

# Bible Study 1 – Psalm 91



## Leaders Notes

**Big Idea** – As we bring our troubles and concerns to God and trust in Him for care and protection our hearts can find the rest and peace that we long for.

## **Key Points from message**

- \* God promises us rest as we remind ourselves of His power and majesty over all things
- \* God does not take all our troubles and worries away, but promises to be with us in everything we go through in life
- \* This psalm is an invitation to communion with God through prayer, and that as we draw close to Him we will find rest.

## Read Psalm 91 together

1. Try to recall what stood out for you from the message on this Prayer of Rest?
2. List the big and small things that cause you worry, stress or anxiety at the moment? Are there any ways you try to deal or cope with these things day to day that are helpful or not helpful?
3. In verses 1 & 2 the psalmist declares the name of God four times over? What do you think is the significance of reminding themselves of the Most High, The Almighty, The Lord, and my God?
4. What kind of care and protection is described in verses 1 and 2, and also verses 4 and 9? How have you experienced this in your walk with God?
5. What are the things, areas of life, or people that you regularly find yourself coming to God with for shelter or refuge?
6. In verses 14-16 God responds to the psalmist through an oracle. These verses encourage us that loving God, acknowledging his name, and calling out to Him do actually lead us into this place of security and rest.

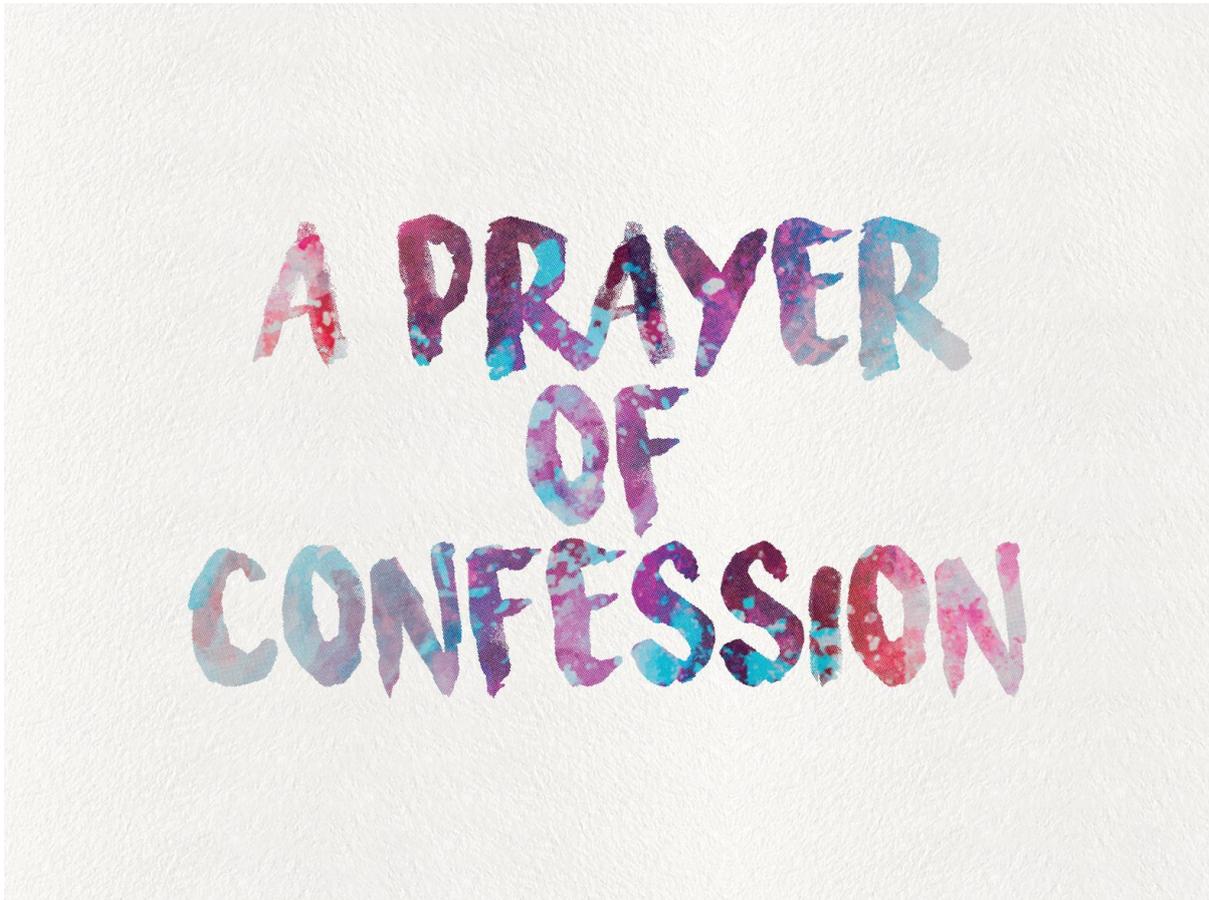
In considering the act of prayer as part of this, how does this operate in your life? When do you find it best/easiest to commune with God in this way?

