

A LOOK AT THE PSALMS
“God’s Provisions for His Children”
PSALMS 8-10
Layne Lebo
October 14, 2018

One of the most common questions people ask about God and the Bible is, ***“Why doesn’t God spell things out more clearly, so there aren’t so many gray areas?”*** The Old Testament tells us stories about God’s work in history and we’re given the Law God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, including the 10 Commandments. In the New Testament we read about Jesus’ life and the ministry of the Apostles and we have instructions like *“Love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself,”* but there are also a lot of gaps—questions we have that seem like they could have been answered more clearly. Early in my time as a pastor at McBIC it seemed like I was constantly encountering questions I thought should have been spelled out more clearly in Scripture. One day I asked our senior pastor, Ken Hepner, why there wasn’t more clarity about some important issues. I’ll never forget his answer. Ken said, *“God’s desire is to be in a relationship with us as his sons and daughters. If everything were spelled out for us like a manual with formulas, we wouldn’t need to cultivate a relationship with Him.”* I’ve never forgotten Ken’s answer and I think what he shared is a helpful reminder for us as we look at the Psalms, because the Psalms, above all else, emphasize God’s nature and character and our relationship with Him.

I hope to remind us of truths about God today—who He is and the provisions He makes available to us—but my overarching hope is that we will receive from Him today. In other words, my goal isn’t that you’d walk out of here this morning with more information, but that you’d experience God’s touch. And so after the sermon we’re going to have an opportunity to sing to God—praising Him for who He is and for what He makes available to us. And we’ll have an opportunity to receive prayer.

Psalm 8 begins with these words of praise,

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place. Psalm 8:1-3

In this Psalm King David—the author of more than ½ of our Psalms—praises God and declares that evidence of God is seen throughout creation. *“How majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars, which you have set in place...”* David’s words point us back to the Creation account in Genesis chapter 1, where we’re told that God created everything on the earth and declared it was *“very good.”* And in Romans chapter 1 the Apostle writes, *“...since what may be known about God is plain to [people]. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse.”* Romans 1:19 & 20 Creation is filled with evidence of God’s nature and character, and yet many people fail to see and understand God. We might speculate that they’re being stubborn or resistant or that they’ve been hurt in the past by people misrepresenting God or that they are deceived by our enemy, Satan, but the bottom line is many people don’t know God. Follow along as I continue reading David’s words in Psalm 8 verses 4-9:

What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Psalm 8:4-9

These verses don’t answer the question of why God doesn’t spell everything out more clearly, but they do point to the priority of relationship with God. We’re told that God is mindful of us and that He cares for us. And we’re told that we were made a little lower than angels and that God entrusted his creation to us. Today, as we explore Psalms 9 & 10, I’d like us to ask the question, **“What do these Psalms tell us about God and about He interacts with his children?”**

As I researched on Psalm 9 this week I learned that Psalm 9 & 10 were written together—if you have your Bibles you’ll see that above Psalm 9 it reads, “A Psalm of David,” but Psalm 10 has no by-line. Psalms 9 & 10 are laid out in an interesting way. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and in the original language of Hebrew in which the Psalms were written, every 2nd verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet—starting with the beginning and moving to the end. These Psalms were written that way as a memory device to help students remember God’s nature and character. We’re not going to read both Psalms in their entirety,

that would be a lot of verses, but I want to pull out statements from them that address the question, **“What do these Psalms tell us about God and about He interacts with his children?”**

David begins Psalm 9 with words of praise: *“I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.”* Psalm 9:1 & 2 And in verses 7-10 David declares God’s faithfulness and justice...

The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity. The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Psalm 9:7-10

Those last words are powerful words of promise for us. *“The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.”* Do you feel oppressed this morning? Are you in a time of trouble? You can confidently place your trust in your Heavenly Father because He won’t forsake those who seek Him. In verses 16-18 of chapter 9 David writes more about God’s justice and his provisions for those in need...

The LORD is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. The wicked go down to the realm of the dead, all the nations that forget God. But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish. Psalm 9:16-18

Are you in need this morning? God won’t forget you. Are you afflicted? There is hope in God. Verse 14 fleshes out the hope we have in God even more fully...

But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. Psalm 10:14

God sees the trouble of the afflicted. He considers our grief and acts on it. He is the helper of the fatherless. The Scriptures make numerous references to God being a father to the fatherless—in fact, that’s a prominent line in Psalm 27, which we’ll be looking at next week. God, being a father to the fatherless is such an important truth for us in a day when many are without fathers and many are raised in homes where, while they may have had a father, he wasn’t a positive influence in their lives. And the reality, even for those of us who are good fathers, is that we all fall short and need our Heavenly Father to fill in the gaps for our children.

David concludes Psalm 10 with these words in verses 16-18:

The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror. Psalm 10:16-18

God is constant. He reigns for ever and ever. He hears the desire of the afflicted; He encourages them; He listens to their cry; and, He defends the fatherless and the oppressed from those who seek to terrorize them.

When I read the Psalms I always marvel at the relationship David had with God and the understanding he had of God's nature and character. David wrote these words one thousand years before Jesus and before the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given to live inside followers of Jesus. God reveals Himself through Creation and through nature—they give us evidence of God's existence and of his love for us, but God's love is most clearly revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was sent by God to live on earth as one of us. He was fully God and fully human. He lived a sinless life and died for our sins, so that the gap sin created between us and God might be bridged. And Jesus was raised to life by God, demonstrating his power over sin and death and foretelling our coming resurrection. And as Jesus prepared to leave this earth, He promised his followers that his Holy Spirit would live inside us, comforting us, convicting us of sin and guiding us into all truth. Let's read what the Apostle Paul had to see about Jesus being the full revelation of God in Colossians chapter 1:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:15-20

You and I have the amazing privilege of walking in relationship with God through the revelation of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. Sometimes, when we're in great distress it's difficult to move past our pain and receive what God has for us, but He is there. I've heard someone say, *"If you're feeling distant from God, ask 'Who moved?'"* Listen again to the provisions God makes available for us in the Psalms we looked at today:

- The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed.

- He is a stronghold in times of trouble.
- He never forsakes those who seek Him.
- The Lord is known by his acts of justice.
- God never forgets the needy.
- The hope that the afflicted place in God will never perish.
- He sees the trouble of the afflicted.
- He considers our grief and takes it in hand.
- He is the helper of the fatherless.
- The Lord is King for ever and ever.
- God hears the desire of the afflicted; He encourages them and listens to their cry.
- He defends the fatherless and oppressed.

My prayer for each of us today is that we'll experience the provisions God makes available to his children through his Son, Jesus Christ. Near the beginning of 2018 our staff sensed God impressing us to pray for 4 things—and we've been regularly praying for these throughout the year: salvations, freedom for individuals from addiction, reconciliation in marriages and physical healing. As we declare our praise and worship to God today, I encourage you to avail yourselves of prayer. Allow Him to meet you at your point of need and release his healing power into your life today. There are prayer team members and pastors around the perimeter of this room who are ready to pray for you. Or, perhaps you want to pray with your friends or spouse or family. I'm not concerned with how we experience God's provisions, my heart is that we'll receive from God today.