



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

"All About Praise"

LESSON 3

This week we'll be looking at Psalm 49, which was addressed to the Chief Musician, and is thought to have been written by the "Sons of Korah," which was a guild of singers and composers. (They wrote a total of 10 psalms: 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87). Some scholars lean towards the thought that the author is anonymous but written for the sons of Korah to sing. They were employed in the performance of the temple music. John Phillips wrote, "The Sons of Korah descended from a father who perished under the wrath and curse of God because of his arrogance and pride. The fact that he was a Levite, the grandson of Kohath, great-grandson of Levi, and kin to Moses and Aaron, only aggravated his fault (Numbers 26:9-11)."

When the Israelites were wandering in the desert, Korah led a rebellion of 250 community leaders against Moses and perished by God's judgment, along with the other leaders and their families (Numbers 16). "For some reason the Sons of Korah were spared, and it seems from their later employment that, in gratitude to God and His mercy, they must have dedicated themselves to producing and performing the music used to praise God at the wilderness tabernacle and alter in the temple in Jerusalem."

This psalm is sometimes known as an "anonymous" or "orphan" psalm because they don't know exactly who the author is. It is also categorized as a "wisdom" psalm, offering instruction to men rather than worship to God. There is something very interesting about this Psalm. A New Testament passage can often be a commentary on some truth found in the Old Testament. But sometimes it works the other way around. James Montgomery Boice points out that in this psalm "An Old Testament passage is a commentary on something in the New Testament." We'll take a look at that later on during the week, but as you read through it, see if you can pinpoint what story in the New Testament this supports.

The power of this psalm is in the fact that it relates to all mankind. It's a universal issue that people everywhere -- no matter what race, religion, or age they are -- are likely to be faced with. May the Holy Spirit open your eyes and heart to all He desires to show you. Will you, like David, ask the Holy Spirit to "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

First Day

1. Let's begin today by reading Psalm 49:1-20. Jot down any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts you find.
2. What do you think is the general "theme" of this Psalm? What is the key verse that supports that theme?
3. What would you title this Psalm?
4. Can you list some of the warnings the psalmist gives?
5. Define the word "ransom." In what context is this word used? Also read Matthew 20:28 for help.

6. According to verses 1 and 2, who is the psalmist writing to? Why?

7. How do you think this Psalm is similar to a Proverb?

We'll end here for today. I'm sure you've figured out what the general theme is, but tomorrow we'll jump in a little deeper. Have a great day, ladies, and don't forget all your **"Reasons to Rejoice"**!

Memory Verse of the Week: "Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Psalm 49:6-7

Second Day

Work on your memory verse!

1. Read Psalm 49:1-20 again. Let's focus on verses 1-4. In most psalms, the author is either praising or praying, but in this one, he seems to be preaching. How would you describe this introduction? Who is he demanding the attention of?
2. Why is it so easy to think we are above this "call to attention"?
3. According to verses 3-4, is he including himself in the warning?

The psalmist tells us that he will be "instructive." He has pondered and thought through this problem and believes God has shown him some answers. He intends to keep it as plain and simple as he can. The mention of the harp is interesting. Perhaps he feels that if he sings it with an instrument, it will make it plainer. John Phillips, in his book called Exploring

Wiersbe said, "It's not a sin to have the things that money **CAN** buy as long as you don't lose the things money **CAN'T** buy."

9. How would you explain Wiersbe's quote? (Is it a sin to "be" rich?)

10. Why is it so easy for the rich to "take pride" in their riches sometimes?

11. Okay. Let's get personal. Do you tend to boast in your wealth, riches, or opportunities? How can you change this bad habit?

Let's stop here for today. May the Lord bless you and keep you, always reminding you that what you have is a gift from the Lord, rather than something you really own or deserve. ☺

Third Day

What's your memory verse?

1. Read Psalm 49:1-20, again focusing on verses 5-9. Can money buy a man's soul?

The word "redeem" means to "buy or buy back."