7. Tim Keller describes all this as a communion-centred prayer, and that this is a means to:
  - *experience God's love and to know oneness with him,*
  - *a promise of peace and of continual resting in God,*
  - *and to be regularly surrounded by the divine presence.*

Which of these aspects of communion-centred prayer do you feel you need most at the moment? Share with the group an area where you would like to be able to experience God's rest and peace.

**Pray about these things for one another.**

# Bible Study 2 – Psalm 51



## Leaders Notes

**Big Idea** – Confession is the path to transformation

### **Key Points from message**

Our psalm today (Psalm 51) demonstrates a heart that is repentant. It has always been seen as David's words as he had been confronted for having sex with another man's wife (Bathsheba) and then conspiring to have that man (Uriah) killed. Many people think that Psalm 38 is David who has concealed his sin and is paying the consequences in his own body. Psalm 51 is a result of David being exposed, and his subsequent sorrowful repentance. We can learn immensely from this Psalm, as I believe that repentance is the key to mental health, and spiritual growth.

**Stop:** Denying the truth about yourself

**Start:** Taking Responsibility for your life – no excuses.

**Start:** Turning your heart back to God

In Confession God's grace both humbles us and lifts us up at the same time.

## **Read Psalm 51 together**

1. What strikes you about this psalm? What ideas, thoughts, encouragement and challenges to gain from it.

## **From the Head...**

Repentance Begins with Acknowledgment of Our Condition (Psalm 51:1-6)

2. How does David describe himself?
3. In what ways is this challenging and confronting?

## **Andrew stated that sin under all sins is our lack of love for God.**

4. Is this too simplistic? Or if it is true why?

Repentance Ends with A Restored Heart (Psalm 51:7-14)

Restoration comes as a result of a heart that is free from pride, and humbly comes before the Lord in repentance.

5. What steps does David take in restoring his heart back towards God?

## **Read verse 1**

6. How does God's *Kesev* – unconditional love both humble us and lifts us up at the same time?

7. Read and discuss the following examples of repentance (taken from sermon rant)

## **Deep Humility (vs. Pride)**

Have I looked down on anyone? Have I been too stung by criticism? Have I felt to snubbed and ignored?

\* Repent Like this: Consider the free grace of Jesus until I sense a) a decreasing disdain (Since I am a sinner too), b) decreasing pain over criticism (Since I should not value human approval over God's love). In light of His grace I can let go of the need to keep up a good image. It is too great a burden and now unnecessary. Consider free grace until I experience grateful, restful joy.

### **Burning Love (vs. Indifference)**

Have I spoken or thought unkindly of anyone? Am I justifying myself by caricaturing (In my mind) someone else? Have I been impatient and irritable? Have I been self-absorbed and indifferent and inattentive to people?

\* Repent like this: Consider the free grace of Jesus until there is a.) no coldness or unkindness (Think of the sacrificial love of CHrist for you), b) no impatience (Think of His patience with you), and c) no indifference. Consider free grace until I show warmth and affection. God was infinitely patient and attentive to me, out of grace.

