

Psalms 2023 Pt. 4

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, August 6, 2023

COMMUNION

- 1) The Wafer Symbolizes the BODY of Christ – Broken for Us
- 2) The Juice Symbolizes the BLOOD of Christ – Shed for Us All

KEY – Let Communion be a time for us to look: **a)** upward; **b)** inward; **c)** outward; **d)** backward; and **d)** forward.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

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SETTING THE STAGE

KEY – We are in the midst of an extended summer series on the Book of Psalms. In recent days we have noted:

1) The Passion Believers Possess for the Book of Psalms (i.e., Manifold Reasons)

NOTE 1 – Many gravitate to the psalms for their sense of artistry and beauty. Not only do the psalms offer inspired and impacting content, but they do so in a beautiful manner. These ancient works of Hebrew poetry exemplify artistry in that they are characterized by beauty, craftsmanship and technique. The Lord has spoken to humanity, but is there no significance that He has chosen to do so in such a stylized manner?

NOTE 2 – Many gravitate to the psalms as they help to inform and impact the practices of prayer and worship. The Book of Psalms has always given believers of the Old and New Covenant eras rich verbiage and vocabulary which helps us to connect with God in the midst of life and living (e.g., public and private elements herein).

NOTE 3 – Many find connection with the psalms because they connect with human emotion and experience! The psalms touch upon nigh every human emotion (e.g., elation and celebration to despair and despondency) and experience (e.g., lack, betrayal and opposition vs. provision, fidelity and breakthrough) with striking detail!

2) The Varying Types of Psalms

The psalmists contended with the complexities of human experience/emotion via an array of types of psalms: **a)** hymns; **b)** laments; **c)** psalms of thanksgiving; **d)** psalms of remembrance; **e)** psalms of confidence; **f)** psalms of wisdom; and **g)** royal (i.e., kinship) psalms.

3) Poetic Texture of the Psalms

The Book of Psalms is a compendium of one-hundred-and-fifty exemplars of ancient Hebraic lyric poetry. Therefore, we must come to understand the characteristics and/or hallmarks of this genre of biblical literature:

NOTE 1 – Hence, we noted the musicality of the psalms. Lyric poetry was often connected to tune and melody.

NOTE 2 – Also, we addressed the operation of parallelism in the psalms (i.e., foundational unit of lyric poetry).

KEY – Please review previous sessions and corr. notes online at www.NewLifeBarre.org for further information.

NOTE 3 – Let us continue our conversation concerning the poetic texture of the psalms (i.e., hallmarks of genre).

NOTE 4 – Those who would rightly interpret and apply the Book of Psalms, etc., do well to note the following:

LITERARY DEVICES PT. 1

KEY – The Book of Psalms abounds with literary devices commonly connected to works of poetry. Please note:

NOTE 1 – A basic principle of poetic language is that poets communicate in IMAGES (i.e., word pictures meant to help the reader grasp eternal yet abstract principles). The psalms are rich with poetic imagery! For instance, think of the many ways in which God is described in the psalms: He is presented as a shield, a fortress, a rock, a storm cloud, a shepherd, a warrior, a chariot rider, an archer, a king and beyond. Each image communicates some spiritual truth through the language of the familiar, natural world.

NOTE 2 – Consider the imagery present in Psalm 91 (i.e., noting the varied allusions to the natural world). Note:

Psalm 91 (NIV)

1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

3 Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

5 You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

8 You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your dwelling,

10 no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;

12 they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

NOTE 3 – Moving from the general to the specific, images in the psalms are often communicated via two devices:

1) Simile

Q. What is a simile?

A. A figure of speech in which a writer compares two things using the formula *like* or *as*.

Q. Examples of simile in the Book of Psalms?

Psalm 42:1 (Emphasis Mine)

1 **As the deer** pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.

Psalm 7:1–2 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Lord my God, I take refuge in you;
save and deliver me from all who pursue me,
2 or they will tear me apart **like a lion**
and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

Psalm 37:1–2 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
2 for **like the grass** they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

2) Metaphor

Q. What is a metaphor?

A. An implied comparison that does not use the formula *like* or *as*.

Q. Examples of simile in the Book of Psalms?

Psalm 3:1–3 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
2 Many are saying of me,
“God will not deliver him.”

