A book of instruction for life in God’s world.

“For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” Psalm 1:6
## Sermon Series Outline

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## Bible Study Approach

### Preparation before the bible study meeting:
1. Pray for Spiritual insight. Pray God will give you understanding of his word and prepare you to be taught.
2. Read the main passage. (Try reading different translations – NIV, NESB, etc)
4. Prepare your answers and thoughts to the questions in the study guide, which you will go through in the meeting
5. During the meeting, you may not have time to go through ALL of the questions – your leader will select questions each week that will be most helpful for your group. So it is important you prepare all of the study yourself to get the most out of it.

### Meditating on the passage – getting the most out of it:
1. Ask the questions: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW
2. What things are being emphasized?
3. What things are being repeated?
4. Are there things that are connected – within the passage or with other passages in the Bible?
5. Interpretation: What does it mean?
   a. Context – style (poetry, history, etc), culture, geography, etc
   b. Meaning – of important words and phrases
6. Think about applying each passage to your own life:
   a. Personal, Family, Church, Work, Social
7. Is there an example to follow? a sin to avoid?, a promise to hold on to? a prayer to pray? commands to obey? verses to memorise? doctrinal understanding that needs correcting? challenges to face?
8. Finally, ask yourself – “Who can I share this with?”
Study One: “Psalm 1” – A Didactic Psalm

Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man
   who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
   or stand in the way of sinners
   or sit in the seat of mockers.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
   and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
   which yields its fruit in season
   and whose leaf does not wither.
   Whatever he does prospers.

4 Not so the wicked!
   They are like chaff
   that the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
   nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
   but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 1 is a wisdom Psalm. It talks about the way life can be under God – how following the righteous way of God is to affect our everyday life. This Psalm is often seen as part of Psalm 2 and an introduction to the whole book of Psalms. Psalm 1 is a “Royal Messianic Psalm” – a Psalm about the Kingship of God in our world.

But this Psalm also prepares us today for life under the Kingship of Jesus. Consider the wisdom of this Psalm. So simple in just 6 verses, but so deep in application – a daily challenge to us as we live under King Jesus.

Before you begin, if you have time, consider the structure of the Psalm as a poem.

For example:
Verse 1: the way of the... wicked
Verse 2: the way of the... righteous
Verse 3: the way of the... righteous
Verses 4-5: the way of the... wicked
Verse 6: Conclusion
Investigating the text

1. Have a look at these examples of wisdom in the Bible.
   a. Proverbs 1:7

2. Discuss the different “stanzas”. Comment on
   a. The solid foundation of the righteous
      Read Psalm 1:1-3

   b. The temporary nature of the wicked
      Read Psalm 1:4-5

   c. The contrast between the righteous and the wicked
      Read Psalm 1:6

3. According to this Psalm, how can a person be blessed?
   a. Consider the negative in verse 1 – what to avoid to be blessed

   b. Consider the positive in verse 2 – what to engage in to be blessed
4. Consider the images that are used to describe the righteous and the wicked. What ideas does that give you of what life can be like (as righteous or as wicked). What other images could you come up with that are similar?

5. Compare this Psalm with Matthew 7:13-14 and the image Jesus uses.

6. What is the purpose of life? Do you think this Psalm might give us an answer to this question?

Investigating our lives
Consider reading this Psalm every morning for a week and think about how it might impact your daily living:

9. How will this affect the way I interact with others?

10. How will this affect the way I see evil in the world?

11. How will this affect the way I meditate on God’s Word?

12. What do you delight in? What do you avoid?
Study Two: “Psalm 2” – A Messianic Psalm

Psalm 2

1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.

3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

5 Then he rebukes them in his anger andterrifies them in his wrath, saying,

6 "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

9 You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.
Psalm 2 is a “Royal Messianic Psalm” or “Coronation Psalm” – it’s about the king (the anointed one). But it’s not only about Israel’s King at the time the Psalm was written – it’s about Jesus as King in the future. God’s way of dealing with rebellion is to ultimately place his King (Jesus) in Zion (the city of God – also referred to as Jerusalem and, eventually, heaven).

The New Testament refers to this Psalm 17 times – including Jesus’ Baptism and transfiguration, his resurrection, and the judgement day. Many believe Psalm 2 is the second part of Psalm 1.

Investigating the text
1. Have a look at the idea of “son of God” in the Old Testament – compare these passages to Psalm 2:7.

Exodus 4:22  
Hosea 11:1  
2 Samuel 7:14

2. What does this Psalm tell us about the kingship of God and the kingship of the rulers of the world?

The kingship of God: (verses 4-6):  
The kingship of the world: (verses 1-3)

3. Psalm 2 prepares us for “the Son” as king. David was anointed as King in one day (2 Samuel 5:3). Jesus was anointed, in many ways, over many events in his ministry. Have a look at the use of “my son” in the New Testament used for Jesus. How can these been seen as announcements of Jesus being “anointed”, or announced, King?

Matthew 3:17  
Matthew 17:5  
Acts 13:33  
Romans 1:4

4. What is God’s solution for the rule of the world? (verses 7-9)

5. What is God’s warning for the rulers of the world? (verses 10-12)
6. Compare the first phrase of Psalm 1:1 and the last phrase of Psalm 2:12. How well do you think these two Psalms fit together as one piece of writing?

