

Psalm 101

What is going on in this psalm? The first 4 verses are about David's commitment to being an obedient son of God. David is able to celebrate God's actions. Are we able to celebrate what God is doing; or are we afraid of the consequences of our actions? It's not about being the perfect son. It is about wanting to connect with God, and know him better.

David, like Abraham, was ready to meet God. The next three verses are God telling us that he will remove the evil-doers. God studies the landscape for an individual here or there who is actually helping his neighbor.

David and God are speaking in agreement. There is a partnership between our effort and God's power. We have a responsibility to sort out our own lives and commit to follow God. In turn, God will remove the posers and the harmful elements among us. We have to make the effort; but God alone can bring it to pass.

Sometimes we can get some context by reading what was written before this psalm; and then reading what comes afterwards. Psalm 100 was about the perfect *Amish-style* life in the millennium. Psalm 102 is about the brutal life circumstances that can come to God's people (like Job). God tried to set us out in a perfect world; but we opted out. Eve was not satisfied with the status quo. Satan was somehow able to convince Eve that she could do better. Hardships and breakdowns and death followed her choice.

Eve could not appreciate a perfect situation. The sad truth is that God could not take us to heaven before we are prepared to live there. We would be uncomfortable. It might be like listening to the same top 40 songs all day long; if we are not feeling it. God seems to be up for the challenge of taking sinful men; and somehow making us holy and devoted to him. It took a lifetime to convert Jacob into Israel.

God is preparing us as citizens of heaven. Can we be happy in heaven without TV? Can we be happy in heaven without our routines? We are currently milking our preferences for all that they are worth, to find peace of mind? That is not the abundant life.

I don't know how much renovation that God is doing in heaven, for our resting spot...as much as he is re-programming our minds and hearts down here. That involves weaning us off of our attachments and expectations.

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place

for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (John 14:1-4)

One of God’s ongoing actions in our lives is to strip away our idols and self control. It is extremely hard to build our trust and reliance on him.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:1-5)

The end goal is a tabernacle type of relationship. That is God living in the tent of a man’s body. Would God be comfortable with the entertainment and conversation? God did not even describe the tabernacle requirements until he got his people out into the desert (without distractions). The ultimate question is can we be content to live with our relationship with God alone. What options and pastimes must be removed? We set our hopes on a vision of what life should look like. Part of growing up in Christ is to receive the opposite of what you requested in prayer. That means contentment without a job, or a family, or great health, or friendly neighbors. Once we can say “yes”; then we can enjoy all of these things in their proper place.

Read Psalms 101:1-4: David is singing about God’s ways. He has no fear of letting God drive. He is essentially saying: “Bring it on...I like it”. Are we saying that too...or are we saying..”Let me indulge in this other thing for a moment?” Is God a core necessity or a preference? Is our salvation for fire insurance or an opportunity to commune with God?

David vows to not let the evil things of this world cling to him. Do we do that? How do we not develop an attitude that is unhealthy? Taking our eyes off of God happens automatically. We do not have to pursue mischief to become spiritually unhealthy.

Read Psalm 101:5-8: God responds by saying that he is paying attention to our intentions. I have to be careful about consenting to the failures of others. Am I burying a man, or have I helped him get better? What about subcontractors? Is it easier to condemn them, or get in front of them to help them navigate the problem? Intellectual honesty and mercy are not always easy.