3 But you, Lord, are a **shield** around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

Psalm 23:1 (NKJV, Emphasis Mine)

1 The Lord *is* **my shepherd**, I shall not want.

NOTE 3 – Of course, imagery does have its challenges, in that they place immense demands upon the reader. They require far more activity of thought than a direct propositional statement does (i.e., necessitating time). Moreover, they involve a far greater risk on the part of the writer, who must trust the audience to rightly interpret the image v. misconstrue or absorb in an overly-literal manner (e.g., Psalm 91:4 resting in His wings)!

NOTE 4 – However, they also have their benefits!

Q. Why do the biblical poets (i.e., psalmists) utilize imagery?

- A1.** Firstly, the poetic texture enhances the beauty and/or artistry of the piece.
- A2.** Secondly, poetic imagery arrests the imagination of the reader and makes it more impacting.
- A3.** Thirdly, they force the reader to slow down and meditate upon truth versus absorb and move onward.
- A4.** Such imagery—in light of all that has been said thus far—serves as an effective mnemonic device.
- A5.** Fifthly, it is amazing how much can be communicated in a short and simple manner:

Q. How much is communicated by the imagery of Psalm 23:1?

LITERARY DEVICES PT. 2

KEY – Of course, this does not exhaust the varying devices present in the Book of Psalms. We should also note:

3) Allegory

Q. What is an allegory?

- A.** A symbolic narrative meant to convey spiritual truth through the interplay of fictional figures or characters:

Psalm 80:8–15 (NIV) (Farmer = God & the Vine = People of Israel)

- 8 You transplanted a vine from Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
- 9 You cleared the ground for it,
and it took root and filled the land.
- 10 The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches.
- 11 Its branches reached as far as the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.

- 12 Why have you broken down its walls
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?
- 13 Boars from the forest ravage it,
and insects from the fields feed on it.
- 14 Return to us, God Almighty!
Look down from heaven and see!
Watch over this vine,
- 15 the root your right hand has planted,
the son [i.e., branch] you have raised up for yourself.

4) Hyperbole

Q. What is hyperbole?

A. Hyperbole is a figure of speech that conveys a concept using a deliberate exaggeration for dramatic effect. Hyperbole does not claim to be literal truth, but instead seeks to convey emotional truth. Hyperbole falls into the category of poetic license and, therefore, should be interpreted as literal fact.

Psalm 42:3 (Emphasis Mine)

3 My tears have **been my food**
day and night,
 while people say to me all day long,
 "Where is your God?"

Psalm 18:7–10, 17–19 (re: the Deliverance of David from His Saul and His Enemies)

6 In my distress I called to the Lord;
 I cried to my God for help.
 From his temple he heard my voice;
 my cry came before him, into his ears.
 7 The earth trembled and quaked,
 and the foundations of the mountains shook;
 they trembled because he was angry.
 8 Smoke rose from his nostrils;
 consuming fire came from his mouth,
 burning coals blazed out of it.

 9 He parted the heavens and came down;
 dark clouds were under his feet.
 10 He mounted the cherubim and flew;
 he soared on the wings of the wind.

 17 He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
 from my foes, who were too strong for me.
 18 They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
 but the Lord was my support.
 19 He brought me out into a spacious place;
 he rescued me because he delighted in me.

5) Personification

Q. What is personification?

A. Figure of speech in which human attributes are given to something nonhuman (e.g., nature; abstract items).

Psalm 96:11–13 (Nature)

- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
 let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
 12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
 let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
 13 Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,
 he comes to judge the earth.
 He will judge the world in righteousness
 and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Psalm 114:1–4 (Nature)

- 1 When Israel came out of Egypt,
 Jacob from a people of foreign tongue,
 2 Judah became God's sanctuary,
 Israel his dominion.
 3 The sea looked and fled,
 the Jordan turned back;
 4 the mountains leaped like rams,
 the hills like lambs.

Psalm 148:3–4, 7–10 (Nature)

- 3 Praise him, sun and moon;
 praise him, all you shining stars.
 4 Praise him, you highest heavens
 and you waters above the skies.
 7 Praise the Lord from the earth,
 you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
 8 lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
 stormy winds that do his bidding,
 9 you mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars,
 10 wild animals and all cattle,
 small creatures and flying birds . . .

Psalm 85:10–12 (Abstract Elements)

- 10 Love and faithfulness meet together;
 righteousness and peace kiss each other.
 11 Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
 and righteousness looks down from heaven.