### **Wise Courage (vs. Anxiety)**

Have I avoided people or tasks that I know I should face? Have I been anxious and worried? Have I failed to be circumspect or have been rash and impulsive?

\* Repent like this: Consider the free grace of Jesus until there is a) no cowardly avoidance of hard things (Since Jesus faced evil for me), b) no anxious or rash behavior (Since Jesus' death proves God cares and will watch over me). It takes pride to be anxious; I am not wise enough to know how my life should go. Consider free grace until I experience calm thoughtfulness and strategic boldness.

### **Godly Motivations (a 'Single Eye')**

Am I doing what I am doing for God's glory and the good of others or am I being driven by fears, need for approval, love of comfort and ease, need for control, hunger for acclaim and power, or the fear of man? Am I looking at anyone with envy? Am I giving to any of even the first motions of lust and gluttony? Am I spending my time on urgent things rather than on important things because of these inordinate desires?

\* Repent like this: How does Jesus provide for me what I am looking for in these things? Pray: "Lord Jesus make me happy enough in you to avoid sin and wise enough in you to avoid danger, that I may always do what is right in your sight, in your name I pray, Amen.

**Pray about these things for one another.**

**Bible Study 3 – Psalm 16**



# A PRAYER FOR SECURITY

## **Leaders Notes**

**Big Idea** – Our security comes as we remember God’s faithfulness and put our trust in Him, leading us into God’s presence as a central core of security for us.

## **Key Points from message**

- *We long for foundations in our life that are certain, unchanging and secure.*
- *David points to God’s faithfulness as the thing that provides safety and refuge.*
- *David declares His trust in God’s faithfulness as a way of relinquishing his independence.*
- *David experiences God’s presence which provides a central core of security for this life and life evermore.*
- *We are invited to place our faith and trust in God and to know the security that comes from God’s presence with us.*

1. How did God speak to you through the message on The Prayer for Security?
2. In a world that is forever changing and is at times volatile Tim Keller says...

***There is nothing in this world that will last, or that won't be shaken,  
It is fleeting, it is precarious, and it is temporary.***

What comes to mind when you think about how you have experienced this in your life?

- Fleeting?
- Temporary?
- Precarious?

### **Read Psalm 16 together**

3. In this prayer David guides us through how He finds certainty, assurance and security in his life. In verses 1-4 he identifies God's faithfulness as the starting point to discovering this place. How have you seen God's faithfulness in your life in the past, though both challenges and times of growth?
4. In the message we heard that for David he sees God's faithfulness in areas beyond his personal circumstances. The three things that emerge are:
  - God's love;
  - the Community Of Faith;
  - our Worship of God alone.

Consider how these things have provided security for you in the past?

5. In verses 5-8 David responds to God's faithfulness through a declaration of trust in Him. Here David undertakes an exchange of his own independence for dependence on God. How do you find prayer allows you to do this exchange with God of those things that are causing us uncertainty and insecurity?

6. In the final section, verses 9-11, David describes a place where the presence of God was very real to him; a place where prayer becomes His central core of security.

Again referencing Tim Keller, he says...

***David cries out as we all cry out for something lasting, something we cannot lose. And what He finds is a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.***

Consider how prayer and knowing this central core of security are related?

7. In what areas do you need to know God's presence and security in at this time in your life?

**Pray about these things for one another.**

# Bible Study 4 – Ephesians 3



## Leader's Notes

**Big Idea** – We seek to experience Christ's love in the prayer.

### **Key Points from message**

Why we need experience the love of Christ?

What is it to experience the love of Christ?

How do we experience the love of Christ?

Seek

Grasp

Community

Gaze upon Jesus

1. How did God speak to you through the message on The Prayer for Experience?
2. What is the difference between knowing the love of Christ and experiencing the love of Christ – Explain?
3. What difference, practically, does experiencing Christ’s love make upon a believers life?

