



LENT

Bible Reading Initiative 2025

WEEK 2

BODMIN
LIGHT & LIFE CHURCH

DAY SIX: Mon 10th March 2025

Reading: Psalm 126

It's hard to read this psalm and not draw comparisons with the current situation in Israel with hostages being returned from Gaza. Do we have faith that the situation in 2025 will be joyful?

It begins by talking about when previously the fortunes of Zion (modern-day Israel) were restored by the return of captives and how happy the people were. It reminds us how joyful and grateful we are when good things happen and that our reactions and gratitude are seen by those around us. And this is also a powerful reminder to be careful when God answers prayer. The world sees how we react to positive situations, and we should ensure that we give the glory to God for our happy change in circumstances. In praising him, other people can see the faith that we have.

The second part of the psalm is a plea for the Lord to do it again and a reminder to have faith. As the empty dry riverbeds in the south of the country are restored by the rains when they come, we should still live and work through the tough times. It may seem fruitless to scatter seeds when the land is arid, but the Lord provides rain, and crops will thrive. This is a reminder to keep the faith and that the good times *will* come again.

You may be praying that someone has a change of heart, that a friend or family member becomes a Christian, or that your unhappy workplace changes. Carry on living your life and prepare for the good times as our God answers our prayers. Today, hear the call to be patient, as this psalm is a powerful reminder that God did it before and He will do it again.

Phil Dawber

DAY SEVEN: Tues 11th March 2025

Reading: Psalm 139

Here is another corker of a psalm full of good news and optimism, but still the opportunity to make us stop and think. It is a series of amazing observations about our God. Firstly, he knows us. Every action, thought, and word, He is aware of before we've even done it. This begs the question of why does He allow it when the result is sinful? Simply put, God does not control us, we have free thought and can act how we want. I imagine him thinking, "Oh know he's going to do it again, why doesn't he learn!?" The problem is when we do this and follow our own desires, we are not doing his will and can cause pain and suffering to ourselves and to others.

The second point is that we cannot hide from God. Not even in our sin, or as the King James Bible puts it, not even when we make our "bed in Hell" can we hide from him. He finds us in our darkest hour, even when we've turned our back. The famous footprints on the shore poem where God carries us through our darkest moments comes to mind.

The third point is that God planned and made us, and we should be glad as this gives us hope that we have a purpose.

The psalmist then moves on to remind us that this is still the Old Testament. Jesus and his teachings on forgiveness and turning the other cheek haven't yet happened. God's enemies, and by that they mean the blasphemers, idol worshippers and false prophets, are described as *our* enemies too. The psalmist pleads for these enemies of God to be destroyed. As Christians, we believe in forgiveness of sins and pray that the non-believers turn towards Christ rather than being destroyed by a vengeful God. It's important to remember to put this psalm in context today, and to seek his grace.

The finale of the psalm is another plea to our Lord, for him to judge us. They want their faults highlighted and cry out for help to be guided on to the road to eternal life. If we are honest, do we want our faults and sin to be highlighted by God? We would probably rather a touch of the Holy Spirit to make us gently aware of our failings and to be given the strength to act as true people of God. Allow Him to do that today.

Phil Dawber

DAY EIGHT: Wed 12th March 2025

Reading: Proverbs 3:5-6

When I boil today's reading down to its bare meaning, I have to admit that, if I'm honest, I rely heavily on my own understanding. I use my own understanding to make judgements at work and to make sense of the world around me. Sometimes those judgements can be quite frightening and, left to myself, I admit that I could make some rather hasty and rash decisions.

If only I could remember to do what it says at the start of verse 5, and "Trust in the LORD with all your heart". I'm sure that if I followed this maxim every time I come to make a judgement-call, then I would come to quicker and better decisions. Yes! I admit it, I can easily procrastinate (put off making a decision) because I'm nervous about making the wrong decision. Learning to trust in God is something that you just have to get on with and put in to practice. Verse 6 says "In all your ways submit to Him, and he will make your paths straight". I tend to take the long and winding path. Trusting in God would be so much simpler!

Where do you need to put this wisdom into practice today?

Nigel Horwell

DAY NINE: Thurs 13th March 2025

Reading: Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

For anyone who has started reading the entire book of Ecclesiastes, then you'll know that, at first, this can seem like a pretty depressing book. Chapter 3 verse 20 says "All go to the same place, all come from dust, and to dust all return". Pretty depressing, right?

