

finds the next national park or historic site for us to visit. You can see many wonders in town, but it's not until you spend a week at a national park like Glacier, Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons, Olympic or, our favorite, Crater Lake, just to name a few, that you really start to experience how amazing our God is. He put everything in motion with the foundation, the waters, the wind, the animals, to give us what we now see at all these places. If mountains, volcanoes, lakes, rivers and rainforests are not enough for you, try getting away from the city lights at night and looking up to the heavens to see all the stars and planets. I think you will begin to appreciate the vastness of His wonder.

*Jeremy Skoglund*

**Day 25:**    **Wade In** – Psalm 106:1,   **Jump In** – Psalm 106,   **Dive In** – Psalm 105-106

A benefit of writing a short devotional is I learned finally how to spell “Psalms.” One reason I'm a United Methodist is I can spell it. A rule of my life is if I can't spell it I can't be it or live in it: thus no “Pressbyterian” or “Alburquirke” for me.

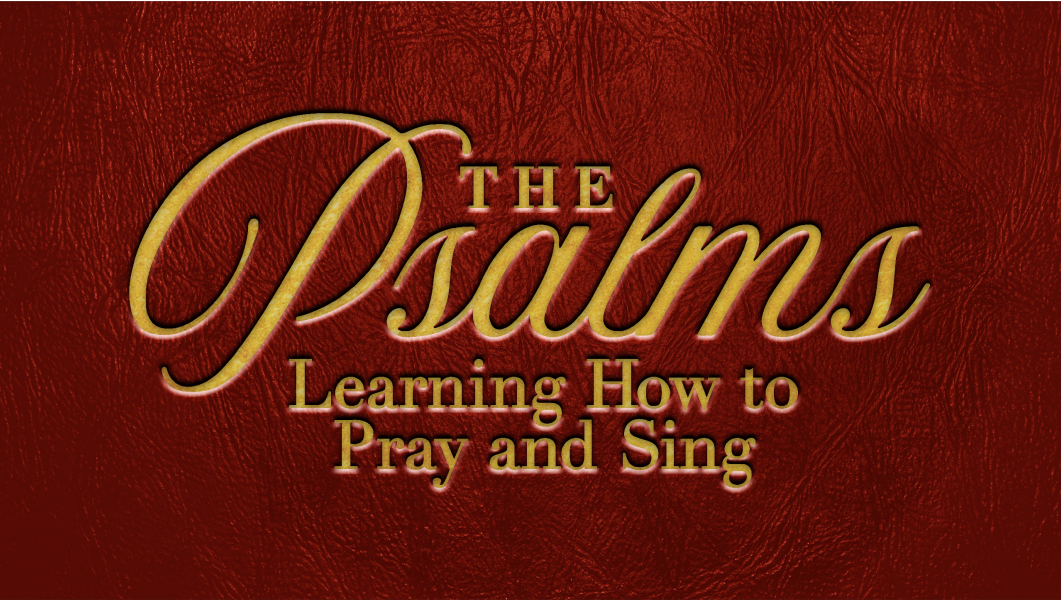
Psalms carries the music of the Old Testament. Its prayers and hymns reflect the origin of its translation as string instruments such as harp and lyre that accompanied songs of faith, praise, desperation, hope, pain, loss, exile, creation, remembrance, fear, thanksgiving, salvation, guilt, justice, revenge and mercy. Their ancient pleas and praise remain applicable to us and will be so to our descendants. In reading the Psalms, the sounds of the recorded drama, dreams, destruction, and deliverance reach each soul in defining human existence. The soothing, rumbling or joyful chords heard by our hearts inexplicably move us toward God. It is a wonderful mystery of lyrics put to silent song.

The theme of Psalms 105 and 106 is acknowledgment of God as Creator, the source of strength for those who his recall and trust in his everlasting promises. Psalm 106: 1 “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” Response to God's character and enduring love results in prayers of thanks and praise. That message is repeated and repeated by choruses of psalm writers.

Years ago, an old friend shared the book, Help, Thanks, Wow: 3 Essential Prayers by Anne LaMott. That three-step concept became the basis of my daily journaling. First, we recognize the marvelous gifts of a day provided by the Giver of Grace. (My unusually quiet sister made extended conversation today. Wow!) Next comes thanks. (On occasion it included thanks for protection from disaster to which I'm quite prone.) Finally, help. (I admit frequently asking for mindfulness over the mouth to shut up before I speak unkindly or too much.)

In the lyrical Psalms, I listen for the melody on maintaining a relationship to my Maker in all circumstances. The amazing Psalms written by people struggling to understand personal and collective experience begin and end with trust in God's promise of delivery from which they and we consistently sing praise.

