

St James News: Thought for the day – Monday 16th November 2020

The Psalms - Rev Funke Ogbede

I love reading the book of psalms. They are prayers and cry for help, thanksgiving and praise. They are affirmation of God's supremacy in heaven and earth. The psalms keep us grounded in our humanity and feel God's arms of love around us.

Psalm 18: 1-3 says: 'I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, the rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my strong hold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised' ----- Verse 31 says: 'For who is God except the Lord? Any who is a rock besides our God?'
I find comfort and strength, confidence and assurance, joy and peace reading this psalm, prayerfully and sometimes aloud.

The book of psalms embraces our human reactions to various situations in which we may find ourselves - be joy or pain, sadness or happiness, defeat, failure or victory, sickness or good health / wholeness, despair or hope and cry for help / deliverance. God, who knows our weaknesses and needs, use the psalms to calm our fears, give us strength and courage.

Psalm 139 shows God's perfect knowledge of us all individually, while psalm 121 is about God's help to those who seek him.

Psalm 51 is about repentance and restoration.

Psalm 103 says: 'Praise the Lord, O my soul or (Bless the Lord, O my soul); all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits'- 'who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life, who crowns you with love and kindness, who satisfies your mouth with good things, who renews you etc

We have all had time of difficulties and pain, experienced danger and loss, in need of deliverance, healing, protection, provisions, strength and courage in the face of struggles etc. Have we always praised God / thanked Him or shown our gratitude?

When was the last time you said a genuine 'Thank You' to God for His multiple blessings in your life and family? How important is it for us to give thanks and praise God *for all His benefits - all that we receive from Him?*

Psalm 8: 4, asks God why he bothers about us. *'What are human beings that you are mindful of them or the mortals that you care for them?'*

In joy or pain, tough times and good times, God stands by us even if we do not notice Him. He is the second set of foot prints in the sand as we walk along. Sometimes we notice the two sets (His and ours) but other times, it is just one set. We complain and ask where He has gone. Yet, He is holding us in His arms of love, as always.

God, who sent His Son to show us the way, knows our needs before we think of them and He whispers: 'do not be afraid for I am with you always'. Let us praise our living God and give thanks *'for he is good and his mercy endures forever'*. Ps 106 v 1.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, thank you for everything you have done for us,
Thank you for everything you are doing,
Thank you for everything you will do.
O God, our God, we give you praise, honour and glory,
Excellent is your name, wonderful and powerful
We love you and bless your holy name
Now and always. Amen