

*Silvia's Psalms for Lentern Journey study series  
from [www.conversations.net.nz](http://www.conversations.net.nz)*

**Psalm 131: Calm and Quiet**

**LENT 1**

Shush, my heart –  
rest in the Lord.  
Close, my eyes –  
rest in the Lord.  
Thoughts – stop rushing.  
Body – relax!  
Oh my soul – be calm and quiet.  
Breathe in and out  
and be still.

Big ideas and important jobs  
can wait.  
Yesterday's hurts and tomorrow's worries  
can drift off,  
for here and now  
I am held  
in the arms of God  
like a little child  
half asleep in her mother's arms.

Trust in the Lord  
in this moment  
and for ever more.  
Amen.

## **Psalm 126: A Harvest of Joy**

**LENT 2**

Remember feeling amazing!  
Remember a time of celebration –  
that was the Lord God at work!  
Laughter rang out,  
everyone was happy,  
everyone laughed till they shook with joy!  
**The Lord has done great things for us  
and we reply with shouts of joy!**

Remember feeling sad?  
Remember tears running down your face –  
God was with you then.  
Your pain planted seeds  
and your tears watered them.  
The seeds grew in the tender mercy of God  
growing fruit of wisdom  
fruit of kindness.  
Gather the fruit, and celebrate  
that all things work for good in God's ways.  
Those who go out weeping  
shall come home rejoicing.  
**The Lord has done great things for us  
and we reply with shouts of joy!**

## **Psalm 2: Wrath on a hill**

## **LENT 3**

Jesus stood at the very top of a high mountain  
with only the Devil for company  
The Devil said  
"Look down, look around, see all the kingdoms of the world!  
All these nations could be yours to rule!  
There's just one catch  
(there is always a catch with the Devil!)  
you just have to worship me."  
Jesus looked at the Devil  
(silly old Devil, he's met his match this time!)  
"Shove off, tempter" he said,  
"I have no need for you. I worship the Lord my God.  
I serve the God of heaven and earth and only him." *Matt 4:8-10*

You see, Jesus had the words of Psalm 2 running through his veins.  
"You are my son; today I have conceived you." *Psalm 2:7*  
Jesus stood on the mountain laughing at the powers of evil and the powers of men.  
His Father, too, offered him the nations to rule  
"I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. 2:6  
Just ask and to the ends of the earth all shall be yours to control, to break with a rod of iron, or to dash to pieces like a useless pot." 2:8-9

Jesus stood on top of the mountain looking evil in the eye and looking his God in the face  
He looked deep into the ways of humanity  
our plotting to bust free of God  
nothing was hidden from him  
all rage and judgment, all power and conflict  
and Jesus chose his own way

He came down the mountain  
inviting people into God's kingdom

Blessed are those who take refuge in God  
Blessed are the poor, the humble, the persecuted  
Blessed are you who choose Jesus' way.

## **Psalm 121: The Bodyguard**

**LENT 4**

*I lift my eyes to the hills*

Really?!

What am I hoping for?

Gandalf charging an army down the hill  
with the rising sun at his heels  
to slay all my troubles!?

*The one who watches over you*

*will not let you stumble*

Yeah right!

So why is my toe stubbed  
and my heart bruised?

*The sun will not strike you by day*

but wear your sunblock  
and watch out for melanoma.

*The Lord keeps you from all harm*

Is this my fantasy?

A Bodyguard God

a Helicopter Parent God

a Bubble-Wrap God?

Doesn't sound like my God

Doesn't sound like my life

or Peter's, or Paul's –

*"always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies."*

*(2 Corinthians 4:10)*

So bring it on, Lord –

let me stumble, let me weep

let the sun strike me by day

and the moon by night.

I feel your eyes on me.

I know Christ's death

enclosing all pain

transforming all harm.

I know Christ's life

keeping watch over me

lighting my comings and goings

now and forever more.

## LENT 5

### **Psalm 51: Standing under the shower of Confession**

The most lovely of Psalms  
but how do we get to verse 1?  
What needs to happen in us before we can begin?  
because us silly people tend to be much more  
comfortable hiding  
under umbrellas of self justification.

O crap. things have gone bad.  
It's not my fault!  
If only he wasn't so arrogant  
she needs to sort her shit out  
you change, not me!

The last thing we want to do  
is recognize our rebellion.  
How do we train ourselves to bring  
honesty to our God  
to peel back the layers of pride?  
We quite like our own dirt  
do we want to be washed clean?

This Psalm, of all Psalms,  
takes the most guts to read  
but you can do it!  
Like a child shoved under the shower  
Take a deep breath and begin –

*Have mercy on me, O God ...*

## **Psalm 9 in the mirror: The weeds and the wheat**

Jesus told a good story (he was good like that!)  
about a guy growing wheat but weeds grew too  
all mixed up together  
and it was hard to tell weeds from wheat  
until they grew seeds  
and the wheat put up tall full stalks of grain  
and the weeds produced nothing.

Our lives are like that  
O we'd love to have it all together  
to give thanks to the Lord with our hearts full and whole.  
Instead we are at war with ourselves.  
We are our own worst enemy.  
Freedom only comes as we stand under judgment.

