

## PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS (1 to 72)

The book of Psalms, "Israel's Hymn Book," has been from very ancient times divided into five parts, as follows: Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150. Each part closes with a song of praise to God. For convenience, we study the first two divisions this month, returning to complete the Psalms in a future month.

The word "psalm" indicates a song composed especially to be sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. Thus the Psalms are songs, expressing the deepest and highest feelings of the writers in their worship, praise, and dependence upon God. In Hebrew they are the highest form of poetry, depending not upon rhyme and meter as English poetry does, but rather depending upon strength and beauty of expression, and upon rhythm and balance of thought and form. The power of this form of verse is carried over into the translations appearing greatly different from ordinary prose.

Writers of the Psalms are numerous and varied, as are the writers of modern songs. David is named as the author of very many of them; they express well his faith, his character, his experiences, and his skill as a musician. Moses is named as a writer of at least one. Others bear the names of Asaph, the "sons of Korah," Solomon, and Ethan. Many are anonymous; some of them no doubt coming from David.

The Psalms were loved by Jesus. His speech shows that He knew them well, and treasured their message. His words of agony on the cross fall into the expressions of Psalm 22, which tells of Messiah's suffering.

Principal thoughts of the Psalms are (1) trust in God, (2) praise to Him, (3) rejoicing in His goodness, (4) reminders of His loving kindness or mercy, and (5) pleas or thanks for His protection against the wicked enemies of the righteous.

There is much in the book and these messages which will be helpful to you. Share with us in the reading and in the worship of this month. Bring your friends.

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### Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "To Have Dominion" (Psalm 8)
- "The World and the Word" (Psalm 19)
- "I Will Confess My Transgressions Unto the Lord" (Psalm 32)
- "Where Is Thy God?" (Psalm 42)

### Other Suggested Sermon Topics:

- "Thou Art My Son" (Psalm 2)
- "Song of the Suffering Savior" (Psalm 22)
- "Hallowed Be Thy Name" (Psalm 34)
- "Fall House Cleaning" (Psalm 51)
- "What to Do With Trouble (Psalm 56)

## QUESTIONS OVER PSALMS 1 to 72

1. What is the delight of the blessed man? (1:2)
2. How does David state his amazement over God's attention to man? (8:3-4)
3. Whom does God's soul hate? (11:5)
4. What has the fool said? (14:1)
5. How worthwhile is the Word of God? (19:7-11)
6. How does Psalm 22 describe the crucifixion? (22)
7. What reason does David give for fearing no evil? (23:4)
8. How did David handle sin in his life? (32:1-5)
9. In whom did David's soul boast? (34:2)
10. How does David compare the righteous and the wicked? (37:16-22)
11. How greatly did David's soul desire God? (42:1)
12. Who is our refuge, strength, and help? (46:1)
13. What will God do with David's soul? (49:15)
14. In what manner does David say he will sacrifice to God? (54:6)
15. How great are God's lovingkindness and truth? (57:10)
16. Why does David say he will not get greatly shaken? (62:1-2)
17. What should all the earth say to God? (66:1-3)
18. Who daily bears our burden? (68:19)
19. How strong was David's hope? (71:14)

PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS  
TO HAVE DOMINION (Labor Day Sermon)  
(Psalm 8)

INTRODUCTION — Labor Day.

“Knights of Labor” paraded in New York in 1882 and again in 1884. Other workers began action to have a legal holiday created. First law in Oregon on February 21, 1887; other states followed soon after.

To those who labor with their calloused hands;  
Who mine the coal and make the clanging steel;  
Who from the forest wrest new, fertile lands;  
Who build tall towers where the planets reel;  
Who fashion houses, factories, and ships;  
Who work with wrench and bar, with plow and hoe;  
Who joying in their strength come to glad grips  
With mighty forces that the ages know,  
We give high praise and humbly bow the knee  
Before the glory of their lasting worth  
That shapes their dreams into reality  
And mystically blesses all the earth,  
Because through toil and sweat the seeking clod  
Gropes back through Eden to discover God.

(The writer recognized that God is in labor, but he has the reverse on who seeks whom.)

Read Psalm 8.