*Marilyn Johnson*



## **Week 5 Devotional - The Lord Reigns**

*Read Psalm 100 (ESV) as a prayer:*

*“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness!*

*Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God!*

*It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”*

**Wade In** - If you are unfamiliar with the Bible, new to following Jesus or just want to renew your faith, wade into the shallow end with the Bible by reading one or two verses.

**Jump In** - If you're growing in your faith and getting to know God better through your daily Bible reading plan but you know you still have a lot to learn and experience in God's Word, then jump in with a short passage of the Bible.

**Dive In** - If you've ready to get in the deep end of the pool, join us in reading longer sections of Scripture.

**Day 21:**     **Wade In** – Psalm 90:12,   **Jump In** – Psalm 90,   **Dive In** – Psalm 90-93

My neighbor, Dorothy, recently turned 102 years old. She lives on her own, tends her vegetable and flower gardens daily, and with the exception of slight hearing loss, she is in very good health for someone who has seen over 10 decades of life. About a month ago, I pulled into my driveway to find her raking her front yard and I stepped over to wish her a belated happy birthday. Dorothy laughed and appreciated the well wishes, but her remarks about the day were a little underwhelming. I'm sure she saw the confusion on my face as she went on to explain that at her age, there aren't a lot of surprises. "Life is what you make it," she continued, "so we'd better make the most of it." So that's what Dorothy does every day, she works hard to make each day count.

Dorothy's wise words are reminiscent of the words of Moses in Psalm 90. This is the oldest of the Psalms and was written around the time that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. This context gives perspective to themes of God's infinite power and eternal faithfulness. In some translations, verse 1 likens the Everlasting One to a "home" or "dwelling place," something that God's chosen people would have longed for in 40 years in exile. The author, wisely and humbly understanding the value of time, juxtaposed God's eternal nature against man's mortality. In verse 12, Moses asks the Lord to "teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom" (NLT). This is not a call to fill our days or remain busy. Rather, those who know Jesus have an opportunity to seek wisdom and direction as to how to order our lives from the Greatest Teacher who ever lived.

*Amanda Rue*

**Day 22:**     **Wade In** – Psalm 95:7,   **Jump In** – Psalm 95,   **Dive In** – Psalm 94-98

Can you imagine the privilege and honor of announcing the coming of the Messiah and even His second coming? Jewish tradition claims that Psalms 93 – 99 anticipated some of the works of the Messiah. Here are some of the items associated with Jesus found in our Scripture reading today:

1. First coming of Jesus – Psalm 96:11–13 proclaims that heaven and everything on earth is to rejoice because, as verse 13 says, "for he is coming!"
2. Second coming of Jesus – Psalm 96:13 and Psalm 98:9 predict that Jesus will come again to judge the world saying, "He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with his truth."
3. Forgiveness of sins and victory over Satan – Jesus came to save all people from their sins. Psalms 98 verses 2 and 3 says, "The Lord has announced his victory and has revealed his righteousness to every nation! He has remembered his promise to love and

be faithful to Israel. The ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God."

**4. Becoming disciples** – Are we to keep Jesus for ourselves? Psalm 96:2-3 answers this question, "Sing to the Lord; praise his name. Each day proclaim the good news that he saves. Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does."

Our Scripture reading was written hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, but, when you read some of these words, it is as if Jesus had already lived, died and rose again. Listen to God's voice today and every day.

*Bruce Walth*

**Day 23:**     **Wade In** – Psalm 101:3,   **Jump In** – Psalm 101,   **Dive In** – Psalm 99-102

Phones. Computers. Tablets. Television. Books. Outdoor events and activities. Some good, some necessary, but in combination, we can allow those things to distract us from what's really important, and by the time we think of setting aside time for studying God's word, praying and simply focusing our attention on him, it's well past bedtime.

Consider me, for instance, and this devotion. Because I allowed all the distractions above to take up my time, focus and energy, I have waited until nearly the last minute to get it done. God does not like us to waste time—mostly. Considering the importance he placed on observing the Sabbath, he anticipated that we need times of rest, and, yes, even spending time on unimportant endeavors. Some of my best ideas and thoughts have come from moments when I'm doing nothing important or necessary.

The verse above reminds me to weigh my activities and ask, does it have worth? That's a hard question, because how do I define what's worthy of spending my time on? Does it always have to be important, something that helps me and others grow in faith and wisdom? Or can it be an activity such as playing board games with my family so we grow closer? Could it be an activity of pure enjoyment after a difficult day? Then again, I can safely say that binge watching Stranger Things on Netflix instead of doing the dishes isn't a worthy goal. I think that's what the verse means: to not allow the frivolous take the place of more important things.

*Andra Marquardt*

**Day 24:**     **Wade In** – Psalm 104:1-2,   **Jump In** – Psalm 104,   **Dive In** – Psalm 103-104

Psalm 104 reminds me so much of getting out and experiencing God's greatness in nature and seeing all the wonders He has created. The summer also helps, as that is the time our family