

Travelling Songs

Through Lent with the Psalms of Ascent

Week I Psalm 123 Mercy

'Until he have mercy upon us'

The two sessions for Week I of the Lent Course will be held on:

- (1). Tuesday afternoon March 8th, at St Luke's Church, Stoke Hammond,
1.00pm for Soup Lunch, 1.30pm for the course.
- (2). An evening course held on Thursday 10th March, 8pm at:-
The Rectory, 10 Pound Hill, Great Brickhill

***All will be welcome to join in any of the sessions at any of the venues.
The sessions are independent, so it doesn't matter if you miss one.***



Psalm 123

- 1 To you I lift up my eyes,
 to you that are enthroned in the heavens.
- 2 As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,
 or the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
- 3 So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,
 until he have mercy upon us.
- 4 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
 for we have had more than enough of contempt.
- 5 Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of the arrogant,
 and of the contempt of the proud.

Quotation

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice
(Abraham Lincoln)

Some reflections

Along with the theme of ‘mercy’ that is our main focus, there are several others that are raised by this psalm.

Seeing: The psalm begins with the psalmist lifting their eyes to God, and the image of a servant looking attentively to their master or mistress. It is a theme that runs through the scriptures and the psalms, including Psalm 121, which also begins with the psalmist lifting their eyes, looking for where help will come from.

Waiting: Looking moves on to the image of waiting – waiting for the Lord. We will explore this further in Week 5 as we look at Psalm 134.

Enemies: The psalm ends by addressing those who the psalmist seeks God’s merciful release from – the arrogant and the proud who treat them with scorn and contempt. Through the psalms there are frequent references to the ‘wicked’, those who are evil, and the enemies of the psalmist, and calls for God to exercise judgement and vengeance. One of the challenges for us in reading the psalms is working out how to interpret these sections in the light of the teaching of Jesus and the gospel message of God’s mercy.

Other Bible passages

Here are some of the other passages from the Bible that reflect our theme:

the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18. 21-35)
the parable of the prodigal son (or perhaps, the parable of the forgiving father
(Luke 15. 11-32)

Jesus’ words from the cross, “Father, forgive them ... “ (Luke 23. 34)
“so that we may receive mercy and grace” (Hebrews 4. 16)

Can you think of some more?

Some questions

1. What does the word ‘mercy’ mean to you?
2. What is your experience of receiving mercy from God, or from others?
3. In what ways have you shown, or could you show, mercy to others?

Prayer

God of the heavens,
who comes to those who wait on you:
open our eyes and hearts
so that we may be assured of your mercy
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Next Week: Week 2 Psalm 124 Deliverance

‘Then would the waters have overwhelmed us’

Full details of the Lent Course can be found on the website:-

See the “Lent Courses” section:- <https://brickhillschurches.org.uk/lent-course/>