I. “THE WORK OF THY FINGERS”—GOD THE ARTISAN

- A. God labors; labor is of God. “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.”
- B. Labor is worthy of respect: Says U. S. Grant, “Labor disgraces no man; unfortunately you occasionally find a man who disgraces labor.”
- C. The true laborer becomes a fellow artisan with God.
  1. God’s purpose becomes his—to bring beauty and usefulness out of things.
  2. Labor becomes an expression of love and respect to

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the men God made. See Ephesians 6:5-9. Leviticus 25:43 "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God."

(This sort of relationship is not made by asking for it—there must be a motive.)

### II. "WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF HIM?"

- A. The cry of amazement. God is so great: how is He concerned with man? Man is so small in the scale of God's creation—how is he noticed?
- B. Man is nothing, except as God makes him something.
- C. The very being of man, his nature, his activities, must be understood in relationship to the question: For what purpose did God create him?

### III. "THOU MAKEST HIM TO HAVE DOMINION"

"Thou hast made him but a little lower than God."

- A. Dominion wrongly used is a curse to the creation. See Romans 8:19-22. The land, the streams, the forests, the creatures, suffer man's cruel greed.
- B. Does man have dominion over things or do they have dominion over him? (On the wind gadget was the farmer chasing the calf, or vice versa?)
- C. Dominion over things takes labor—and self-control. The plan of God is in Genesis 1:26 ff.

### IV. THE WAY OF CHRIST.

- A. Work is dignified, since He was a carpenter.
- B. His purpose was not to make houses, but to make men. "I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4).

### CONCLUSION —

At Ludlow, Okla., Henry Ferris, rancher, non-churchman, saw a small group of faithful—mostly women—trying to build a church. He left his own work and built the church. At the first invitation given in the new building he accepted Christ.

PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS  
THE WORLD AND THE WORD  
(Psalm 19)

INTRODUCTION —

Since the day when Adam's sin put a veil between him and God, man has sought to know again his Maker (Show us the Father), and God has sought to make himself known. Psalm 19 is one of the great and noble passages on revelation: "The glory of God's works and the perfection of God's word."

I. THE HEAVENS DECLARE

A. Man has always stood in awe as he contemplated creation. Psalm 8:3 "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou has ordained."

1. "The spacious firmament on high, with all the blue  
ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame, their Great  
Original proclaim;  
The unwearied sun, from day to day, does his  
creator's power display,  
And publishes to every land the work of an al-  
mighty Hand.  
What though in solemn silence all move round this  
dark terrestrial ball?  
What though no real voice nor sound amid the  
radiant orbs be found?  
In reason's ear they all rejoice and utter forth a  
glorious voice;  
Forever singing as they shine, "The hand that made  
us is divine."  
—Joseph Addison.

2. Well the awe may be—the knowledge of scientist enhances it: (There can be no scale model of the universe; world 1 inch diameter calls for nearest fixed star forty thousand miles away.)

Its silent testimony everywhere known.

B. But some worship the creation more than the Creator.

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1. "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (Rom. 1:25).
2. So we have days named for pagan gods—Saturday Sunday, Monday. The firmament showeth *His* handiwork, but God knew something more was needed.

### II. THE *LAW OF THE LORD* IS PERFECT, RESTORING THE SOUL—a quick turn to fuller revelation.

#### A. The completeness of revelation in the Word.

1. The law—"Thou shalt not"—cannot be broken, but broken upon.
2. The testimony is sure. "Hear, O Israel"—"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).
3. The precepts are right, rejoicing the heart—stewardship, partnership, sacrifice.
4. Commandment is pure, enlightening—"Thou shalt love the Lord."
5. Fear of the Lord is clean—reverence (coal from the altar).
6. Ordinances of the Lord are true—"What doth God require of a man but to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with his God?" (Micah 6:8).

#### B. Here again there were those who worshiped the message, and not God.

1. Pharisees spent lives in hair-splitting, and forgot justice and mercy.
2. "The sabbath is made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

### III. FINAL REVELATION IN THE LIVING WORD.

1. He was partner in the creation, "Without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3).
2. He was the fulfillment of the Law. "They are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).
3. When the question comes, show us the Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).
4. He is to all creation, as the sun to the heavens. Verses 4-6 a description of His coming again.

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I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSIONS  
UNTO THE LORD

(Psalm 32)

INTRODUCTION —

The basic brotherhood of men no better attested than here. The background is apparently the story of David and Bathsheba. The events leading up—the thing is done.

