

Christ in the Psalms



Lent 2020

Small Group Questions

INTRODUCTION

Starting on February 26, 2020, we enter into Lent, a season of fasting that leads us to and prepares us for Easter. At Bethany Community Church, we are focusing on discovering Christ in the Psalms in this season of Lent. These questions will provide a way for your small group to explore each week's Psalm through your own life experiences.

For additional resources, visit churchbcc.org/lent, where we have practical ways for you to lean into Lent through fasting, prayer and generosity—both individually and/or within your group.

FOR LEADERS

On certain weeks, we indicate that the questions were written to accompany The Message translation of the Bible. For all other weeks, feel free to use whatever translation is most commonly used in your small group.

These questions do ask for members to be more vulnerable with each other. One way to create safe spaces for people is to ensure that what is shared in the group will remain private, unless the sharer gives permission otherwise.

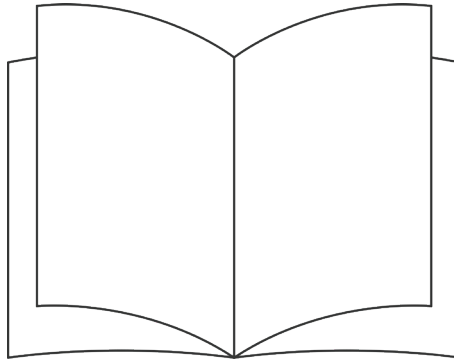
Each week opens with a meditative reading of the Psalm. It's helpful to slow down and take a couple deep breaths before starting to read the passage. The leader will read the passage the first time and then allow 1-2 minutes of silence for reflection before asking a different group member to read the same passage. Again, wait 1-2 minutes before asking a third person to read the passage a third time.

Note: Sometimes our temptation is to hurry through exercises like this, but the more you can slow down, the more your group will be able to absorb the Psalm. As a poetic book, we listen and process through Psalms differently than we would a book like Matthew. Like poetry, it's helpful to listen to a Psalm being read aloud slowly a few times before entering into discussion.

After your discussion, make space and time to pray for each other, either together or by breaking into smaller groups of 2-3. This is another way to create a safe space for your group members to share vulnerably and to receive care from the body of Christ.

Content was created by Bev Emerson, Vanessa Fenlason, Dee Lewis, and Jen Manglos.

For questions, please contact jenm@churchbcc.org.



Ash Wednesday, February 26 • Psalm 130

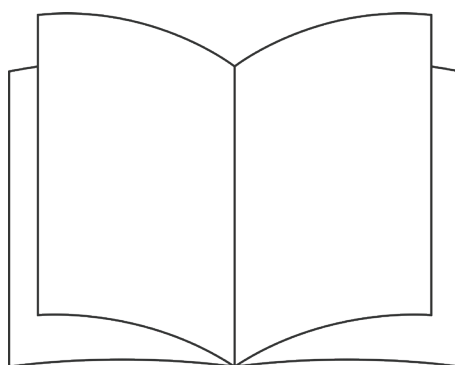
Start by reading Psalm 130 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps up to your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this same word unfolds. Again, don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you from this Psalm? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- For what are you waiting, right now in your life? What is it like for you to name this desire?
- What is your experience of God as you wait? Does He seem near? Does He seem distant?
- How might God be waiting for you right now?
- How do you need God's help in your waiting? How can the group support you as you wait?



March 1 • Psalm 73

Note: Questions for this week are based on The Message translation of the Bible.

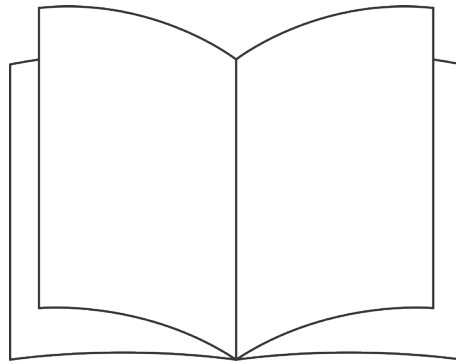
Start by reading Psalm 73:21-28 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps up to your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this word unfolds. Again don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- There are many things that can distract us from God's presence, such as stress, loneliness, envy, or anger. What might cause you to miss seeing God's goodness?
- What is it like for you when God takes your hand and guides you? Maybe it's comforting, or encouraging? Or perhaps you find it scary?
- What is your experience of God being your refuge?
- Where do you struggle to trust God and his goodness? How do you need him to help you in this struggle? How can the group support you in this?



