



The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector: "Early Will I Seek Thee"

The theme of this article is the priority of the Christian's daily walk with God, and the principal text I shall use to shed light on this theme is *Psalm 63:1-8*. The first two verses of this Psalm contain the essence of the theme:

O God, Thou art

er and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary.

The Psalmist here is likely to have been King David, and the psalm to have been written during the time when he was in the wilderness in Judah (*I Samuel 21 - 26*). King Saul was trying to find

his worship. The Hebrew word for the phrase *seek God early* means "to look for the dawn". It implies a very earnest looking for the Lord. The Revised English Bible translates this as "I seek you eagerly." This seeking is the prayer of waiting on God, of listening to Him, adoring Him, praising Him, and thanking Him. It is



my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

To see Thy pow-

er and kill him. Though God did not allow that to happen, the urgency of needing to stay hidden from King Saul was a trial of David's faith in God and dependence on Him.

In these trying times, David states his determination to "seek God early" since God is his God, the only One deserving of

not to be postponed till later in the day or to another day. It has to be done now, early in the morning, before the other tasks of the day begin. Everything else depends on this prayerful and eager approach to God before the day begins.

The dry wilderness

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“Early Will I Seek Thee”

(Continued from page 1) surrounding David reflects the dryness of his body and soul, his spiritual thirst for God. The desert emphasizes both his need for water and his need to find God’s presence, the very God who will keep him safe from his enemies. His longing for God is like the extreme thirst of the desert traveler for water, and just as the desert dweller



or traveler must find water to live, so David must find the presence of God to experience life and strength. David longs to see God’s power and glory, as He has seen God in the sanctuary during his times of worship. It was not a

literal sight of God (since no human has ever seen God – *1 St. Timothy 6:16* and *1 St. John 4:12*), but a vision of His presence, His power, and His glory.

A “dry and thirsty land” expresses the soul’s feeling of its own isolation from God. Christians can often identify with this, since having to live in an evil, ungodly world impresses on them a feeling of separation from God and all that is good. Besides this, their own sinfulness produces the same result. Therefore,

like David, we often feel we are in the desert and in desperate need of God. In fact, God invites His people to drink freely of the waters of life (*Isaiah 12:3; 43:20; 55:1; St. John 4:14; 6:35; 7:37-38; Revelation 7:17; 21:6; 22:17*). We should see to it that we answer God’s call, and come early and frequently to drink from the water of life!

David desires to see God’s power and glory as he saw it in the sanctuary of worship. There are times in our lives when the presence of God is experienced more deeply than at others, and there are times of crisis and trial when God seems further away from us than we would like Him to be. During his intense bodily suffering, Job at times felt cut off from God (for example, *Job 23:1-9; 30:20*). Our Lord Himself, while suffering extremely on the cross, called out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (*St. Matthew 27:46*). Therefore, while we have the time, while it is today, and as early today as we can, we must wait on the Lord, seek His presence, call upon Him in praise and prayer, and listen to Him. If we do not make a daily habit of doing this, our lives will become spiritually very dry.

What must we do to be filled with God’s presence? Not only must we

make time to wait on God in prayer, but we must praise and thank Him. David proceeds with these words in verses 3 and 4:

Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee.

Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy Name.

The Hebrew word translated as *lovingkindness* denotes the faithfulness of God to His covenants as well as His loving kindness and mercy to men. This kindness and mercy God shows to thousands (*Exodus 34:7*). Though David’s life at the time of composing this psalm was stressful, he had the insight to realize that because God is merciful, loving, kind, and faithful to all who put their trust in Him, he should praise Him. While we live, since God is full of loving kindness to all His people, let us also praise Him. Praising and blessing God, of which lifting up one’s hands is a symbol as well as an accompaniment of praise, is the right response to all God’s kindness and mercy, and it shows itself in public worship as well as private. David did not

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Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early

“Early Will I Seek Thee”

(Continued from page 2)
turn the spotlight on his troubles to the exclusion of God, but the trials led him to realize that the loving kindness of God is greater and better than life itself and that to live is to experience His kindness. For this reason, while we live, we must praise God and bless Him.