- I. "WHEN I KEPT SILENCE"—MENTAL ANGUISH AND BODILY ILLNESS.
  - A. Pride says, "It is not a sin"—an affair of war and idleness. Conscience knows better.
  - B. Pride says, "A king has a right to do these things; all do same." Conscience says a man is a man.
  - C. Pride says, "Keep the thing quiet; no one will find it out." Conscience says God knows it, and guilt is great.
  - D. (Illus.) A young man in Canton who struck and killed a lad, went home and hid. Police traced from piece of headlight. He came in, having lost twenty pounds in four days.
  - E. The coverage of *sin*—missing the mark "of the high calling"
    1. Transgression—getting out of bounds.
    2. Iniquity—Moral deformity or perversity.
  - F. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar" (I John 1:10).
- II. "I ACKNOWLEDGED MY TRANSGRESSION, AND SAID, I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSION TO GOD."
  - A. Historical—Nathan's story and accusation (II Sam. 12).  
—Like a sharp lance to a festering boil.
  - B. Is the feeling and acknowledgement of guilt a wholesome thing? How is it with the criminal? Confession the one hope of reformation.

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- C. To whom shall we confess?
  1. To the one whom we have wronged. "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight."
  2. To a real person—and God is that. Those who can't find reality in Him need another.

### III. "THOU FORGAVEST."

- A. Completeness of forgiveness—
  1. Forgive—lift the burden of guilt.
  2. Cover—hide from the eyes and memory of man and God.
  3. Not imputing—Remove from the record of dealings. "A perfect and upright man"—King after God's own heart."
- B. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
- C. This is true before baptism in the confession of Christ as Savior.
- D. After baptism—"Repent and pray God, if perhaps the sin of thine heart may be forgiven" (Acts 8:22).

### CONCLUSION —

"Thou art my hiding place."

- A. A friend is one who knows the worst and still loves us.
- B. "Gracious hiding place; gracious hiding place,  
in the shelter of His love;  
Not a doubt, nor fear, since my Lord is near,  
And I'm sheltered in His love."



PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS  
WHERE IS THY GOD?  
(Psalm 42)

INTRODUCTION — "Singing hymns at midnight."

- A. Where has ease and brittle laughter produced a song like "Home, Sweet, Home"?
- B. This is one of the Psalms not attributed to David, but by the locations named, is the song of an exile in the north of Palestine.
- C. It speaks the same truth. The "home" is God's house.

I. THE SOUL'S NEED FOR GOD.

"Connection between the human soul and the living God, and the thirst of the soul for God's presence form the first principle of the Book of Psalms."

- A. A part of the natural need of man, as water for the body. "I spread forth my hands unto thee, My soul thirsteth for thee, as a weary land" (Psalm 143:6). "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God."
- B. "When God makes man with longings it is a prophecy that these longings will be supplied."
- C. Thirst is for the living God, as opposed to a Force, Principle, or idol.
- D. The need is more noticeable in sorrow.
  - 1. Here the failure of false gods is most apparent.
  - 2. Can any supply contentment? Spiritual growth? Human love and fellowship? Help in sorrows? Eternal life?

II. SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION — LONELINESS IN TROUBLE: "WHERE IS THY GOD?"

- A. Memory of better days, when one was in the house of God.
  - 1. This is reflected in the experience of many moderns.
  - 2. Many who worship other gods were once in the house of the Lord.

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- B. The tears of hopelessness ask the question.
- C. The enemies in derision ask it.

### III. PERSISTENT HOPE IN GOD—"I WILL YET PRAISE HIM."

- A. His presence cannot be dimmed by trouble—His care is with the suffering.
  - 1. (Illus. — Convoy stops in submarine-infested waters to form breakwater for destroyer while doctor takes appendix of a sailor.)
  - 2. This is the expression of God's care for one.
- B. He has not promised ease—that might be to destroy the soul.
- C. His perfect gifts cannot be given in the present—they are yet to come. — "When shall I appear before the living God?"

### CONCLUSION —

The question for us:

- A. Where is thy God? — Where have you made, or found your center of life and worship?
- B. As to the living God, He has made Himself approachable to you in Christ. No longer, Where is He?
- C. Are you approachable to Him? Where are *you*?

## PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS (73-150)

Israel's hymn book occupied our attention two months ago, but there is more to it. See again the general introductory matter which was distributed then. Psalms 73-150 include the last three of the five general divisions of the book.

**GREAT PSALMS IN THIS GROUP.** Notice especially:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Psalm 90      | The eternal majesty of God.   |
| Psalm 91      | Hymn of devotion and trust.   |
| Psalm 103     | God's care for His children.  |
| Psalm 113-118 | Psalms of Thanksgiving, which were sung at the Jewish Passover, and probably include the "hymn" which Jesus and His apostles sang as they departed from the Upper Room toward Gethsemane (Matt. 26:30). |
| Psalm 119     | Concerning the Bible, God's Word.   |
| Psalm 127     | On building the house; basis of substantial family life.  |
| Psalm 139     | God's complete knowledge.   |
| Psalm 146-150 | Hallelujah Psalms.  |

### MESSAGE FOR THE CHRISTIAN

The Christian will be especially interested in the Messianic Psalms, many of which are quoted in the New Testament, and in the glorious messages of trust and praise which are timeless, not depending at all upon the dispensation under which they were written.

**Sermon Outlines Provided:**

- "Number Our Days" (Psalm 90)
- "Reason Enough to Sing" (Psalm 98)
- "Thy Word Is a Lamp" (Psalm 119:9-15, 105)
- "Search Me, O God" (Psalm 139:23, 24)

**Other Suggested Sermon Topics:**

- "The Security of the Righteous" (Psalm 73)
- "His Mercy Endureth Forever" (Psalm 118)

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QUESTIONS OVER PSALMS 73-150

1. What did Asaph desire on earth? (73:25)
2. Who is feared by the kings of the earth? (76:11-12)
3. What is the bread of angels? (78:24-25)
4. To whom is God's salvation near? (85:9)
5. What is God's covenant with David? (89:28-37)
6. How long is a man's life? (90:10)
7. What is to be told about God? (96:2, 3, 10)
8. How should we serve the Lord? (100:2)
9. What is it that David said he would not set before his eyes?  
(101:3)
10. How far does God remove our sins from us? (103:12)
11. Why is the Lord good? (106:1)
12. Whose name is holy and reverend? (111:9)
13. What is an idol like? (115:4-8)
14. "How can a young man keep his way pure?" (119:9)
15. Where does help come from? (121:2)
16. How desirable is unity? (Psalm 133)
17. What does the Lord do? (135:6)
18. How vast is the sum of God's thoughts? (139:17)
19. How enduring is God's kingdom? (145:13)
20. With what three words do the last five Psalms begin?

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NUMBER OUR DAYS (Anniversary Sermon)  
(Psalm 90)

INTRODUCTION —

The time seems much shorter afterward than before: Jacob to Pharaoh: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (Gen. 47:9).

So Moses *meditated and prayed*, during the wilderness wanderings, as death decimated the generation that had come out of Egypt. None, except Caleb and Joshua, that were of voting age at Sinai went into Canaan. Older ones might have lived to a hundred in the wilderness, but the seniors were disappearing! Moses' prayer contrasts God and man, with reference to time.

I. GOD IS; MAN IS TRANSIENT (vv. 1-6).

- A. Dwelling place — From basket to palace to tents, Moses knew the difference between transition and permanence. God is our sole security and shelter. "The eternal God is thy dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).
- B. Fills time and extends beyond it: All generations; everlasting to everlasting. "Before the mountains were born"; but even that doesn't cover it.
- C. "Thou *art* God" "I AM that I AM" Changeless, eternal present. A thousand years as yesterday — No, as one-third of a night! Things of men as transient as a desert torrent. "Don't regret growing old; it's a privilege denied to many." So we rejoice in old age, knowing its limitations. "Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, abide with me!" — What is 75 years? Just enough to remind us that God transcends the years!