So show me, Judge Jesus -  
Show me the lies in my head  
snare them in their tangled logic.  
Show me the hate that lurks under politeness  
pluck me from the mires of death.  
Show me the pointless efforts  
that end up in ruins, blotted out as if I had never bothered.  
Show me the pits of self-obsession  
catching my feet in nets of stress.

Sit in judgment, Lord Jesus  
Stand on the side of the vulnerable people  
that I all too easily ignore.  
Call me again to trust you.  
Tell me your name again  
and tell me mine.

## **Psalm 149: The Double Edged Sword**

**LENT 6**

Ah, the Psalms. We love them, and then duck for cover as they swing around and whack us on the back of the head! Psalm 149 is mostly all sweetness and soaring music ...

**Praise to the Lord!**

**Sing to the Lord a new song**

**Sing his praise in the company of friends**

**Find joy here, celebrating the one who made us**

**Find joy here, praising God!**

**Praise with your body, move and dance**

**Praise with your voice, your drums and guitars**

**Find a place here,**

**for God is delighted with you**

**Be you broken or lost**

**be you fragile or sad**

**God delights in you**

**Glory grows as we praise God**

**and God lifts up our heads**

**Praise the Lord with joy!**

So far so good.

But suddenly a double-edged sword is placed in your hands  
and around you the crowd yells for victory  
crying for the head of the President  
waving bayonets in the air  
roaring for revenge  
roaring for blood!

Feel free to stop reading at verse 5.

Or can we absorb the violence  
transform the hunger to punish and control?  
Can we confront our own hidden fantasies



of retribution for those who have hurt us?  
What are the victories we celebrate  
the victories over darkness that give substance to our joy?  
so that praise is hard-won and worship is bone-deep

## **Psalm 22: The Crucifixion Psalm**

**GOOD FRIDAY**

*Jesus, Jesus, on the cross  
call us to come closer.  
We hear your cry  
that splits the sky  
we're passing by  
but cannot hide  
What's that you say?  
We're on our way  
you dare us to come closer.*

My God, my God –  
why have you abandoned me?  
Why are you so far away?  
Here I groan, I writhe in pain  
I cry my guts out hour after hour  
Why don't you answer?

*Jesus, Jesus, on the cross  
call us to come closer  
but will we dare?  
for everywhere  
soldiers, weapons, poised to tear  
flesh from flesh, bone from bone  
a pack of dogs, while you alone  
cry -  
'why?'*

I am poured out like water  
flushed away like sewerage  
tossed in the trash  
dislocated, discontinued,  
shriveled, split, wasted.

*Jesus, Jesus, on the cross  
your pain unhinges the universe  
all meaning hurled into the void  
all time twists and gasps with your shuddering breath  
as your dying eyes fill with light*

My God, my God, I praise you!  
I worship through the pain  
I will tell of your name to all people  
I proclaim your salvation to all generations  
Those who seek shall find  
To the ends of the earth hearts will turn to you  
I will live for you.  
It is fulfilled!

## **Psalm 18**

## **EASTER DAY**

Part C) **Jesus' Resurrection Song** verses 16-30

*(I am not a humble person, but I can't say this part in my own voice. All I have is a share in the righteous won for me by Christ. So this is his song.)*

I fell deep into the waters  
but my Father hoisted me up.  
I was destroyed by hate and fear  
but my Father broke through  
because he delighted in me  
as I delight in him.  
The Father was in me  
and I in him  
so every moment of my life  
was lived towards him  
(righteous, clean, blameless, free!).  
I knew him through and through these hands  
these eyes, these words, this touch;  
and so he has rewarded me,  
and my reward is YOU!  
Come, step into my open space  
step onto solid ground  
step into this dynamic love.  
Come, become loyal, blameless, humble, free!  
Come step into the light, into my safety,  
step into the promise that will prove true -  
for I am the Way!

*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,  
but we are now restored by his grace as a gift,  
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-25)*

## **Drawing Near to God with the Heart**

*by Knox College lecturer Lynne Baab*

I am amazed at the variety of emotions portrayed in the Psalms. The Psalms model the radical truth that every part of me – the loving, peaceful and devoted self, along with the discouraged, irritable, and vindictive self – can be brought to God in prayer. The Psalms nudged me into a new kind of prayer involving my whole self and all my emotions.

The sheer overwhelming praises in so many psalms helps us capture that joy and exuberance in God's presence with us. "O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation" (Ps 95:1)

Emotions that we consider negative are portrayed just as vividly. Discouragement and depression were very real to the psalm writers. "Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. ... I am weary with crying" (Ps 69:1-3). The psalmist feels distant from God: "My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God" (Ps 69:3).

Self-pity, anger, irritation, and desire for vengeance all appear in the Psalms. ...a profound honesty about the vicissitudes of human emotion can be very helpful in these challenging times. They help us face the darkness inside us so we can bring it honestly before God.

Longing and thirsting for God are woven throughout the Psalms, moving rapidly from longing to praise and confession and back to longing. The Psalms validate our spiritual experience in a way that no other literature can do, and they give us hope that our painful longings and uncomfortable yearnings may give way to praise at any moment.

The Psalms have allowed me to face my own inner turmoil more honestly and they have helped me bring more parts of myself to God in prayer. They have called me to praise and thanks in a powerfully transforming way. They have given me the kind of hope that resides deep in the heart and illuminates daily life.