

GREATEST HITS

PSALMS

CHRISTMAS: PSALM 98

Introduction

Think about all the Christmas gifts you ever received and choose one that was especially meaningful. Then, share a little bit about that gift with the people at your table. What was it about this gift that made it so special? Work together with the people at your table to come up with **three** things that make gifts particularly special.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Read It Through

As you hear the words of Psalm 98 being read, circle the word that you think best describes the gift that God gives you at Christmas. For what reasons did you pick that word? Share your thoughts with the people at your table.

Some Thoughts to Ponder

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "his holy arm"? Write a short sentence to summarize your thoughts.

PSALM 98

¹ Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

² The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

³ He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

⁴ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;

⁵ make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,

⁶ with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;

⁹ let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

2. Notice some of the titles for God that are used in this psalm. How do the passages listed below help you understand these titles?

LORD: Exodus 34:5-7

KING: 1 Timothy 6:13-16

JUDGE: James 4:12

3. For what reasons does this psalm say that God has “remembered” his love? Did God forget?

4. Evaluate: *Christmas is closely connected to Judgment Day.*

5. Find three verses in this psalm that emphasize for whom this Christmas gift is given. With the people at your table, come up with at least 2 special things we can do as a church to make sure people know this gift is for them.

6. Note how this psalm encourages us to respond to this gift. List three ways that we can do this in our Christmas worship services.

Take it Home

Revisit the three things that you decided make a gift special from the front of this sheet. Work together with the people at your table to see if you can find these three things in Psalm 98.

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EPIPHANY: PSALM 72



Introduction

When you open your mailbox, you find an invitation to a special celebration. But when you read the invitation closely, this is what it says: *You are invited to join us for a special celebration **if** your income is six figures, **if** you drive a luxury car, and **if** you exceed an agreeable standard of beauty.* What emotions do you have as you read these words? What might you conclude about the one who invited you? Share your thoughts with your table.

Read It Through

As you hear the words of Psalm 72 being read, think of 2 words you would use to describe the king in this psalm. For what reasons did you pick those words? Share your thoughts with the people at your table.

Some Thoughts to Ponder

1. It's possible that this psalm was used at the time of a king's coronation. For what reasons would people pray for the wealth, power, and success of their rulers?

PSALM 72

(selected verses)

¹ Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.

² He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.

⁵ He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations.

¹⁰ The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts.

¹¹ All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.

¹² For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.

¹³ He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

¹⁴ He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.

¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed.

2. Reread verse 2. For what reasons might this verse frighten you? For what reasons might it comfort you?

It **frightens** me because...

It **comforts** me because...

3. Many of God's promises in the Bible are fulfilled in several ways at several different times. Read the Bible passages below and describe how verses 10 & 11 are being fulfilled.

2 Chronicles 9:22-24

Matthew 2:9-11

Revelation 5:6-14

4. Evaluate: *The king earns respect by how he treats the lowliest of his subject.*

5. How are "all nations" blessed through our Epiphany King?

Take it Home

With the people at your table, pick out two verses from this psalm and use them to write a church invitation that you could give to your neighbors.

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EASTER: PSALM 118



Introduction

You've known your neighbors for nearly 10 years, but you've also known that they are not Christian and do not belong to any church. But you just learned that yesterday evening, your neighbor's oldest son was killed in a tragic car accident. You plan on attending the funeral later in the week. As you think about going through the visitation line, you start thinking about what to say to this non-Christian family at a time of tragedy.

At your table, split up into two groups. Group 1 will put themselves in the shoes of the neighbors. *What would you want to hear from people coming through the visitation line?* Group 2 will put themselves in your shoes. *What do you want to say to people going through such a difficult tragedy?* Write down two thoughts and share them with the other group.

Read It Through

As you hear the words of Psalm 118 being read, underline or highlight your favorite verse. For what reasons did you pick this verse? Share your thoughts.

PSALM 118

(selected verses)

¹ Give thanks to the LORD,
for he is good; his love
endures forever.

⁵ In my anguish I cried to the
LORD, and he answered by
setting me free.

⁶ The LORD is with me; I will
not be afraid. What can man
do to me?

⁷ The LORD is with me; he is
my helper. I will look in
triumph on my enemies.

¹³ I was pushed back and
about to fall, but the LORD
helped me.

¹⁴ The LORD is my strength
and my song; he has
become my salvation.

¹⁷ I will not die but live, and
will proclaim what the LORD
has done.

¹⁸ The LORD has chastened
me severely, but he has not
given me over to death.

²² The stone the builders
rejected has become the
capstone;

²³ the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our
eyes.

²⁴ This is the day the LORD
has made; let us rejoice and
be glad in it.

Some Thoughts to Ponder

1. Look up the following passages with the people at your table. Write down one thing you learn about death from each passage.

Romans 5:12

Mark 5:22-24, 35-42

John 5:24-27

John 11:17-27

2. When people experience the death of a loved one, they often remark that death leaves so many unanswered questions. On your own, come up with 3 questions that a sudden and tragic death might present. Then, share your thoughts with the people at your table. Together decide on two questions to share with the whole group.

3. At your table, read through the verses of Psalm 118 again. Work together to pick out the verses of this psalm that best answer the questions that death presents.

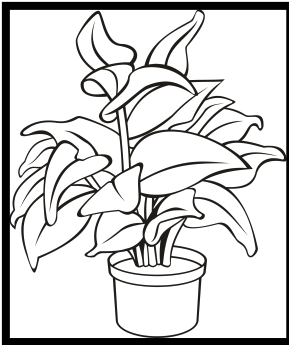
Take it Home

Think back to the introduction to this lesson. How has this psalm equipped you to share the confidence that God wants you to have in the face of death?

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PENTECOST: PSALM 51



Introduction

You are helping your daughter with her science project at school. She decides to study how plants absorb nutrients and grow. She purchases three identical plants, and “feeds” them with water, diet cola, and corn syrup. What do you think will happen to each plant over the course of two weeks? What does this tell you about what a plant needs to survive and thrive? Work together with the people at your table to think of two lessons this science project could teach us about spiritual growth.

1. _____
2. _____

Read It Through

This is the title that introduces this psalm in the Bible: *For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.* As you hear the verses of this psalm read, think about why David might have written this psalm for this particular time in his life.

PSALM 51

(selected verses)

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

⁶ Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

²² The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Some Thoughts to Ponder

1. Take 5 minutes to scan 2 Samuel 11 & 12. Write down two thoughts that you want to remember from this story.

2. Note the three words that are used for sin in verses 1 & 2. With the people at your table, try to come up with a simple definition for each word (you are free to use a Bible, a phone, or even a dictionary!).

transgressions -

iniquity -

sin -

3. Compare verses 6 & 16. What *does* God desire? What *doesn't* God desire? Why is it important to understand both?

4. Verses 10-15 of this psalm really describe how spiritual growth takes place for the Christian. What do these verses have to say about your daily devotional life?

Take it Home

Pick out three themes from this psalm that you will focus on during your daily devotions this week:
