

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (January 15) – Psalm 109, 110, 111

There are spiritual forces against us in the life of faith. Psalm 109 says that they encircle us and attack without cause (v. 3). May God's help be with us. May He save us according to His steadfast love (v. 26)! He does so in Jesus Christ our Lord. Psalm 110 is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. This psalm speaks of Christ's place at the right hand of the Father (v. 1). It also confesses that He is a priest forever (v. 4) who on the day of His wrath will execute judgment (vv. 5, 6). In this psalm "LORD" (all caps) refers to God the Father, and "Lord" refers to God the Son. This is a good reminder that the teaching of the Trinity, though made explicit in the New Testament, has always been present in the Old Testament.

The praise of our God is the theme of Psalm 111. We praise Him for His great works (v. 2). He is gracious and merciful (v. 4). He provides for His people, and He remembers His covenant forever (v. 5).

Tuesday (January 16) – Psalm 112, 113, 114, 115

Psalm 112 speaks of the blessing upon the one who fears God. As the *Small Catechism* directs, let us fear, love, and trust in Him above all things. The praise of God's name is the theme of Psalm 113. His holy name is blessed (v. 2). From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of our God is to be praised by His people (v. 3). For where His name is, there is His blessing. The psalms are the story of salvation. Psalm 114 tells the story of God's people called out of slavery to sin. As a result the whole earth trembles at God's presence (v. 7). However, His saving presence in His word and Spirit are the gift of God for the people of God. Psalm 115 says that our God does what He pleases (v. 3) and that the false gods of our world can do nothing themselves. Although these are not real, God is the ever-present help and shield of His people (v. 9). Thanks be to God that He remembers us as His chosen people in Jesus Christ!

Wednesday (January 17) – Psalm 116, 117

These psalms speak of prayer and of praise. In Psalm 116 praise is offered as God hears the voice of His child seeking for mercy. God has inclined His ear (v. 1,2). The reason for answered prayer is that God is gracious, righteous, and merciful (v. 5). The response of His people is praise! What shall be given to God for His innumerable blessings toward His own? The psalmist asks the question and answers only that he will lift the cup of salvation, calling on God's name (v. 12,13). The highest form of praise is to receive the gifts of God! In the Divine Liturgy these two verses are often historically associated with the Offertory, just before sharing in the Lord's Supper. They are a reminder of our Lord's gifts to the sinfully unworthy. Psalm 117 is the shortest of all psalms. However, its scope is exceedingly broad. All nations and peoples are called to praise him! God's people give Him thanks and praise because of His steadfast love toward them and His faithfulness that never ends.

Thursday (January 18) – Psalm 118

Psalm 118 is a psalm of thanksgiving. This psalm gives thanks to God for His steadfast love and for His protecting and saving presence. The psalms so often point directly to our Savior, Jesus Christ. This psalm was sung at the triumphal entry of Jesus into the city on Palm Sunday. It was also quoted by Jesus in His ministry (Matthew 21: 42-44). In God's wisdom this stone rejected is the very cornerstone itself (v. 22). Our God's plan here is indeed marvelous. On this day that He has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it (vv. 23, 24)!

Friday (January 19) – Psalm 119:1–64

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and the longest chapter in Scripture. It is also one of the acrostic psalms, meaning that the first letter of each verse forms the pattern of the Hebrew alphabet. There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, so the acrostic psalms usually have twenty-two verses (see Psalm 25; Psalm 34; Lamentations 1–4). However, Psalm 119, being the greatest acrostic, has eight verses for each letter. The pattern is lost in the translation to English, but your Bible might still show the eight-verse divisions with the corresponding Hebrew letter for each.

Martin Luther once said that the right way to study theology is through prayer, study, and testing. He added that this is the way taught by king David in Psalm 119. For there he makes use of three rules throughout the entirety of the psalm: prayer, study, and testing. These words apply to every Christian as he or she endeavors to live out God's word day-to-day. In this opening portion the psalmist prays that God would open his eyes to know the wondrous things of His law (v. 18). He prays for understanding (v. 27), and that through these words his Lord might revive him (v. 37). Through his prayers the psalmist wants to lay hold of God himself as the true Teacher of the Scriptures.

Saturday (January 20) – Psalm 119:65–120

The psalmist makes use of the three rules of prayer, study, and testing throughout this psalm. At one point the psalmist exclaims how he loves God's law and meditates upon it all day long (v. 97)! Meditation upon the great truths of our God's word is what is meant here. Luther reminds us that repeating, reading, and rereading the words with reflection are necessary to know what the Holy Spirit means by these words.

Sunday (January 21) – Psalm 119:121–176

Testing or trials of faith can come in different forms. Through these experiences we learn how strengthening and comforting God's Word is to us. Luther says that David struggles with all kinds of enemies whom he must tolerate because he meditates upon God's Word. Affliction in the life of faith can be a good thing when it drives us to hold to God's word through all things (vv. 67, 71). The more we apply ourselves to prayer and the learning of God's words, the greater the struggle in faith. And that struggle continually drives us back to the blessing of God's word. For amidst the troubles, God's commands become His people's delight (v. 143)!