

Three Challenging Psalms

by Zac Poonen

The sermon highlights the importance of meditating on God's Word, controlling our anger, and speaking graciously and truthfully.

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 4:4-5, Psalm 4:7, Psalm 12:4-6, Ephesians 4:26, James 3:1

Topics: "Speech and Communication", "Meditation on God's Word", "Control of Anger"

Description

Zac Poonen explores three challenging Psalms, emphasizing the importance of meditating on God's Word as a means to cultivate a fruitful life, akin to trees planted by water. He highlights the necessity of overcoming anger through stillness and righteousness, advising that one should calm down before acting on anger. Furthermore, Poonen discusses the significance of speech, urging believers to be mindful of their words and to ensure they reflect godliness and truth. The sermon encourages a deep, reflective engagement with scripture, self-control in emotions, and graciousness in communication.

Transcript

Psalm 1 describes the blessed man who avoids sinful paths and meditates on God's Word. It is not enough to avoid evil. The heart that has been cleansed of evil must be filled with God's Word. To meditate on God's Word day and night means to think frequently of the Word that we have read and to let it sink into our hearts - just like the food we eat is digested over a period of many hours and converted into blood, flesh and bones. We spend very little time actually eating. It is the digestion process that goes on for hours. So we may spend only a short while reading God's Word. But meditation on it is important. If we do that, we will be like trees planted by a river that are always fruitful, and whatever we do will prosper. The blessing of God will be upon the work of our hands and the words we speak. This is the way God wants all of us to live.

Psalm 4- We are warned against the sin of anger: "Stand in awe and sin not," (Psalm 4:4) is quoted in Ephesians 4:26 and there it reads thus: "Be angry and sin not". But the rest of verse 4 is unfortunately not quoted in Ephesians: "Go and lie down on your bed, and be still for a little while." That is good practical advice. If you can overcome anger by the grace of God that is the best. But if you haven't come that far, then the next best thing to do is to lie down in your bed until you have calmed down. And when you are lying down in bed, "offer the sacrifices of righteousness to the Lord" (Psalm 4:5), and get up only when you can say "Lord, you have put gladness in my heart" (Psalm 4:7). There was anger in my heart until now. But now there is gladness.

Psalm 12 is about the use of the tongue. It begins by saying that faithful, godly people are becoming fewer and fewer. And then it goes on in the next three verses to speak about the tongue - falsehood, flattery, insincerity and arrogance are expressed through the tongue. A primary mark of a godly man is the graciousness of his speech. The ungodly however say, "Our lips are our own. We will speak whatever we like." (Psalm 12:4). It is the man who can control his tongue who is a perfect man (Jas.3:1). A godly man recognizes that "the words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tested in a furnace seven times" (Psalm 12:6). So before he speaks, he thinks about what he is going to say. If he is in doubt, he throws the words he is planning to speak back into the furnace of his heart and asks himself a few questions: "Is it necessary for me to say this? Can I put it in a gentler way? Am I speaking the truth? Am I speaking it in love?", etc. Then he decides what to say and how to say it. If he is writing a letter to correct someone, he will rewrite it seven times, if necessary, before sending it.

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