



POWER
· OF THE ·
PSALMS

WITH ALYSSA BETHKE

HAND LETTERING
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POWER OF THE PSALMS

WITH ALYSSA BETHKE

Life can be hard at times. We experience pain, sorrow, grief, and hurt. Or sometimes we just wake up and are sad, stressed, overwhelmed or anxious by life's demands. God didn't promise that we'd be protected or saved from pain, but He did promise that He'd be with us as we walk through the pain, and that He'd fill us with hope, peace and joy as we learn to trust Him.

Join us as we journey through some of my favorite Psalms that remind us of how good and faithful God is and that gives strength and courage to us believers as we apply their truths to our hearts.



for THE LORD GOD
is a sun & shield
the LORD BESTOWS
FAVOR & HONOR
no good thing does
he withhold from
THOSE who walk
uprightly

SESSION 1

It can be so easy to feel like we're missing out, or that God is holding out on us in some way, isn't it? "Lord, why haven't you done *this* in my life yet?" You look around and everyone around you has what you're wanting, and yet you're left empty handed.

"God, don't you see me? Don't you hear my cries?"

Blessed is the one who trusts in Him.

Blessed. Happy. Greatly favored.

God no doubt sees you. He knows your very heart, your every longing and desire. He is not holding out on you. You are not missing out. He is giving you His very best at every moment of every day. It may be hard, it may be lonely, and it most likely is not what you had imagined. But God is using your circumstances to woo you into His presence; to show you that His presence is better than anything in this life. And when you look for it, you will see that He is showering you with His grace and honor. He shines down on you.





Verse 12 in the Amplified Bible says, “O Lord of hosts, how blessed and greatly favored is the man who trusts in You [believing in You, relying on You, and committing himself to You with confident hope and expectation].

How are you not trusting in the Lord?

What truths from this Psalm give you hope and confidence?





This Psalm says that the Lord withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly. Spend some time journaling about this truth today. Do you feel like God is holding out on you? Confess that, and ask Him to help you believe that He is only giving you what's best at all times. List the ways the He has been good to you.



Do you long for the presence of the Lord more than other things?
Why or why not?





As a Deer Longs
for streams
of water,
So I Long for
you, O God

PSALM 42:1

SESSION 2

Yesterday I woke up in good spirits, grabbed my bible and coffee and sat under the glow of the Christmas tree to spend some time with Jesus. I journaled out my heart, praising God and admitting to Him a longing I have lately, but wrote out how good He was and trusted Him in that situation. Then I closed my bible, and started going about my business. Literally 10 minutes later, I was sad. Stressed. Irritable.

How could my mood have changed within 10 minutes, let alone right after I had just had my quiet time? Wasn't that supposed to fill you up for the rest of the day?

After awhile Jeff woke up and noticed I was down. He sent me to our room to just have some time by myself while he took care of our 19 month old.

As I sat in my comfy chair, tears streamed from my face. As I cried and prayed, I realized that that longing I had admitted to Jesus an hour ago was real and deep. And came with a lot of grief over a loss I had. I had been carrying it around for a month now, but that had been the first time I had journaled about it, and it hit home hard. I was so thankful for that time to just be alone and cry out to God; to feel the emotions I had and ask Him to fill me with His hope and joy.



Have you been there before?

Sadness can hit us randomly one morning, or it can be a long drawn out season. It can overtake us, or it can be something that we just handle on the back burner of life. Sometimes we understand it well, and other times we are wondering “What in the world? WHY DO I FEEL LIKE THIS?”

Thankfully God knows our frame, and welcomes us into His arms as weak and frail as we are. He not only gives us the tools we need to walk through the sadness, but He gives Himself to be our comfort.



Is there something that you're sad about today? It may be really apparent or it may be something you've been carrying around for awhile but pushing it aside, telling yourself you're fine. Write it out now.





In this Psalm we see that hope is not something that we just stumble upon, but rather it's a command; a call to action. "Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God." (v. 5, 11) How can you put on hope today?



I love verse 8! "By day the Lord commands His steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life." How does knowing that the Lord commands His love for you during the day, and that He sings over you at night fill you with hope?



Wait → for the LORD;
be strong, &
let your heart
TAKE COURAGE; ←←←
→ Wait for the LORD
←←←

PSALM 27:14

SESSION 3

Waiting. Not a word we love to hear right? And certainly not a lesson we enjoy learning. In a day where we can get things with the tap of our finger (I mean, how much do you love amazon prime?!), waiting can be a lost art. Foreign in so many ways, and yet God allows things in our life that cause us to wait on Him. And even after we “get” the thing we’ve waited so long for, another wait is just around the corner. So we must learn to wait well.

I say all that knowing the ache that waiting involves. You have something that you so long for, and yet no matter how often you pray or how much you think about it or try to make it happen, it just isn’t. That longing can be so heart breaking. You feel like you can’t go one more second waiting; almost as if you’re holding your breath and you may pass out soon if it doesn’t come to fruition.

The Lord teaches us three important truths in Psalm 27 about waiting.

1. Waiting isn’t passive, but active.
2. We must believe in the goodness of God as we wait.
3. Waiting takes courage.





What does it mean that waiting is active, and not passive? How can you actively wait on the Lord?



Do you believe that the Lord is good to YOU? Why or why not? Spend some time journaling about this question. Confess the ways that you may have not believed, and write out ways that He is good to you.





Girl. YOU ARE BRAVE. God has equipped you with all you need as you wait on Him. It is no easy task. List out what God says He's given you to help you fight this battle.



I praise you
for all
I am

fearfully
&
wonderfully
made

wonderful are your works
my soul knows it
very well

SESSION 4

A huge part of my story is that I battled anorexia for years. I compared myself with every woman I saw, and constantly looked at my body with distaste wanting to change this or that. I felt uncomfortable in my skin, and wished I looked different. I tried to control my eating as a form of not trusting God with other circumstances, and I believed the lie that if I was a size ____ I would be satisfied and happy. In reality, I was a slave to food, letting it control me. I was in bondage, daily feeling like I was in a dark dungeon and not able to get out. My mind was a battlefield and I was losing constantly.

I know that this is a lot of girls' stories, and yet this may not be your story. However, I believe that we all in some part dislike something about us. Whether it is physical or a personality trait.

You fill in the blank. I'm too _____.

Psalm 139 is like a healing balm to the soul. In this Psalm, God dispels all of our lies- yes, LIES- that we believe about ourselves, and covers us with His truth.

He made us.



He *purposefully* and *intentionally* formed every part of us. Our physical selves, as well as our personality. There is only one you, and you are not a mistake or a mess up, but a child of God who is loved and known far beyond what you will ever comprehend. Wanted. Desired. Pursued. Just as you are. You are beautiful, and you are His.



What parts about yourself do you not like? List them.



Now look at that list, and write next to each item a sentence or two thanking God for giving you that very trait. Why might He have made you like that?





It's so easy to look at others and compare ourselves with them. We envy what they have, the strengths they possess and the way they look. Spend some time confessing anything in your heart that may fall along those lines and not please the Lord.



Comparison and discontent can be a daily, maybe moment by moment, battle. But God has equipped you with all that you need to be victorious, to be set free. And the first way to do that is to guard your mind. How can you guard your mind- to set your mind on things above- regarding this issue?



TRUST IN THE LORD,
AND DO GOOD;
DWELL IN THE LAND AND
BEFRIEND FAITHFULNESS.
DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD
AND HE WILL GIVE YOU
THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART.
COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD;
TRUST IN HIM,
AND HE WILL ACT.

SESSION 5

I was born a dreamer. It comes very naturally to me to have big ideas, to seek adventure and set goals. Nothing is impossible in my book.

You may be a dreamer too. Or maybe not at all. Maybe you reside more on the practical side, or perhaps life has just been hard and you've learned to live in survival mode.

Whatever side you fall on, I want to take some time in this session to dream. I believe God made you with a crazy good purpose in mind, and that He has plans for you to help usher in His kingdom as you use your gifts and passions. And, I also believe that He's our Father who loves you with an extravagant love and wants to bless you. When we are seeking His face, He gives us the dreams that He has for us. He places it deep within our hearts, and when we catch onto that dream, it draws us closer to the Father.