We tend to allow our feelings and the circumstances of life, including our trials and sufferings, to cause us to grumble, complain, or become downhearted. David had reason to be downhearted—he was being hunted by King Saul. Yet in this psalm he triumphs over his feelings and circumstances, knowing that God both sustains and protects him. What happens when, instead of complaining and grumbling, we praise and thank God? We find that the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving leads to our being fed spiritually by the Lord Himself, as David affirms in the words of verses 5 and 6:

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips:

When I remember Thee upon my bed,

and meditate on Thee in the night watches.

Through our praises of God, our souls are fed “with marrow and fatness”, that is, with the nourishing life of God, and more praise springs from us, not only in the day, but at night, when we meditate on the Lord if we are unable to sleep. When many people lie awake at night worrying about their problems, Christians should be bringing their problems to God and praising God and praying to Him whenever they cannot sleep at night or for a part of the night. Some have thought we must have joy to praise God, and it is right to praise God when one is joyful, but one should even praise God when one feels no joy. This is the way to being filled with the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul writes in *Ephesians* 5:18-20:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Singing to the Lord, praising Him, thanking Him, all lead to being filled with the Holy Spirit

and being satisfied with the spiritual food and drink God gives us. The ancient Greek name for Holy Communion, *Eucharistia*, means “Thanksgiving.” We should not come to Holy Communion, or Holy Eucharist, without thanksgiving in our hearts for all that God has done for us.

David gives us another reason for rejoicing in God in the next two verses:

Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.

My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me.

The Lord’s help, His love, His protection, and His kindness are the reasons for David’s rejoicing in the shadow of God’s wings, a metaphor for rejoicing in the protection of God and in His love. As David “follows hard after” (pursues) God, God’s power and strength sustain, support, and protect him.

May we all long for God and pursue Him, loving Him with our whole being!

– The Reverend Christopher Parrish

in the morning our song shall rise to Thee!

Our Chapel Family Prayer List

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness:

Archbishop Beach;
Bishop Ilgenfritz;
Bishop Mott;
Vicar-General Penfield;
Father Parrish;
Deacon Vogel; and
Deacon Bracken;

as well as all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; especially those for whom our prayers are desired:

the soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, police officers, firefighters, and pilots who protect us every day; our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world;
all refugees;
Estelle Wilson;
Julia McNeely;
Claudia Schott;
Joya de Rossett;
Louise Xavier;
Sharon De Souza;
Scott and Brittany;
Don Cottam;
Joy Ware;
Tanya Theiler;
Christian McKagan and his parents;
the Rolfe Family;
Lois Martins;

Dale Quinn;
Lisa;
Ben;
Marion;
Max;
Samar and her family;
Bishop Don and Pat Miles;
Dorian;
Heidi;
Matthew Ward;
Lane and the Handwerker Family;
and for all those who are in our hearts, that it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Please note: This prayer list was current as of September 15th. Please contact Father Parrish to make corrections.



And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

Learning to Walk in the Ways of the Lord

As I mentioned in last month's article about how making a Christmas pudding reminds us of ways God works in our lives, these puddings are traditionally steamed in two stages. This series of articles has already examined how God uses tests and trials to grow our faith so that we become mature Christians¹ (please see "The Blessing of Trials" in the July 2016 *Hillside Messenger*) and how God offers us entry into His glorious rest² and then calls those who receive this blessing to actively and eagerly await Christ's return³ (please see "Resting and Waiting" in the August 2016 issue). Now, following the steps of the recipe, it is time for the Cook (God) to put the pudding (His people) back into the hot water.

Why, you may ask, would God repeatedly put His children into difficult situations? Part of the answer may be found in "The Blessing of Trials", but today I would like to look at how God leads us through the learning process.

God wants us to be perfect just as He is⁴. Thankfully, He is patient with us. He knows that, like infants learning to walk, we need help getting to our feet and a

guiding hand to support us as we toddle. God is generous with His aid in our spiritual journey. In addition to His greatest gift of His Son to be our Saviour, He also gives us His Word to renew our minds⁵ and transform us, His Holy Spirit to live within us and teach us⁶, and the Church to train us⁷. He picks us up when we fall⁸, and He forgives us when we confess our sins⁹.