6) Anthropomorphism

Q. What is anthropomorphism?

A. A figure of speech in which human qualities are attributed to God; that we might readily understand Him:

Psalm 10:12 (Emphasis Mine)

12 Arise, Lord! **Lift up your hand**, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.

Psalm 31:2 (Emphasis Mine)

1 In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.
2 **Turn your ear to me**,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.

Psalm 34:15 (Emphasis Mine)

15 The **eyes of the Lord** are on the righteous,
and **his ears** are attentive to their cry . . .

Psalm 113:6 (Emphasis Mine)

4 The Lord is exalted over all the nations,
his glory above the heavens.
5 Who is like the Lord our God,
the **One who sits** enthroned on high,
6 who **stoops down to look**
on the heavens and the earth?

7) Apostrophe

Q. What is literary apostrophe?

A1. A figure of speech in which a non-human object is addressed as if it were a person.

A2. A figure of speech in which an absent or imaginary person is addressed as if present.

Psalm 24:7 (Emphasis Mine)

7 Lift up your heads, **you gates**;
be lifted up, **you ancient doors**,
that the King of glory may come in.

Psalm 87:3 (Emphasis Mine)

1 He has founded his city on the holy mountain.
2 The Lord loves the gates of Zion
more than all the other dwellings of Jacob.
3 Glorious things are said of you,
city of God . . .

Psalm 103:1 (Emphasis Mine)

- 1 Praise the Lord, **my soul**;
 all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
 2 Praise the Lord, **my soul**,
 and forget not all his benefits . . .

Psalm 148:3–4, 7–12 (Emphasis Mine)

- 3 Praise him, **sun** and **moon**;
 praise him, all you **shining stars**.
 4 Praise him, you **highest heavens**
 and you **waters** above the skies.
- 7 Praise the Lord from the earth,
 you great **sea creatures** and all **ocean depths**,
 8 **lightning** and **hail**, **snow** and **clouds**,
stormy winds that do his bidding,
 9 you **mountains** and **all hills**,
fruit trees and **all cedars**,
 10 **wild animals** and **all cattle**,
small creatures and **flying birds**,
 11 **kings** of the earth and **all nations**,
 you **princes** and **all rulers** on earth,
 12 **young men** and **women**,
old men and **children**.

8) Acrostic**Q. What is acrostic poetry as it relates to the Book of Psalms?**

A. Poetry comprised of a sequence of uses of the Hebrew alphabet in alphabetical order.

FYI 1 – A number of the psalms are acrostic poems (v. degrees): Psalm 9–10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145.

FYI 2 – The longest and most famous acrostic poem in the Book of Psalms is, of course, Psalm 119. Please note:

QUOTE – “Its 176 verses are divided in twenty-two stanzas, one stanza for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Within each stanza, each of the eight verses begins (in Hebrew) with that letter.” Please scroll through Psalm 119 with me at this time (i.e., View on iPhone)!

FYI 3 – Please consider what a feat this would have been to write (even under the inspiration of the H. Spirit). Imagine trying to write a poem built on this format in the English language: eight-verse units starting with the successive letters of our alphabet: A through Z. There is some homework for you!

FYI 4 – Please note that this device is not present in Psalms alone. Rather, acrostic poems abound in the Word. Examine Lamentations chapters 1–4, Nahum 1:2–8 and Proverbs 31:10–31 on your own time. Amazing device!

SUMMATIONS & CLOSING REMARKS

NOTE 1 – When you study the Book of Psalms, learn to take note of the specific type of psalm you are reading. Are you reading a hymn, a lament, a psalm of thanksgiving, remembrance, confidence, wisdom or a kingship (i.e., royal) psalm?

NOTE 2 – Moreover, when you study the Book of Psalms, learn to take note of the poetic texture of the piece. What “literary devices” are present within: **a)** simile; **b)** metaphor; **c)** allegory; **d)** hyperbole; **e)** personification; **f)** anthropomorphism; **g)** apostrophe; or **h)** acrostic?

NOTE 3 – Learn to slow down, appreciate the artistry, consider its beauty, process the imagery and be changed!

NOTE 4 – We will continue next Sunday AM with further items to consider when accessing the Book of Psalms.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org.

NOTE 2 – Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).

NOTE 3 – Week of Prayer & Fasting this week. Moreover, a Night of Prayer this Thursday at 6:30pm.

NOTE 4 – Our Men’s Breakfast this Saturday Morning at 9–10:30am. We hope that you men will join us then.