



Studying the Psalms

Psalms 124

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side -- let Israel now say --if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when our enemies attacked us, then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; then over us would have gone the raging waters. Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

For the next few weeks we will be studying the Psalms presented to us in the Revised Common Lectionary. There are many different types of Psalms—below you'll see a list of the different types of Psalms. Which do you think applies to Psalm 124? It could be more than one!

Wisdom

Thanksgiving

Rejoicing

Confession

Lament

Praise

Petition

Prayer/Song

Psalm 124 is a song or poem expressing gratefulness to the Lord for allowing the Israelites to remain safe during times of war. No specific enemies are named in this Psalm but it's safe to say there were many enemies of Israel during this time period. Tribes were always at war against each other, mostly over land and territory.

In Psalm 124 the Israelites are not only thanking God but they're celebrating their own faithfulness. They are declaring for everyone to hear that they are believers in the one true God of Israel and because of this God is faithful to them in return.

As individuals we are rarely at "war" in our own personal lives but that doesn't mean we don't have struggles and hardships. Like the Israelites it's important to acknowledge that in our times of struggle we can turn to God and God is always on our side. We can pray to God for guidance, love, nurture, and assistance when we are going through hardships.

Think about a recent time in which you were struggling or a hardship you are currently experiencing. How might you ask God to assist? Fill in the box below with your thoughts.

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When reading and studying Scripture it's important to know the words on the page are open to individual interpretation. Better put, it's always important to ask "What do YOU think this means?" when you're reading. God made each of us unique, no two people are exactly alike so we will all have different ways of interpreting the Scriptures.

Each week we're going to do an exercise to put this knowledge into practice.

Verse 8 of Psalm 124 is one that stands out when reading our text today. You can see it to the left made into a bookmark for you to cut out, color, and use in your Bible.]

While it might seem pretty blunt in its message its open for interpretation, just like the rest of Scripture. So, what do YOU think it means?

In the box below, rewrite Psalm 124:8 in your own words. It can be longer or shorter than what you see in the bookmark. It can be more specific, more detailed, or simpler. It's completely up to you— all of Scripture is before you for your own interpretation.

Rewrite Psalm 124:8 in your own words.

A closing prayer...

Dear God, thank you for always being there for me during my struggles and my hardships. Thank you for your comfort and guidance when I am feeling lost and alone. Help me as a struggle with _____ and remind me of your constant presence. Amen.