Dreams come in all different shapes and sizes. Some hold a lot more importance than others. Some dreams will change over time, and others won't come to fruition this side of heaven. However, whatever your dreams are, they will cause you to lean onto the Lord more, see His glory brighter and grow you as you learn to trust Him more.





List out your dreams. Big. Small. Impossible. Probable.



Take some time surrendering each dream to the Lord, thanking Him for laying those on your heart, and trusting in His perfect timing, and acting on your behalf. Confess any ways that you've doubted God, or tried to take matters into your own hands.





As you look at verses 3-8, how can you:

- a. Do good and dwell in the land in faithfulness right now?
- b. Delight yourself in the Lord?
- c. Commit your way to Him?
- d. Wait patiently for Him?
- e. And not worry or get angry?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____





As for God
his way is perfect:
The LORD's word
is flawless; he
shields all who take
refuge in him



SESSION 6

Throughout our lives we will be forced to walk through dark valleys. Perhaps you are currently in one, or just came out of one, or can so distinctly remember every feeling associated with one in the past. Trials and pain are part of being human. Isn't it so comforting to know however that God does not leave us alone in those times? Rather He comes running to us, and carries us through. When we look to Jesus to lead us and be our light in the darkness, He will strengthen us, and make us more like Him. **FOR GOD IS AFTER OUR HOLINESS MORE THAN OUR HAPPINESS.** And in that truth we can rejoice because happiness comes and goes, but holiness is a character trait that lasts for eternity.

Whatever trial you may be facing, or will face in the future, we can take shelter in God most high, for He is our Rock. He is solid. Immovable. Steady. Sure.

A rock. What do you picture when I say that? I remember being asked that when I was 16 on a missions trip. We were in Switzerland, taking a break by a waterfall. Switzerland is in the Alps, so all around you there are towers of cliffs and snow covered mountain tops. It's breathtaking. Our leader asked us this question, as he picked up a fairly big rock and held it up over his head. I was thinking, "Wow, that's a big rock." He then threw it down and shouted, "No! God is our ROCK!" as he pointed up at this gigantic cliff looming over us.



God is our mighty fortress, our solid rock. Whatever your trial, you can take hope in Psalm 18:30 “This God- his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.”



When you read Psalm 18:3-19, how does it make you feel to know that God moved mightily to save and rescue David? Do you believe that God delights in you as verse 19 says?



Are you facing a trial right now? How does knowing that God’s way is perfect and His word faithful and true help you?





Spend some time journaling asking the Lord to be your refuge in this time. If you're currently not facing a trial, think back to a time when you did and thank the Lord for how He carried you through.



my flesh
& my heart
may fail but GOD
is the STRENGTH
of my heart & my
portion forever

PSALM 73:26

SESSION 7

We've all heard the phrase, "the grass is greener on the other side" and how often have we fallen into believing that lie? For this Psalmist, he looks around at all the people who are wicked and living life in rebellion to God, and yet their lives look so easy and so good. How unfair! He's been faithful to God, obeying Him and walking with Him, and yet his life is hard.

Have you ever fallen into the same trap, of looking at others lives who aren't following God, and yet their lives look so good. Or maybe it's looking at other believer's lives and wanting what they have, feeling left out or forgotten or alone.

The Psalmist asks God to forgive him for his hatred and envy and feeling like the victim. And then he remembers. He remembers God.

"Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:23-26 ESV

Life with God is so much better. He gets God, and although life is hard and maybe lonely, He has God, and that is the best. He knows that at the end of the day He has all He needs. He is truly the rich one.





Do you ever find yourself in a similar situation as this Psalmist? Explain.



How does Psalm 73:23-28 transform your heart and thinking?





Portion in v.26 can also mean *inheritance*. We get God. How does that truth encourage you today?



the Lord is
my Shepherd
I lack nothing
he makes me lie
down in green pastures
he leads me
beside still waters
he restores
my soul

PSALM 23:1-3a

SESSION 8

As I talked about in the video, change can be real scary. There are so many unknowns and things are unfamiliar. Whether it is a move, a loss of a relationship, a change in schools or jobs.

We can get fearful. Afraid that we'll fail or plagued with all the "what ifs". We're plucked out of our comfort zones and honestly, that can feel uneasy and terrifying.