2. We can not redeem ourselves or anyone else. What are we "redeemed" by? Read 1 Peter 1: 18-19. Why do we need to be redeemed?

3. Read the following verses on redemption and write your thoughts:

- A. Isaiah 50:2
- B. Galatians 4:4-7
- C. Titus 2:14
- D. Job 19:25
- E. Psalm 130:7
- F. Romans 3:23-25
- G. Ephesians 5:30
- H. Hebrews 9:12

4. I once read that we are all "stewards of wealth, not owners." What do you think that means?

John Phillips wrote, "Some men put their hope and trust in money. The psalmist intends to show that this is a foolish thing to do. Money can buy a castle, but not a mansion in the sky; it can buy pleasure, but not peace; it can purchase service, but not salvation; it can buy men, but it cannot buy God. God is not impressed by the size of a man's bank balance. Indeed, wealth devours a man's hopes, for the rich man puts his confidence in his wealth which lets him down in the end, leaving him a hopeless exile stranded bankrupt in eternity."

5. Besides wealth, what other types of things can we wrongly put our confidence in?
6. What have you placed your confidence in? Have you been trusting in your wealth, or anything else besides the Lord?
7. Read Deuteronomy 4:24 and 2 Corinthians 11:2. What do these verses say about God? How does this relate to the issue of where we place our trust?

8. How do men try to "buy" their salvation? What does that mean?
Why is it so easy for them to be deceived into that way?

You can own every piece of gold and silver in the world, and still, it would not buy eternal life. We've all heard the expression, "You can't take it with you," speaking of material things. And being rich won't stop anyone from dying. Death is a great equalizer. Whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated, old or young, attractive or homely, we all will die. And no riches can keep anyone from experiencing corruption. Only faith in God through Jesus Christ can buy back our soul and keep us from the "pit."

"The rich man cannot prevent death from seizing him in the end. He may be able to bribe a judge, but he can't bribe death. Because his money is able to purchase so much, however, the rich confuse truth with error. He is so used to buying immunity from life's ordinary inconveniences that he thinks he can buy immunity from death."

Spurgeon said, "Forever must the attempt to redeem a soul with money remain a failure. Death comes and wealth cannot bribe him; hell follows and no golden key can unlock its dungeon. Vain, then, are your threatenings, ye possessors of the yellow clay; your childish toys are despised by men who estimate the value of possessions by the shekel of the sanctuary."

9. Read Matthew 6:19-21. Where is your treasure? Are you focusing too much on the things of this earth, rather than setting your mind on "things above"? What do you spend most of your time thinking about? (Colossians 3:2) Allow the Spirit to look deep in your heart on this one.

10. What are some "things above" that you can specifically discipline yourself to spend more time concentrating on?

Spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord to show you any changes that need to be made in your focus and your perspective.

Fourth Day

Spend some time on your verse today. Did you hide it in your heart?

The psalmist has pointed out that wealth can't take us to Heaven, nor can it rescue us from death. In our section today, he continues those thoughts, giving us insight into the heart and the motive of the foolish.

1. Read Psalm 49:1-20, focusing on verses 10-13. What new thought does the author add? What drives the fool's thinking, according to these verses?

2. Read Luke 12:13-21. How is this parable similar to Psalm 49?

3. In verse 10, he reminds us that men are not "invincible." What does that mean? (Are you living in a way that tells God you think YOU are invincible?)

4. Even "honor" is like a fleeting shadow. What do you think that means? Why is that compared to a beast?

James Montgomery Boice wrote, "It is a recurring theme in much ancient literature, not only in the Bible, that to live without understanding is

to live like an animal, since it is the ability to think and reason that sets human beings apart from the remainder of creation. Yet how animal-like we are when we fail to consider the shortness of our days and prepare for how we will spend eternity. The Hebrew text is more powerful than the translations at this point, for the phrase 'does not endure' literally means 'does not pass the night.' It suggests that, in view of death, a person's position in life is not as secure even as a traveler who turns in to an inn for the evening. In our case, life is so short that we do not even make it to the morning."

