

Week 3

Psalms (First Peek) - תהלים

The Psalms come in all shapes and sizes, for this purpose or for that: some psalms are for confession, some for worship, some for instruction, some for traveling to Jerusalem, and some to give testimony to a present and a future. They speak to the whole sweep of emotions: sadness, joy, anger, praise, trust, doubt and on and on. Written by a host of authors: David – (73), the family of Asaph (12), the Sons of Korah (11), Solomon (2) a few one offs, and quite a few come to us anonymously (50). The Psalms were and are the hymnal and prayer book of the people of God. They allow us to see into the soul of believers. They teach us how to talk to God. No rules you can read one or both of the suggestions.

- Sunday, Nov 7** Psalms of Instruction - Psalm 1 and 37
For Reflection - What essential wisdom would you want to pass down to your children's, children's, children?
Lagniappe – Ephesians 6:4
- Monday, Nov 8** Psalms of Praise¹ – Psalm 8 and 34
For Reflection - What events, places, or experiences cause you to praise?
Lagniappe – Matthew 21:14-16
- Tuesday, Nov 9** Messianic Psalms² – Psalm 22 and 118
For Reflection – When have you felt forsaken by God? (22) When have you experienced the unlooked-for rescue of God? (118)
Lagniappe – Matthew 27:35-46
- Wednesday, Nov 10** Psalms of Lament³ – Psalm 42/43⁴ and 77
For Reflection – Everyone has seasons of lament, when was your last significant season of lament? How did you involve God in it? How did you experience God in it?
Lagniappe – Matthew 5:4

John (second half) - Ἰωάννης

- Thursday, Nov 11** A conversation with a dear friend - John 11
For Reflection: Where do you need to see resurrection power/life in your life? Your Family? Your Church? Your Community? Your world?
Lagniappe – Ezekiel 37:1-14
- Friday, Nov 12** A conversation while breaking bread - John 13
For Reflection – Who is God calling you to serve this week?

¹ Tied for first as the most frequent type/genre of psalms if included with the thanksgivings. (See note 5 below)

² These psalms are really multi-tasking Psalms; 22 is a lament about a current experience and a prophecy about something that would happen in 1000 years - the crucifixion. Psalm 118 is current thanksgiving and a prophecy of the triumphal entry.

³ Lament is the other high frequency type/genre of psalm. We hide sadness, the psalmists did not, I wonder, "Why?"

⁴ 42/43 is intended by the author to be read/sung as one Psalm not two. The repeated refrain seen in vs 42:5, 42:11 and 43:5 link these two Psalms together as a unified whole.

Lagniappe – Leviticus 19:17-18 (according to Jesus a really important passage – Matthew 22:36-40)

Saturday, Nov 13 A last conversation – John 14
For Reflection: Believing that Jesus is the way, the truth... how would you describe the path Jesus has been for you: newly paved and comfortable, winding and scenic, potholed and difficult, four-wheel drive only?
Lagniappe: Isaiah 40:1-5

Week 4

Sunday, Nov 14 A last conversation continued – John 15
For Reflection – Where are you seeing God's fruit? Where do you feel like an outsider? Where
Lagniappe – Isaiah 5:1-2

Monday, Nov 15 A conversation with God – John 17⁵
For Reflection: What about this prayer comforts you? Challenges you?
Lagniappe – Leviticus 11:44-45 (cf 17:17)

Tuesday, Nov 16 When words fail – John 19⁶
For Reflection: Is this defeat or victory?
Lagniappe: Zechariah 12:10 (also of course you've already read Psalm 22)

Wednesday, Nov 17 Impossible Conversations – John 20
For Reflection: How did Jesus first appear to you?
Lagniappe – Isaiah 26:19

Isaiah — ישעיה

Yesha-ya-hu – Yahweh Has Saved

Isaiah is likely the best-known prophet today among followers of Christ. He was an 8th century prophet (740-ish to 680-ish). He lived and ministered in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He was an aristocrat, which is interesting because you don't often see the wealthy accept a prophetic call. His ministry coincides with the period covered in 2 Kings 15-20. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) is destroyed during his lifetime in 722 by Assyria, who also lays siege to Jerusalem. It was a hard and dangerous time.

In many ways Isaiah serves as a bridge between the Old and New Testaments, as it has so many prophecies that point to Jesus (this is probably why he is known so well in the church today). The book of Isaiah has two distinct divisions - Judgement and Repentance for a rebellious people (1-39) Comfort and Hope for the future exiles (40-66). Tradition (Talmud) tells us Isaiah was martyred during the reign of Manasseh.

⁵ The longest recorded prayer of Jesus includes You!

⁶ When I focus on the gospels I am looking for unique material (material not in the other 3 gospels) John 19 is largely unique. Particularly unique in 19 is the detail regarding Pilate and the piercing of Jesus' side.

- Thursday, Nov 18** The Situation - Isaiah 1:1-20
For Reflection: What about Judah's behavior does God find nauseating?
Lagniappe: James 4:8 & Revelation 7:14
- Friday, Nov 19** The Call – Isaiah 6
For Reflection: When is the last time you have had to give someone bad news about something important? What did you experience before, during and after?
Lagniappe: John 1:14 and also Revelation 4:8
- Saturday, Nov 20** Good News – Isaiah 7:10-17 and 9:1-7
For Reflection: What is your favorite name of God/Jesus? Why?⁷
Lagniappe: Matthew 1:22-23

⁷ I love that Jesus is God With Us (Immanuel), but was surprised this name only comes up 3 times in scripture.