Or perhaps for you, change isn't the issue, but rather dealing with fear and anxiety on a daily basis is. We all have fears, and whether or not you have to fight them daily, they do come up every now and then and they either win, or are defeated. For me personally, I have to fight my fears often. I fear other's approval (or lack thereof), or not being wanted or alone.

Isn't it so sweet to read Psalm 23? To cover ourselves with its truth. To be reminded of how tenderly the Lord takes care of us, leads us, and comforts us. We have NOTHING to fear, because GOD IS WITH US. David here chooses not to fear. Again, it's not a passive action, but rather a very active one. We must choose not to fear, and then clothe our minds with His truth. Put off. Put on. It's certainly no easy task, and may be a constant moment by moment doing. However, God has given you His word, His Spirit and other believers to help you be victorious.

"Only goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Ps. 23:6a





Let's do the exercise from the video. Please write out what you fear.



Now that you've written out your fears, next to each one, write out the truth of who God is or has promised to you. Remember the truth "BUT GOD." Even if that fear does become a reality, who does God say He is and what has he promised He'll do, even in that circumstance?





Read through Psalm 23 once more, and write out characteristics of God. How does knowing God help you fight your fears?



FOR you are
my DELIVERER;
under your wings
I Rejoice

PSALM 63:7

SESSION 9

Have you ever been in a dry season in your walk with God? Or just a rough season in life? Stressed, overwhelmed, busy, anxious?

The wilderness. I don't know anyone who enjoys being in an endless dry desert. When I lived in Israel, we hiked through some of the wilderness and although it was beautiful with its unique landscape, it was also hot, dry and rocky. I was so thankful for our air conditioned bus and my Nalgene water. However, even in the largest desert I've ever seen, there were rare spots of refreshment. We would hike down cliffs, and there in the midst of two cliffs would be palm trees and water! We would lay out in the shade, and swim in the pools, jumping off the rocks. It would be just what we needed to keep hiking in the hot sun.

David ran for his life for 10-15 years in that same wilderness. I can't even imagine fearing for my life, let alone living alone in a desert not knowing where you'll get water or food or shelter.

Those wilderness seasons of life can be hard. You almost feel numb sometimes. However we know that in the wilderness:

1. It is only a season. It won't last forever.
2. Even in the dryness, there will be moments of refreshment. Of filling up. Rest. Just what we need to keep going, keep believing and trusting.

Psalms 63 is such a good reminder of how God is enough even in the dry times.

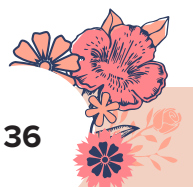




Spend some time asking the Lord to give you a deep desire for Him. To long for Him and thirst for Him; to see Him as all you need.



Write out ways that God has been your help lately. (v. 7)





Do you really believe that God's steadfast love is better than life (v.3)? Spend some time journaling about His love, and how that affects your way of living.



God always Does
what he says &
is gracious
in everything
he Does

PSALM 145:13b

SESSION 10

Psalm 145:3 MSG “God is magnificent; He can never be praised enough. There are no boundaries to His greatness.”

I can tend to focus on my needs and struggles a whole lot more than the greatness of God. I might spend a few minutes praising Him or giving thanks, but then the rest of the day is spent thinking on all I need to do, or asking for wisdom, strength or help. Life can feel daunting at times, or I can just go through the motions trying to check off my to-do lists as much as possible.

I love that we’re ending with Psalm 145. What a beautiful chapter on how great our God is! I pray that this Psalm becomes the heartbeat of our lives; that we become women who love our God, see Him as great and glorious as He is, and are full of His praise. May we reflect His beauty, regardless of the circumstances we are walking through.

One easy way to give Him praise is to think about what we’re thankful for. Thankfulness is the breathe of God, and in fact the will of God for our lives. (1 Thess. 5:18) Writing out a list of what we’re thankful for can switch our gaze from being on the hard or everyday, to seeing God’s work around us.

As we end this study, let’s spend some time praising God.





Write out a list of things that you are thankful for.



Look over Psalm 145:13b-20 and write out how God has been good and faithful to you.





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