### **Read Ephesians 3:14-21**

4. What strikes you about this prayer? What amazes you?

Most people in Paul’s day stood while praying.

5. What is the significance of verse 14?
6. List the things that Paul is praying for the Ephesian church.

**The Paradox:** If you read Ephesians Paul teaches in fact they already have all of these things. For example:

V17 Christ already dwells in their heart

V 18-19 They already know the love of Christ

V 19 They are already filled with the fullness of God.

7. Why then does he pray for these Christians to know and experience these things?
8. What does it mean to know Christ in your “inner most being” What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the process?

Andrew stated that the reason Paul prayed this prayer is that most Christians in most places do not experience Christ in their inner most being.

9. Is this true of you? Discuss.

Andrew stated that this is a prayer for a real experience of Christ's love yet he also reminded us that in Psalms (like Psalm 42 and 88) the feeling of spiritual dryness is also a normal experience.

10. How can we normalize and help one another through the different seasons of faith – winter (feeling distant from God), Summer (feeling close to God)?

11. Describe the experience of Christ that Paul is praying for vv18-19.

### **How to get there:**

12. What does it mean to seek v14? (The word seek is not there but the idea of us earnestly seeking God on bended knee is).

13. What does it mean to grasp v 18?

14. What is the importance of Community in this prayer?

15. What does it mean to pray Christocentric ally?

### **Give it a go...**

Pray as a group – focusing on Jesus – seeking and gazing on Him:

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.*

# Bible Study 5



## Leader's Notes

**Big Idea** – We pray for the church based on the church's identity and destiny in Christ

### **Key Points from message**

What is the church like (sinners and saints) and how does this affect prayer?

We pray in thanks and in hope for the church as sinners and saints

We pray for the church to know God

We pray for the church to know: hope, inheritance and power

1. How did you feel about the Church?
2. What do you usually pray for the Church?

3. What most spoke to you most from the message on Prayer for the Church?

**Read Ephesians 1:15-23**

<sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

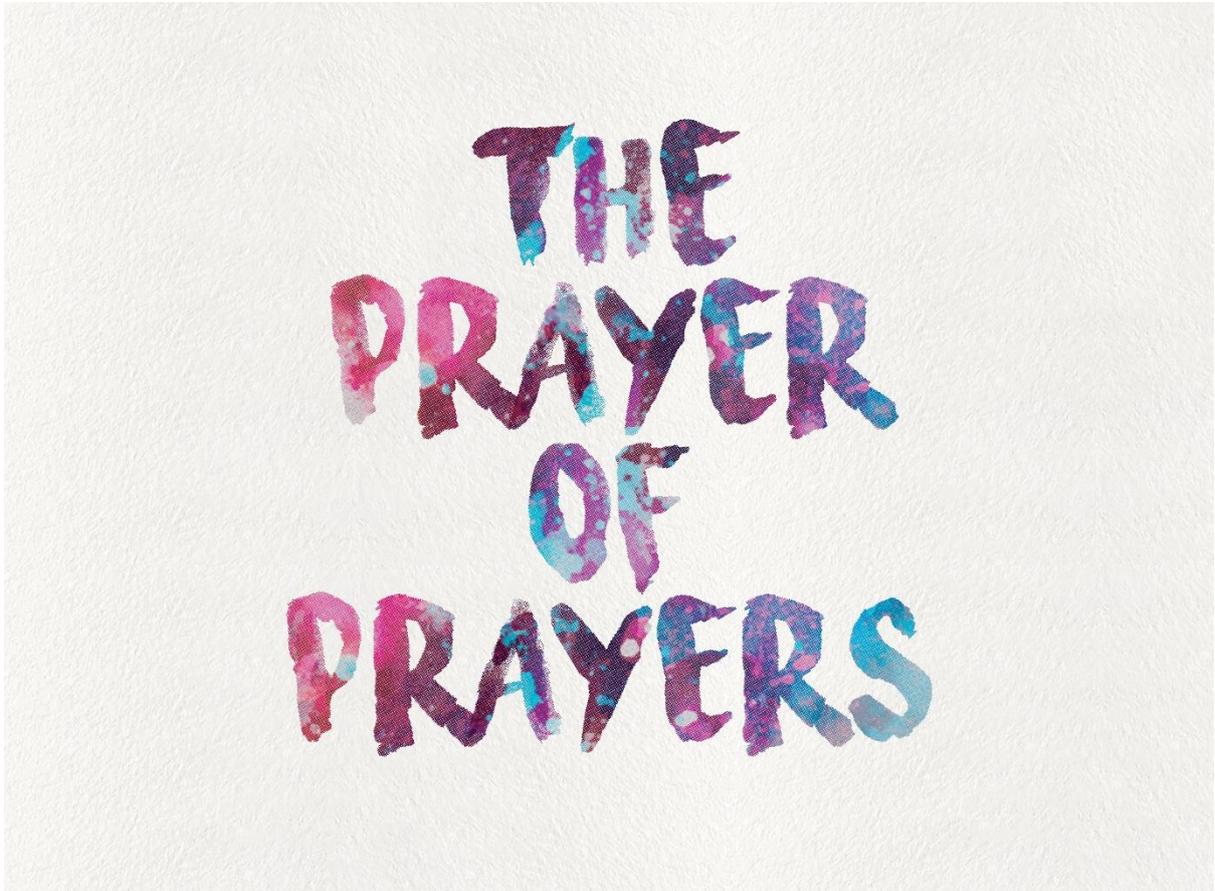
4. What is the reason mentioned by Paul in v15?
5. Why is Paul thankful for the church?
6. What are you thankful for in the church? Do you often give thanks in prayer for these things?
7. What aren't you thankful for about the church – i.e. what frustrates you?
8. How should you pray for what frustrates you about the church?
9. What do you think would change if we prayed for the Church to know God better? (think both about the Church in general and TCBC in particular)
10. What is the hope God calls the church to? (hint: look at the first part of chapter 1)