The graciousness of



God is simply amazing. I am reminded of St. Thomas. When he declared to his fellow disciples that he would not believe Jesus had been resurrected unless he could touch Jesus' wounds, Jesus gave him exactly the proof he said he needed¹⁰. Can you imagine Thomas' embarrassment when he had to put his finger into the nail holes in Jesus' hands and his hand into the spear

wound in Jesus' side? Yet Jesus did not hold his declaration against him but only told Thomas that those who did not see and yet believed would be blessed. That is grace, and St. Thomas learned by this example. In fact, he was the first of the disciples to acknowledge Jesus as his Lord and his God.

St. Paul also learned from God. When he had a problem which tormented him, he prayed repeatedly to the Lord for deliverance. God replied that His power is made perfect in weakness and that His grace is sufficient. From this lesson St. Paul learned to lean on God ever more fully so that the power of Christ could rest on him.

Just as we do, St. Thomas and St. Paul found themselves in difficult situations. St. Thomas' situation was of his own making and St. Paul's was a messenger from Satan, but God met them in their difficulties nonetheless and thereby strengthened their faith. To His everlasting glory, God does the same for us. Let us also respond with praise and thanksgiving, leaning upon God in full trust and offering ourselves wholeheartedly to His service.

– Kim Vogel

Footnotes

1. *I St. Peter 1:3-9*
 2. *Hebrews 4:6-11*
 3. *I Corinthians 1:7*
 4. *St. Matthew 5:48*
 5. *Romans 12:2*
 6. *St. John 14:16, 26*
 7. *Acts 11:26; Acts 16:5; I Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 3:9-10*
 8. *Psalms 145:14*
 9. *I St. John 2:1-2*
 10. *St. John 20:24-29*
 11. *II Corinthians 12:7-10*
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Parish Postings

Our third-quarter Community Missions Project is drawing to a close! If you would like to donate money to buy hooded zip-front sweatshirts for needy schoolchildren in our area, please do so by Sunday, September 25th. Kindly make a note on your offertory envelope or check memo line so that our Treasurer can make a note of your donation. Thank you!



Stanford Spiritual Care Services is opening applications for volunteers for their fall classes. Visit, pray, and provide presence, peace, and inspiration to patients at Stanford Hospital. Stanford Health Care will be training new volunteers beginning Monday, October 10th, from 6:30-9:00 and continuing on November 7th and 14th at Our Lady of the Rosary Church on Cowper in Palo Alto. Please call

650-723-5101

or contact Raksha Patel at
PremillaPatel@
StanfordHealthCare.org.



Please prayerfully consider becoming a Lay Reader. This important minister assists the Priest at worship services. Any confirmed member of the parish is eligible to serve, and training will be provided. Please see Father Parrish for details.



Our bulletins proclaim, "Our service begins when we leave the Chapel." Each of us has some work to do for God's Church. If you have not identified yours, please speak to Julia McNeely or Kim Vogel (the ladies of Martha's List of Parish Ministries) to see if one of their opportunities for service meets your interests and training.



Contributions to this newsletter are always

welcome! If you have a photo, news item, or article (20 words or more!) to share, please give it to either Father Parrish or Kim Vogel. Thank you very much!



Anyone desiring the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Private Confession to a Priest, is asked to contact Father Parrish for an appointment.



Catechesis, a course of instruction in the Christian faith with a view to Confirmation, is available to any baptized parishioner who has not yet taken this step in their spiritual journey. Please speak to Father Parrish to arrange classes.



Upcoming Events

Sunday, September 4th

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity
Emergency Food Pantry Collection Day

Bible Study: Hebrews
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
10:00 AM

Sunday, September 11th

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Hebrews
9:15 AM

Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Holy Communion
noon

Saturday, September 17th

Joanna's Circle
9:30 AM

Sunday, September 18th

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Hebrews
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
10:00 AM

Vestry Meeting
immediately following the noon worship service

Sunday, September 25th

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Bible Study: Hebrews
9:15 AM

Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Holy Communion
noon

Sunday, October 2nd

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity
Emergency Food Pantry Collection Day

Bible Study: Hebrews
9:15 AM

Holy Communion
noon





The Hillside Messenger

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Worship Schedule

St.

Luke's Chapel in the Hills is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the 1928 edition *Book of Common Prayer*. We invite you to join us for worship soon!

*"A place
where the Bible is taught."*



*Biblical in teaching.
Liturgical in worship.
Loving in practice.*

First Sunday of each month

Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM

Second and fourth Sundays each month

Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Said Holy Communion
noon

Third and fifth Sunday each month and Feast Days

Holy Communion
10:00 AM