However, at the start of today's reading, the writer (probably King Solomon) says "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens". Gardeners know this only too well. Now, I have to admit that I'm not much of a gardener. I find it really difficult to recognise the difference between a weed and a flower when they first start to push their leaves through the Spring warmed soil (see verse 2). I'm more your hard landscaper, so "a time to tear down and a time to build" (verse 3) is much more up my street!

The point here is that, in these words, there is something for everyone. It doesn't matter what your skills are or what time of life you find yourself in. It doesn't matter whether you are at war or peace.

It doesn't matter whether you are laughing or weeping. God is saying, through the writer, that He is there with you no matter what you are going through. May you feel the warmth of God's love on your face today!

Nigel Horwell

DAY TEN: Fri 14th March 2025

Reading: Isaiah 40:11

I have a Christian friend who lives in a Devon farmhouse with half an acre of land. For the past few years, the men in her household have reluctantly hacked back the vegetation now and then to keep the Landlord happy. A couple of weeks ago she sent me a photo of sheep in her garden. It's her latest innovation at keeping the grass from taking over. Doing a deal with the local Shepherd was working out well for all involved, and my friend loves watching and listening to them. These paintings are inspired by our conversations about her new gardeners and Isaiah 40:11. I hope you find them helpful as you take a moment to meditate upon them and ask Holy Spirit what he wants to say to you today.



Our Father God feeds us and provides for us, guiding and leading us every day when we choose to follow him. 'My sheep hear my voice,' comes to mind, 'and I know them, and they follow me' (Jesus in John 10:27). He knows our needs and requests before we even ask him. He is interested in all the silly details of our lives and frequently solves our problems in humorous ways that we could not have imagined or perfected in our own strength.

I wouldn't mind a sheep or two in my own garden...

Amanda Young

DAY ELEVEN: Sat 15th March 2025

Reading: Isaiah 40:28-31

Ageing can be a difficult process. Struggling with aches and pains we never used to have. and sometimes living with chronic long-term illness can become wearisome and depressing. Accepting that we have lost the physical vigour of youth and yet we still think like a 20- or 30-year-old, can be a strange place to be, having to navigate uneven emotional (and physical) ground that we are unsure of. But God's word clearly says, 'those who trust in the Lord will find new strength'.

Does that mean physical strength? Emotional? Mental?

'They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.' Well, I have not been walking very far, let alone *running*, for some time now. I have wrestled with the Lord and agonised in prayer over this very thing for a long time and recently He has been showing me different parts of the puzzle that we need to work on together in order to move forward with hope for the future. I have found that when we take one shaky step towards Jesus, He runs quickly to help, hold and support us.

So I have recently been putting in place some things the Holy Spirit has asked me to do re: 'He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless'. Last week I was faced with a scenario that would previously have overwhelmed me: a multi storey carpark (anxiety), on the 4th floor with only one lift working, crowded with people (panic). My choices? Go back to car, wait for lift, take the stairs or fall in a weeping breathless heap on the floor.

I took the stairs, stick in hand, people were patient and polite and allowed me to pass at my own pace. I got to my destination, had a lovely time, and then returned to the car park. But people were queuing for the lift, so I decided to take the stairs up 4 flights (gulp!). Now for some reason, and I don't know how, I climbed those stairs steadily without pausing and got to the car with shaky legs and a massive sense of achievement!

Maybe it was the pain killers I had combined with half a pint of ale, or the adrenalin released as I chose to climb? Maybe all three. All I know is that Jesus got me up those stairs and it's given me confidence to trust and persevere with all He is asking me to do. Remember today that 'Those who trust in the Lord WILL find new strength' because 'HE never grows weak or weary and no one can measure the depths of his understanding'.

Amanda Young

DAY TWELVE: Sun 16th March 2025

Reading: Isaiah 60:19

A few years ago, I had the privilege of being able to go skiing. I was enjoying a rest as the cable car took me back up the mountain, and just as we got out at the top, the clouds parted and the whole mountain and surrounding snow-covered alpine range was bathed in the most powerful sunlight. Sun on snowy peaks. The beauty took my breath away and brought a tear to my eye. Our creator God's awesomeness touched me deeply. Praise was the only response.

In today's verse, Isaiah, looking to the future and the magnificence of God's coming rule, says that God's presence and glory will make even the sun and the moon look pale in comparison. Wow!

Similar imagery is picked up in the description of the new heaven and new earth in Revelation chapter 21. Verses 22-23 read, *"I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."*

Take time now in worship and adoration of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - infinitely greater than even the beauty of sun-illuminated snowy peaks.

Mike Wisheart