



Psalms

Saturday 28th March 2026

Teaching by John Risbridger

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Worship and the Psalms: Expanding Your Voice

'Most of scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms speak for us'

(Attributed to 4th Century theologian Athanasius)

"The prayer preceding all prayers is, "May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to."

Infinitely various are the levels from which we pray."

(CS Lewis)

The Psalms as Poetry

The Psalms and Jesus

(e.g. Psa. 22; 63)

The Psalms and the Human Person

"I have been wont to call this book not inappropriately, an anatomy of all parts of the soul; for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror." (John Calvin)



Worship 'Voices' In the Psalms

'My problem with church is that today's worship styles are alien to people who are introverts'

'I come to church and everyone around me seems to be happy and living a perfect life. It seems there is no place in worship for people who are sad or whose lives are in a mess'

How would you respond?

Genre analysis of the Psalms (Fee and Stuart):

- Laments – for example Psalms 3, 22, 31, 42-3, 88, 120, 142
- Thanksgiving Psalms – for example Psalms 32, 34, 65, 66, 107, 138
- Hymns of praise – for example Psalms 8, 33, 104, 145-148
- Salvation history Psalms – for example Psalms 78, 105, 106, 135, 136
- Psalms of celebration and affirmation – for example Psalms 2, 50, 51, 89, 95-99, 122, 144
- Wisdom Psalms – for example Psalms 1, 37, 73, 119, 133, 139
- Songs of trust - for example Psalms 11, 23, 62, 91, 121, 125

The range of worship voices in the Psalms:

- Psalm 100 (Celebration)
- Psalm 99 (Adoration)
- Psalm 51 (Repentance)
- Psalm 96 (Proclamation)
- Psalms 42-3 (Lament)
- Psalm 63 (Desire)

Looking at that list, which are the least familiar to you and the least explored in corporate worship?

Identify a 'voice' that maybe expresses an emotion you don't often express to God. Dig in for a few moments as to why and see if the linked Psalm can help you and give you permission.

Having learned from the Psalm how to bring that emotion/voice/experience to God, use your own creativity to write your own prayer / poem / song / Psalm that brings your own emotions/experiences to God.