") will not save him; nor will others be able to really do the work that is needed in his life. What God desires is that our ears are attentive to His voice, that our lips are ready to tell of His good deeds and faithfulness, and that our hearts have a yearning to do God's will. David proclaims God's goodness; in the midst of his sin, God lifted him up. Have you ever hit rock bottom? Where did you turn for help? Did you bargain with God and make promises that you have since found hard to keep, promises about monetary giving, or promises about worship attendance? God desires humility. Humility comes when we wait on Him, when we throw ourselves on His mercy and grace alone, and when we trust in His goodness rather than try to make some "deal" with God. When we come in the midst of our weakness and sin humbly crying out to God, God saves us and comes quickly to our aid. If you are really honest with yourself on a day-to-day basis what do you depend on to "save" you, to provide for you, to enable you to accomplish the tasks you do, to get you out of jams, to problem solve, to help you raise your children or to make you happy? But when we get that phone call advising us that we have cancer or when we lose our job we cry out to God. When we have exhausted all avenues of help we cry out, but what about on a day-to-day basis? Do we wait for God or do we depend on ourselves and our efforts on our "works" and on our bargaining? When we approach God with absolute dependant humility, we discover that He is waiting and available. Are you waiting on God? Are you bringing God your offerings of "works" or a heart open to hear his voice? Betty Naylor once said that to leave the house in the morning without praying first is like saying to God..."God, it is ok. I can handle today by myself." I can't. Can you?

**Daily Prayer**

*God, hear my cry. Pick me up from the struggles, worries, sin and troubles that engulfs me.*

**T u e s d a y**

**Acts 16:22-36; Philippians 4:4-8; Psalm 114**

Sometimes you hear sermons that you never forget. I once heard one on this passage that fits that description. The preacher talked about how bad a day it had been for Paul and Silas. Oh, it started off ok. Paul and Silas were on their way to the place of prayer, and in the process exorcised a demon out of a woman; but it had not turned out well, and rather than having a time of prayer and teaching others about Jesus, they were the impetus to a riot. The result was that they were arrested, beaten and thrown into jail in chains (picture being in a dungeon in stocks). Their response? They started to sing, not the blues but songs of praise. In fact, those notes of praise started to lift up through the ceiling, into the stratosphere, and up into the heavenly throne room itself where God, hearing the song, started tapping his foot to the beat. It was God's foot tapping that resulted in the earth shaking and the earthquake happening. Now the preacher was out of the "black church" tradition which added greatly to the retelling of the story, but I will never forget his bottom line: praise breaks the chains of bondage. I used to play the guitar. One of the reasons I gave it up was that I discovered that the songs I often played leaned towards the Blues. I can remember making a conscious decision about the music I let into my life and the things on which I allowed my mind to dwell. This whole incident occurred in Philippi, the city to which Paul will eventually write his words about rejoicing in the Lord always and in all circumstances. What is your cure for depression? Some people go shopping, others abuse a substance, some turn to TV, and some exercise. David's cure in the Psalms and Paul's cure in prison is to sing praise and to dwell on the faithfulness of God. I have often found that depression is a tool of Satan. When I respond with praise to God, it makes Satan mad, it backfires on him and his response is to leave me alone. The chains he wishes to bind me with are broken and they literally fall off. Try it today; try to intentionally put a song in your heart and see if others notice. Like Paul and Silas, it might result in the opportunity to witness to God as it did in Haiti.

**Daily Prayer**

*Praise you for this day I did not make and for your grace I did not deserve.*

**W e d n e s d a y**

**2 Chronicles 20:1-29; Exodus 15:1-18; Psalm 115**

Did you notice who led the army into battle? It was the singers. One of the things I love about this story is that the Israelites never fight. They only worship God. "The Battle Belongs to the Lord" is a praise song that used to be sung years ago. The song acknowledges that the battles we face, though not of an approaching army, are really God's battles. My battle with temptation or obedience is God's battle, for it is a reflection on Him; and if I fail the battle, God has one less person to work through to accomplish His work or for others get a wrong impression of God because of me. Realizing that it is God's battle

and that, in and of themselves, the Israelites were not able to fend off the enemy, Jehoshaphat declared a fast in order to seek the Lord and a time of worship. Like Jehoshaphat we need to realize that we are not able ourselves to fight the battles in our lives. We need to commit our situations to God, seek Him, acknowledge His power, praise Him and take comfort in God's glory and promises and then go out in complete dependence on God recognizing our own limitation. We need to make sure we are pursuing God's interests and not just our own selfish desires, and we need to ask God for help and respond to His answers with praise. Whether we are praying or singing as we focus on God, who He is and His promises, are of upmost importance. It is always helpful to acknowledge God's work in the past, for it gives us confidence in the present and for the future. Singing often does this. Many of the Psalms are actually the retelling of events that have taken place in the past in order to give confidence for the future. The first song that is ever recorded in the Bible does just that. Take a minute to read Colossians 3:15-17. Psalms, hymns, and songs were ways to teach others about God's greatness and a way to express thanks to Him. The result of singing is peace. Singing wins battles, brings peace, is a witness to others, and also is a way to offer thanks to God. Make a conscious effort to sing as you go through today.

#### Daily Prayer

*I pray for those whom I love that have not yet trusted you. I praise you God, that no one is beyond your reach.*

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**T h u r s d a y**

**Deuteronomy 31:14-32:47; Psalm 116**

Someone once said that we sing the prayers we would never pray ourselves. I had never looked at singing that way before, but then I started becoming aware of the words of the songs we sing. In this passage Moses teaches the Israelites a song in order to instruct them about the necessity to keep God at the center of their lives, especially given the temptations that lie ahead. Such songs help us walk the straight and narrow. They help us become the disciples Jesus desires by reminding us of His ways and expectations. One song that we sing is "Jesus be the center of my life, my hope, the reason I live." Another says: "Jesus draw me close, never let me go, I lay it all down again to hear you say I am your friend. You are my desire, nothing else will do." Still another goes: "all of you is more than enough, for every thirst and every need you satisfy, you are more than enough." Or "every move I make, I make in you"... "I give you all that I am, every day I'll learn to stand upon your word, I pray I may come to know you more, that you would guide my every step, that every day I can be your light unto the world." Songs like these often do not reflect my prayers that are often focused on my needs, but they are the cry of my heart. Next time you sing, make the words of the song a prayer of commitment to Jesus and then expect Him to take you up on what you pray. He loves to answer these types of prayers.

#### Daily Prayer

*God, I offer myself up to you today. Use me. Help me to remember that Jesus loves me.*

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**F r i d a y**

**Psalm 117, 118: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

I used to always stumble over the idea of "drinking the cup in an unworthy manner." I know my sins, I know my half-hearted commitment, I know the temptations in my life that I give into and I know the times I have let the Lord and people down. I never ever feel "worthy" to receive the "cup of the Lord." But that is precisely when I am worthy to receive. When we come to the communion table, we come recognizing who Jesus is, what He has done for us, and our need for His mercy and grace. The whole point of coming to the Table is to retell the story of the cross, the story of God's love, His faithfulness, His power, His forgiveness, His Lordship and His coming again. Yes, communion is a sacrament and something of the Holy Spirit works in our lives as we partake; but like the Psalms it is a testimony, a declaration and a sermon in and of itself. When you partake, what goes through your mind? One suggestion might be to spend time in confession as you partake of the bread; and then as you hold the cup, spend time in praise and prayer, recommitting your life to the Lord and ask that He nourish you as you seek to allow your life to be broken for others. Psalm 118 talks of the various ways God had worked in the lives of the people of Israel. Take a few minutes, read a few verses and then think about your own life. Where have you seen God do something similar? As you come to worship this weekend, come prepared to thank God for all the ways he has shown up in your life. By the way, this is a pretty uplifting Psalm compared to others that seem to want to bring disaster upon one's enemies. Some have commented that some of the Psalms are not very loving. That is precisely what I like about the Psalms. There are times in my life when I just don't always have nice thoughts about another person. I, too, would rather behave in some unloving manner towards him/her. The Psalmists teaches me that when such thoughts come to my mind I am to take them to God, to have it out with God rather than the other person and then to leave that particular individual in God's hands. He always does a better job of handling them than I ever would. I am not worthy; but when I give it to God, I place myself in a position to receive his forgiveness, mercy, grace and provision to become just a little more loving.

#### Daily Prayer

*Help me to discover more of you, God, as I read the Bible today.*

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# Something to Consider

Recently someone sent me a link to a YouTube video which was a screen that scrolled through the following phrases as an individual read each line. Half way through the video, rather than scrolling down, the words slowly scrolled back up and the person read the following backwards. If you want, go to [www.youtube](http://www.youtube) and type in Lost Generation and watch this for yourself.

## Lost Generation

I am part of a lost generation and I refuse to believe that I can change the world.  
I realize this may be a shock, but happiness comes from within is a lie and money will make me happy; so in 30 years  
I will tell my children they are **not** the most important thing in my life.  
My employer will know I have my priorities straight because work is more important than family.  
I tell you this; once upon a time families stayed together, but this will not be true in my era. This is a quick fix society.  
Experts tell me that 30 years from now I will be celebrating the  
10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my divorce.  
I do not conceive that I will live in a country of my own making.  
In the future, environmental destruction will be the norm.  
No longer can it be said that my peers and I care about this earth.  
It will be evident that my generation is apathetic and lethargic.  
It is foolish to presume that there is hope and all of this will come true unless we choose to reverse it.

## There is hope!

It is foolish to presume that my generation is apathetic and lethargic.  
It will be evident that my peers and I care about this earth.  
No longer can it be said that environmental destruction will be the norm.  
In the future, I will live in a country of my own making.  
I do not conceive that 30 years from now I will be celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my divorce.  
Experts tell me this is a quick fix society, but this will not be true in my era.  
Families stayed together once upon a time.  
I tell you this, family is more important than work.  
I have my priorities straight because my employer will know  
that they are not the most important thing in my life.  
So in 30 years I will tell my children that money will make me happy is a lie  
and true happiness comes from within.  
I know this may come as a shock, but I can change the world and I refuse to believe  
that I am part of a lost generation.

We have a choice. We can continue to be swept along by society or we can stand up and by following intently and obediently after Christ, we can make a change. Some believe that God's ways are nice but not significant enough to make a real difference in the world. I disagree. Jesus chose 12 men who along with a handful of women changed the world. They did not do it through a revolution. They did it by being obedient to the ways of God in the little things of life and by loving all they came in contact with. There is hope if we would each let God work in and through us to make us more like Him.