In verse 13, the author is saying that after the wealthy die, some try to emulate their ways, follow in their paths, and think they are being wise. The sad truth is that many wealthy become spiritually blind and don't realize that it all comes to an end at the grave. We all must surrender our "stuff" at the grave.

5. What do these verses say about the topic of money and riches?
 - A. 1 Timothy 6:10
 - B. 1 Timothy 3:3
 - C. Philippians 4:10-13
 - D. Hebrews 13:5

6. How would you define "covetousness"?

7. What do these verses say about covetousness?
 - A. Ephesians 5:3
 - B. Proverbs 28:16
 - C. Colossians 3:5
 - D. Exodus 20:17

8. Are you prone to coveting? Is this something you struggle with? What safeguards can you set around yourself to help keep you focused on the "things above" so you won't be tempted to covet?

9. Have you ever been blessed with wealth and then had it taken away for any reason? Were there any lessons you learned in the process?

I pray that we, like Paul, will learn to be content whether we are rich or poor, abased or abounding. May we realize that eternity is what we should be getting ready for and striving after. Lord, we look forward to Your soon return!!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Read Psalm 49:1-20. Reread verses 14-20. What's the main point of this section?

Verses 14-15 are rather confusing to me. I like what Matthew Henry wrote in his commentary on the Psalms. He said, "Their condition on the other side will be very miserable. Like sheep, they are laid in the grave. Their prosperity did but feed them like the sheep for the slaughter (Hosea 4:16), and then death comes, and shuts them in the grave like fat sheep in a fold, to be brought forth to the day of wrath (Job 21:30). Multitudes of them, like flocks of sheep dead of some disease, are thrown into the grave, and there death shall feed on them, the second death, the worm that dies not (Job 24:20). Whereas a saint can proudly ask death, 'Where is thy sting?' death will ask the proud sinner, 'Where is thy wealth; thy pomp?' And the more he was fattened with prosperity the more sweetly death will feed

on him. And in the morning of the Resurrection, when all that sleep in the dust shall awake (Daniel 12:2), the upright shall have dominion over them."

It's so sobering to know that the rich man, lowered into the grave, will soon be reduced to corrupting flesh and dust. But how exciting that those of us who have a relationship with Christ will be received into glory, rewarded, ransomed, and redeemed!!

2. The psalmist restates a truth in verses 16-20. What exhortation is he giving to the believer?

3. I read once that riches can make a man forgetful. What does he forget?

You can lose sight of eternity and forget spiritual things even when you're not rich. If simply making money is your priority, you can easily become a "fool." You can also become preoccupied with health, exercise, weight, success, and a number of other things. The word "preoccupied" means "Having our attention taken up with something; completely absorbed in thinking about something or doing something to the extent of neglecting other things."

4. What things can easily "preoccupy" YOUR mind?

5. In contrast to that, what kinds of things should be "occupying" your mind? Read Philippians 4:8. Is Christ DOMINATING your thoughts?

It's really hard to redirect our thought patterns to make them focus on what glorifies the Lord. "Setting our minds" is a present, active

command, which means we are called to “keep setting.” Set means to “dwell, fix, or cement into place.”

Elisabeth George, in her book Loving God With All My Mind, gives four things we can do to help in this process:

1. Focus on what is real rather than worry about what is unreal.
 2. Reach forward and press on rather than remaining a prisoner of the past.
 3. Believe the truths of the Bible rather than trust our emotions.
 4. Act on what is revealed in Scripture rather than what appears to be.
6. Which of the above do you need to work on? Which one do you struggle with?
7. Looking over this week's lesson in Psalm 49, what truth was the most significant to your life? What point spoke to your heart specifically?
8. What changes, if any, did the Lord show you to make? Are you willing to make those changes?
9. We can't do anything on our own. We are helplessly weak. As a reminder, read Ephesians 5:17-18. What do we need to help us walk victoriously in these areas?

"Those who trust in the Lord will be redeemed *by Him* and be taken to *Him* to enjoy personal life and fellowship *with Him* forever."

James Montgomery Boice