II. GOD JUDGES; MAN LANGUISHES (vv. 7-12).

- A. Death and mortality because of sin. The smells of sin and death have always mingled in the nostrils of

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- mankind. Sin makes him a suicide and/or murderer, suddenly or by slow degrees.
- B. God—outraged holiness. “Anger”—The flared nostrils. Wrath—Judicial execution.
  - C. God—totally and accurately aware—“Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” (Murdered Egyptian or a golden calf.)
  - D. Sentence—Our days are passed away in thy wrath—“our years as a sigh.” Kadesh and the sentence of death; so there were fewer and fewer senior citizens among the children of Israel.
  - E. Need we count the high cost of low living? How much better and easier we could live if workmen were trustworthy, and customers were honest!
    - 1. Sin is a matter of life and death; life being held with a slipping grasp, and with death victorious.
    - 2. Much that we do is transient because of sin’s decay: cleaning, paint, building, influence.

### III. GOD FORGIVES, MAN REVIVES (vv. 13-17).

- A. Moses pleads mercy, glory, beauty, establishment. Futilly wishful?
- B. Not in Christ! “I will raise up a prophet from among thy brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:18, 19).
- C. In Him it becomes a matter of death and life, with life victorious! “If we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him” (II Tim. 2:11).
- D. In Him all our assets are converted into eternal values —“now we live.”

### CONCLUSION —

I Corinthians 15:55-58. “A thousand years . . .” “So teach us to number our days!” “Establish thou . . .”

PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS  
REASON ENOUGH TO SING  
(Psalm 98)

INTRODUCTION — From "Joy to the World"

- A. England at the time of Isaac Watts (1674-1745) is reflected in this: "Inside the churches fervor was frowned upon, and the preaching was frigid, formal, and argumentative."
  - B. Watts responded by writing the hymns that set English church folk to singing. No hymn is more meaningful than "Joy to the World," based on Psalm 98.
- I. GOD HAS DONE MARVELOUS WORKS (vv. 1-3).
- A. The psalmist speaks of a national deliverance to Israel, known to all.
    - 1. His message is best fulfilled in deliverance through Christ to all men.
    - 2. His words describe God's timeless character.
  - B. Salvation (literally, "safety," from Hebrew *jeshua*)
    - 1. The power of God is exerted to man's benefit. (We misrepresent God by referring to flood, storm, and earthquake as "acts of God," and putting no such legal label on sunshine and gentle rain.)
    - 2. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).
    - 3. "Salvation"—*Jeshua*—becomes the name of Joshua and Jesus.
  - C. Righteousness (Literally "rightness" or "justice").
    - 1. Not always, but generally, God's rightness is established in human events. "One does not break God's law; he breaks himself upon God's law!"
    - 2. Still God does not settle all His accounts on the first of the month or the end of the fiscal year.
  - D. Mercy and truth (otherwise translated "lovingkindness and faithfulness").
    - 1. God is love, and unchanging.

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2. His persistent goodwill to Israel was seen in national deliverance.
3. His eternal purpose to mankind has been seen in the Gospel of Christ.

### II. REJOICE, AND BE HEARD IN REJOICING

(vv. 4-8).

—As God's goodness to His people is seen even by the heathen, so His people's praise should be heard even by unbelievers.

A. Let mankind praise! (vv. 4-6).

1. With the voice, loudly and joyously. — The army of Christ is a singing army!
2. With instruments accompanying.
  - a. The harp and the psaltery are suited to accompany the voice.
  - b. The trumpet and cornet have their own stirring sound.

B. Let the natural world be heard praising God (vv. 7, 8).

1. The perceptive observer hears natural sounds as honor to the Creator.
2. Compare Luke 19:40: "If these [who welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem] should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

### III. GOD IS COMING IN JUDGMENT (v. 9).

- A. To the unbeliever and rebel this is no cause for rejoicing, but for His own it is the basis for greatest assurance.
- B. His rightness will be finally established, and all resisters proved wrong.
- C. His "equity" will correct all the inequities in human relationship.

### CONCLUSION —

God's coming in Christ reveals a love that goes far beyond justice; it establishes His mercy! Hallelujah!



PREACHING THROUGH PSALMS  
THY WORD IS A LAMP  
(Psalm 119:9-15, 105)

INTRODUCTION —

Many blessings are most appreciated in the lack of them. So with a light upon the path:

I. TO CLEANSE THE ERRING WAY. "WHERE-WITH SHALL A YOUNG MAN CLEANSE . . . ?"

A. The tendency to wander.

1. (Scouts learned that we walked circles in the dark or when lost.)
2. Without a spiritual guide we are hopelessly lost. "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31).

