

Psalm 18 in the Prime Prayer (19 in the Holy Bible)

1- Objectives

- ❖ Bible study- God's daily presence

2- References

- ❖ "Interpretation of the Bible" Father Tadros Malaty: http://st-takla.org/pub_Bible-Interpretations/Holy-Bible-Tafsir-01-Old-Testament/Father-Tadros-Yacoub-Malaty/21-Sefer-El-Mazameer/Tafseer-Sefer-El-Mazameer__01-Chapter-019.html

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ "The fool has said in his heart: There is no God" (Psalm 14: 1)

4- Lesson Guidelines

- ❖ It is an appropriate psalm for the early morning hours for it talks about the fresh new creation and the rising of the sun. It is a thankful praise to God, the Great creator, who reveals the mystery of His word to His beloved people.
- ❖ It also contains prophetic symbols that refer to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The sun refers to Our Lord Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness; and His word has spread throughout the world by all the preachers and evangelists in all languages and tongues.
- ❖ It reveals a deep spiritual message to each one of us that gives us hope and declare that God wants to be involved in our lives and that He wants us to draw closer to Him each day so that we can enjoy His presence.
- ❖ The Psalm is divided into three parts: The Creation, the word of God and the weakness of mankind despite his love to God and his will to do good.

The Creation

- ❖ David felt so inspired by God's presence that he had to put it in words. He must have seen God's thumbprint on the sun and the moon and the stars and everything around him. St. Maximus the Confessor said, "Blessed is the mind which, passing by all creatures, constantly rejoices in God's beauty."
- ❖ We rush in our prayers and really miss the point of praying which is a time to commune and be in God's presence and not a duty and obligation to be fulfilled: a woman who spends an hour in the morning silently enjoying God's presence said: "Through every crisis, I have found quietness of soul in that hour with God. It gives me time to put things in perspective, to find God in every circumstance. Once I find Him, there seems to be no problem that cannot be resolved. Because of it my life is better. Starting my day with an hour prayer has filled the empty space within me to overflowing."
- ❖ St. Augustine says, "God made all things and whatever He made is less than He is. So do not let the creature please you so as to drag you away from the Creator. If you love what He made, love much more Him who made it. If what He made is beautiful, how much more beautiful is He who made it."

- ❖ This psalm serves as a reminder to us in our day that as we approach our career, finances, belongings, friends and family that we are not to love these things more than God. Yes He created them for our enjoyment and they are good but they are gifts that are supposed to turn us to God and not be hindrances in our relationship with God; the more detached we are from material things the more we will see and enjoy God in the simple things such as a sunrise or a sunset.
- ❖ It is a reminder that we must do all things in this day beautifully that is to the best of our abilities and with the enjoyment that we are doing this task for God. Let us not start our day with grumbling but with a grateful heart and let us give back to Him by doing everything to the best of our abilities.

The Word of God

- ❖ The Psalmist describes God's word in six different ways, seems like one for each day of the week, reminding us that each day God's word to us is different and ever new and that each day we have a new experience with God even though everything around us may seem to be the same.
- ❖ It is a reminder that every day we must meet with God in Holy Scripture and on the seventh day, the Sabbath we meet physically and commune with God in the Eucharist.

So what does the word of God do according to the Psalm?

- It changes our lives and our very being.
 - It gives us wisdom and guidance.
 - It delights the soul.
 - It grows our faith.
- ❖ These are actually in chronological order, for first we are drawn to God, and our lives are changed, then we gain understanding of who God is and how he works in our lives and then we find our delight in God and we start to see things with the eyes of faith and not with our physical eyes.
- ❖ Once the soul has tasted this sweetness it desires it more than anything else in the world. St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of being in God's presence and says, "Who can gaze at His face and remain without divine Eros for such beauty."

Our weakness

- ❖ The Psalmist having moved by love of God through His creation and Word desires to be in God's presence at all times but he becomes aware of his own shortcomings and his sin and that he will inevitably sin every day.
- ❖ It is a reminder to us to not only ask God daily to forgive us our sins but to reveal them to us. We are blind to our sins and the sins we do see it is only by God's grace that we know of them.
- ❖ Sin was not placed in our nature by God. It became part of our corrupted nature after the fall. So any sin that we commit throughout the day is unnatural to us and hence the need for God to remove it from us by His grace.

- ❖ The great transgression is pride and vainglory, which the fathers consider to be the worst sin of all because from it all other sins take root. As we begin our day we remind ourselves that the anger or impatience or lack of forgiveness that we may encounter throughout our day is due to our pride and therefore the first thing for us to do in our day is to ask God to heal us of our ego.
- ❖ Our daily desire should be that our thoughts and feelings and our words always be acceptable before God so that we may continually be in His presence and never separate from Him.

5- Discussion Point

- ❖ The meticulous order of the universe and the Big Bang Theory.
- ❖ There is no speech nor language: The church reveals the work of God by its inner life more than its words; when the Word of God dwells in us, He preach to others by our silence.

6- Conclusion

- ❖ We get busy trying to start our day in a rush and thinking about all the things that we have to do. Let us get in the habit that when we pray this psalm we need to stop and take a few moments to reflect the presence of God in our lives and in the nature that He made.

7- Activities / Workshop

- ❖ Form groups to discuss the different parts of the Psalm