

Monday 18th January

Psalm 98

**¹ Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.**

² The LORD has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

**³ He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.**

⁴ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;

**⁵ make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,**

⁶ with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

**⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.**

⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;

**⁹ let them sing before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.**

**He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.**

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Lawsuits Among Believers

6 If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? **2** Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? **3** Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! **4** Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned

in the church? **5** I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? **6** But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? **8** Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. **9** Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men^[a] **10** nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Tuesday 19th January

Psalm 132

A song of ascents.

**¹ LORD, remember David
and all his self-denial.**

² He swore an oath to the LORD,
he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:

**³ "I will not enter my house
or go to my bed,**

⁴ I will allow no sleep to my eyes
or slumber to my eyelids,

**⁵ till I find a place for the LORD,
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob."**

⁶ We heard it in Ephrathah,
we came upon it in the fields of Jaar:^[a]

**⁷ "Let us go to his dwelling place,
let us worship at his footstool, saying,**

⁸ 'Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.

**⁹ May your priests be clothed with your righteousness;
may your faithful people sing for joy.'"**

¹⁰ For the sake of your servant David,
do not reject your anointed one.

¹¹ **The LORD swore an oath to David,
a sure oath he will not revoke:
“One of your own descendants
I will place on your throne.**

¹² If your sons keep my covenant
and the statutes I teach them,
then their sons will sit
on your throne for ever and ever.”

¹³ **For the LORD has chosen Zion,
he has desired it for his dwelling, saying,**

¹⁴ “This is my resting place for ever and ever;
here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.

¹⁵ **I will bless her with abundant provisions;
her poor I will satisfy with food.**

¹⁶ I will clothe her priests with salvation,
and her faithful people will ever sing for joy.

¹⁷ **“Here I will make a horn^[b] grow for David
and set up a lamp for my anointed one.**

¹⁸ I will clothe his enemies with shame,
but his head will be adorned with a radiant crown.”

I Corinthians 6:12-end

Sexual Immorality

¹² “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”^[b] ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.^[c]

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

Wednesday 20th January

Psalm 81

¹ **Sing for joy to God our strength;
shout aloud to the God of Jacob!**

² Begin the music, strike the timbrel,
play the melodious harp and lyre.

³ **Sound the ram’s horn at the New Moon,
and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival;**

⁴ this is a decree for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.

⁵ **When God went out against Egypt,
he established it as a statute for Joseph.**

I heard an unknown voice say:

⁶ “I removed the burden from their shoulders;
their hands were set free from the basket.

⁷ **In your distress you called and I rescued you,
I answered you out of a thundercloud;**

I tested you at the waters of Meribah

⁸ Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—
if you would only listen to me, Israel!

⁹ **You shall have no foreign god among you;
you shall not worship any god other than me.**

¹⁰ I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of Egypt.

Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

¹¹ **“But my people would not listen to me;
Israel would not submit to me.**

¹² So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own devices.

**13 “If my people would only listen to me,
if Israel would only follow my ways,**
14 how quickly I would subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes!
**15 Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him,
and their punishment would last forever.**
16 But you would be fed with the finest of wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”

1 Corinthians 7:1-24

Concerning Married Life

7 Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” **2** But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. **3** The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. **4** The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. **5** Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. **6** I say this as a concession, not as a command. **7** I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

8 Now to the unmarried^[a] and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. **9** But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. **11** But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. **13** And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. **14** For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife

has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. **16** How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Concerning Change of Status

17 Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. **18** Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. **19** Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts. **20** Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. **22** For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord’s freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ’s slave. **23** You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings. **24** Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

Thursday 21st January

Psalm 76

**1 God is renowned in Judah;
in Israel his name is great.**

2 His tent is in Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.

**3 There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.**

4 You are radiant with light,
more majestic than mountains rich with game.

**5 The valiant lie plundered,
they sleep their last sleep;**

**not one of the warriors
can lift his hands.**

⁶ At your rebuke, God of Jacob,
both horse and chariot lie still.

⁷ **It is you alone who are to be feared.**

Who can stand before you when you are angry?

⁸ From heaven you pronounced judgment,
and the land feared and was quiet—

⁹ **when you, God, rose up to judge,
to save all the afflicted of the land.**

¹⁰ Surely your wrath against mankind brings you praise,
and the survivors of your wrath are restrained.^[c]

¹¹ **Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfil them;
let all the neighbouring lands
bring gifts to the One to be feared.**

¹² He breaks the spirit of rulers;
he is feared by the kings of the earth.

1 Corinthians 7:25-end

Concerning the Unmarried

²⁵ Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶ Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. ²⁷ Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸ But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

²⁹ What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; ³⁰ those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹ those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

³² I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³ But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can

please his wife— ³⁴ and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵ I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

³⁶ If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honourably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong^[b] and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷ But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸ So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better.^[c]

³⁹ A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰ In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Friday 22nd January

Psalms 27

¹ **The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?**

**The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?**

² When the wicked advance against me
to devour^[a] me,

it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

³ **Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;**

**though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.**

⁴ One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD

all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

5 For in the day of trouble

**he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.**

6 Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

**7 Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.**

8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

**9 Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.**

**Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Saviour.**

10 Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.

**11 Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.**

12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.

**13 I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.**

14 Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

1 Corinthians 8

Concerning Food Sacrificed to Idols

8 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. **2** Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. **3** But whoever loves God is known by God.^[a]

4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that "An idol is nothing at all in the world" and that "There is no God but one." **5** For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), **6** yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

7 But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. **8** But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. **10** For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? **11** So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. **12** When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.