11. How would it change the Church in general and TCBC in particular if we more fully grasped this hope?
12. What are the riches of our inheritance in Christ? (cf Gal 4:1-7, Rom 8:16-18)
13. How does grasping more firmly the reality of this inheritance make a difference to the church?
14. What does it mean that God's power is incomparable?
15. How does Paul describe God's power, and what does this tell us about the power?
16. How does understanding the power of God affect the church's...  
Ministry?  
Relationship to the world?  
Use of power?
17. How does it change our understanding of this prayer if we keep in mind that it is for the community of God's people rather than for individuals?
18. What needs to change about your own, and TCBC's practice of prayer in the light of this passage?

**Give it a go...**

Pray as a group for the church in general, and TCBC in particular, on the basis of this study.

# Bible Study 6



## Read Matthew 6: 1-15

- (1) What role has the Lord's Prayer played in your own life? Has it been meaningful to you? Why or why not?
  
- (2) Read v 5-8. What criticisms does Jesus make about the prayers of the Pharisees and the pagans? In what ways are we still guilty of the same mistakes today?
  
- (3) How does the model prayer Jesus offers in v 9-13 ensure we don't make the same mistakes as either the Pharisees or the pagans?

As we look at the content of The Lord's prayer, it is useful to note its structure. Following the opening invocation ("Our father in heaven"), the prayer contains 6 petitions. The first 3 relate to God (His name, kingdom and will). The latter 3 relate to our needs, both physical and spiritual (daily bread, forgiveness and spiritual protection)

- (4) What is significant about the opening invocation "Our Father in Heaven"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (5) What is significant about the order of the Lord's Prayer? In what ways does it shape and orient our prayer life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (6) If we used this prayer as a model for our own prayers, in what ways might the things we pray for change?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (7) Which of the 6 petitions contained within the Lord's Prayer do you find most difficult to pray? Why?

### **Pray together:**

Allocate a line of the Lord's Prayer to each member of your group (or divide the prayer as you see fit). Have each person pray in response to their part of the prayer.