B. The use of the Word: Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction (II Tim. 3:16). — What do we do when we learn that we are off the track? Insist that the track must conform to our way? Refuse to correct, and go on?

II. TO HOLD TO THE TRUE WAY: "LET ME NOT WANDER . . ."

- A. Besides doctrine, reproof, correction there is instruction in righteousness.
- B. So the instructed should be very thankful for the instruction. Use it to avoid the wrecks.

III. HOW—THE EXISTENCE OF THE LAMP DOES NOT GUARANTEE SAFETY—(Compare the foolish virgins).

- A. Thy word have I laid up in my heart (v. 11). — The process of transferring from paper on the shelf to truth in the heart.
- B. Teach me thy statutes (v. 12). The humble acknowledgement that these are from God, and the prayerful approach to learning.
- C. With my lips have I declared (v. 13).

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1. Learn to teach, and thus is the greatest learning.
  2. Missionary Frank Laubach's program—"Each one, teach one."
- D. I have rejoiced—I will delight (vv. 14-16).
1. The attitude speeds the process of learning, and fixes what is learned.
  2. It more easily becomes a part of life.
  3. That which is best known is most loved.
- E. I will meditate (v. 15).
1. "In his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2).
  2. This is an art well on the way to being lost—hence hurry and loneliness.
  3. Recall, review, apply, consider, repeat.
- F. I will have respect (v. 15). "Ye received it as it is, not the word of man, but the word of God, which worketh in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13).
- G. I will not forget (v. 15).
1. It has become a permanent, usable part of one's experience.
  2. Review, repetition, practice, application necessary to avoid forgetting.

## CONCLUSION — Peroration on the Bible.

But salvation is in Christ, the Living Word: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

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SEARCH ME, O GOD (A New Year Sermon)

(Psalm 139:23, 24)

INTRODUCTION — What of the coming year?

- A. The entrance to the New Year is the exit from the old. If we are content with what we were in the year past, the next will probably show no improvement.
- B. Resolutions are still valuable; some still make them.
- C. Any resolution, to be effective must be often renewed; otherwise it is as powerless as Easter religion.
  - 1. God's mercies are new every day; so must be our response.
  - 2. The inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:16).
  - 3. We must have today's faith and today's purpose for today's living.
- D. Psalm 139, especially verses 23, 24, provide basis for renewal. —We may contrast it step by step with the easy, prideful, self-satisfied way.

I. SEARCH ME, O GOD

(What a request! "Have mercy on me"; "forgive me"; "bless me"; yes! But "Search me"?)

- A. This is not self-examination, but examination by the "all-seeing eye."
  - 1. Self examination may excuse self; or it may refuse to forgive self.
  - 2. How is divine examination accomplished? "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalm 119:9).
  - 3. This is the plea of complete sincerity; God's awareness is total and without limit (Psalm 139:1-13).

II. KNOW MY HEART

(You can't put a man in jail for what he is thinking. How about, "Hear my boast of goodness and right belief"? —See Luke 18:10-12.)

- A. This is where any effective understanding and improvement must start.

## PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

B. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

C. The innermost being cannot be hid from God.

### III. TRY ME AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS

(Why not be satisfied with, "Accept my profession of faith"?)

A. This "trying" can be rugged, as the testing of precious metal in refiner's fire (I Peter 1:7).

B. The testing of public officials has sometimes taken the form of offering them bribes, testing whether they are subject to influence.

C. The "ways" grow out of the thoughts, and they are the basis of man's judgment.

1. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20).

2. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Prov. 20:11).

### IV. SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME.

(Isn't it enough that I do more good than evil?)

A. We ask the physician or the dentist to discover any damaging flaw so it may be corrected before it does major harm; why not also God?

B. We may be sure that an honest examination will discover a fault; are we ready for the discovery?

C. The wicked way may be failure to do the good we know (James 4:17).

D. The wicked way may poison all the relationship with God. — One says, "I don't enjoy the Bible . . . I'm not living as I ought."

### V. LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING

(No place for "Forgive me again, and let me go on sinning.")

A. True repentance found in the genuine desire to change.

B. The prayer does not even ask forgiveness, but it goes the way in which sins are forgiven.

C. The way everlasting is found ultimately only in Christ (John 14:6). — "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

## CONCLUSION —

The "way everlasting" is the right way of the NEW YEAR!