March 8 • Psalm 77

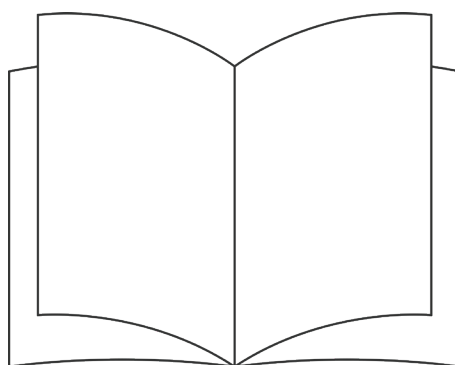
Start by reading Psalm 77:7-20 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps up to your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this word unfolds. Again don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- Where are the places in your life where God seems to have walked away and forgotten you?
- How might His footprints be present but unseen?
- What might help you move from despair to (vs. 9) to hope (vs. 10)? How can the group support you in this?



March 15 • Psalm 116

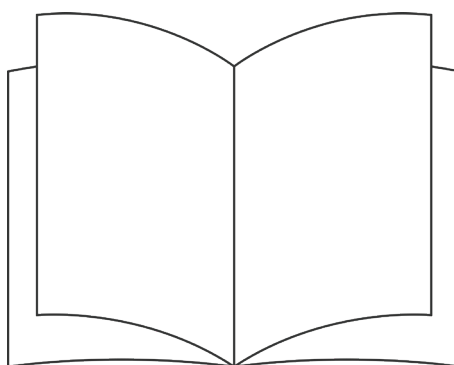
Start by reading Psalm 116:1-7 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps out in your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this word unfolds. Again don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- Can you think of a time in your life, when you cried out to the Lord and he has answered you?
- How has this experience shaped your relationship with God?
- Are there areas in your life, right now, where you are searching for God's presence, protection, or compassion?
- How are you experiencing God as you are crying out to him and searching for him? Does He feel present? Does He feel distant? How can the group support you in this?



March 22 • Psalm 110

Note: Questions for this week are based on The Message translation of the Bible.

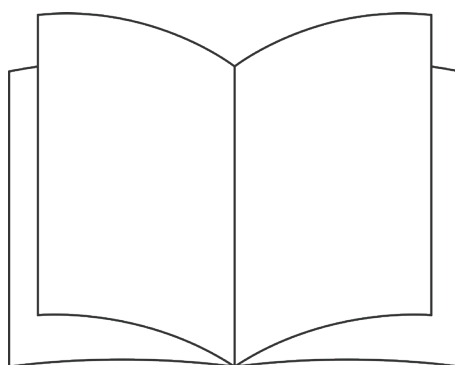
Start by reading Psalm 110 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps out in your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this word unfolds. Again don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- What battles are you facing today? Perhaps you experience this through illness, relationships, work, or habits.
- What is it like to know that God stands by your side? To know that He gave His word and won't take it back?
- How do you experience God in your battles? Is He close? Or perhaps He feels distant?
- What do you need from God as you face your battles? How can the group support you in this?



March 29 • Psalm 2

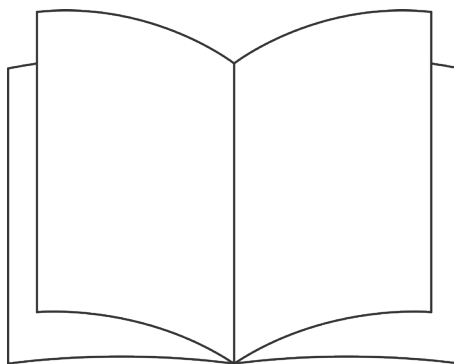
Start by reading Psalm 2 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps out in your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this word unfolds. Again don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- God is laughing at his enemies. He has conquered satan and the world, but we are still in the world awaiting his return and glory. How is the Lord calling you to serve him in this time of waiting for his return?
- What is your response to this calling?
- God is inviting us to take refuge in him. What does this look like for you as you serve him?
- How is God revealing himself to you as you wait for him and serve him? How can the group support you in this?



Palm Sunday, April 5 • Psalm 118

Start by reading Psalm 118:25-29 aloud. Allow yourself to notice what stirs inside when you hear a certain phrase or word. Don't analyze the text. Just pay attention to one word that jumps out in your mind.

Ask another group member to re-read the passage and pay attention to how this word unfolds. Again don't analyze the text, but let God unfold the word for you.

Have another member re-read the passage a third time. What is God's invitation for you, through this word, in your present life? Rest with gratitude in this invitation from him.

Allow a few minutes of silence so that each person can quietly pray and consider what God is inviting them into through this Psalm.

- What word or phrase stood out to you? What is your sense of how it relates to your life?
- What are some ways that you regularly honor those who have come in the name of the Lord?
- How do you recognize those who are from the Lord?
- Can you describe a time when you've been surprised by the Lord's presence in a place or person you did not expect?
- What is God's invitation in this verse? How can your group support you in following this invitation?

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