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7. Consider how you pray for the rulers and leaders of our world – kings, queens, politicians, police, military, teachers, ministers, parents... Does this Psalm encourage you in your prayer for them? If so, how?

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8. What does this Psalm teach us about God’s sovereignty?

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**Investigating our lives**

Consider reading this Psalm every morning for a week and think about how it might impact your daily living.

9. How do I think about Jesus as King of all the earth?

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10. How will this affect the way I see evil in the world?

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11. Remembering back to last week, have you been meditating on God’s Word this week?

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12. How do you think the people of our world see God? As a ruler? As a benevolent creator? As a powerless old man?!

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Study Three: “Psalm 8” – A Thanksgiving Psalm

Psalm 8

1 O LORD, our Lord,
   how majestic is your name in all the earth!
   You have set your glory
   above the heavens.

2 From the lips of children and infants
   you have ordained praise
   because of your enemies,
   to silence the foe and the avenger.

3 When I consider your heavens,
   the work of your fingers,
   the moon and the stars,
   which you have set in place,

4 what is man that you are mindful of him,
   the son of man that you care for him?

5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
   and crowned him with glory and honour.

6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
   you put everything under his feet:

7 all flocks and herds,
   and the beasts of the field,

8 the birds of the air,
   and the fish of the sea,
   all that swim the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD, our Lord,
   how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 8 is a psalm of thanksgiving and a Psalm of David. It speaks of the creation and causes us to reflect upon the role of God within his creation – how he has made all things and how he relates to all of creation... and why. The Lord’s name is majestic and praised because not only has he made all things, but he actually wants to know us personally.
Investigating the text

1. Read Psalm 8:2 (the whole verse) and then Matthew 21:14-16.

How does Jesus use Psalm 8:2 in responding to the chief priests and teachers of the law?

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2. Read Psalm 8:6-8 and then the following references – how do these New Testament references bring new understanding (or fulfillment) to this Old Testament Psalm?
   a. 1 Corinthians 15:26-28

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b. Ephesians 1:22-23

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

c. Hebrews 2:6-9

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3. Read verses 4-8. What do these verses say about our importance as humans in God’s creation?

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4. We see from the references in the New Testament that Jesus became man and God subjected all things to him and his rule. We do not yet see everything subjected to his rule, but one day we will. (Hebrews 2:8)
   However, we as humans are also made to rule over God’s creation (this is a good time to read Genesis 1:28).
   Think about this statement in the context of Psalm 8:5-8 – “Jesus is the perfect man. He shows us how to be truly human.”
   Think about the final days when Jesus returns and he rules over all forever: In what way will Jesus rule over creation in a way that we never could as sinful people?

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5. Have the Psalm read out loud again. What theme do you notice most of all?

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Investigating our lives
Consider reading this Psalm every morning for a week and think about how it might impact your daily living.

6. How do you praise God with thanksgiving in your life?

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7. How do you consider yourself before God and all his greatness?

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8. How do you think God considers you?

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9. What do you think might have prompted David to write a Psalm like this?

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Study Four: “Psalm 19” – A Creation Psalm

Psalm 19

1 The heavens declare the glory of God;  
   the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

2 Day after day they pour forth speech;  
   night after night they display knowledge.

3 There is no speech or language  
   where their voice is not heard.

4 Their voice goes out into all the earth,  
   their words to the ends of the world.  
   In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

5 which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,  
   like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

6 It rises at one end of the heavens  
   and makes its circuit to the other;  
   nothing is hidden from its heat.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect,  
   reviving the soul.  
   The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,  
   making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the LORD are right,  
   giving joy to the heart.  
   The commands of the LORD are radiant,  
   giving light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is pure,  
   enduring forever.  
   The ordinances of the LORD are sure  
   and altogether righteous.

10 They are more precious than gold,  
    than much pure gold;  
    they are sweeter than honey,  
    than honey from the comb.

11 By them is your servant warned;  
    in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern his errors?  
   Forgive my hidden faults.
13 Keep your servant also from wilful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19 is a psalm about creation. A Psalm of David. There are two parts of God’s revelation – he reveals himself in nature and in his law (instruction/Word/Bible/Scriptures). This Psalm shares with us the revealed order that God has created.

When God reveals himself to us as our Saviour Jesus, and through his Holy Spirit, we are then able to truly see and understand his glory in all that is around us in creation.

However, the whole reason for His creation is the gospel of Jesus – the gospel that brings us into a personal relationship with the Creator.

Investigating the text
1. Read Psalm 19 and then read Romans 1:18-25.
   a. What is the danger of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator?

   b. How does Psalm 19 focus us on the Creator rather than Creation as the central focus of our worship?

2. Read Colossians 1:15-17. What is the connection between Jesus and creation?

3. C. S. Lewis said of this Psalm: “I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter (book of Psalms) and one of the greatest lyrics in the world.” (Reflections on the Psalms, p.56). Do you agree?!
4. There are two parts to this Psalm:
   a. Verses 1-6 speak about ____________________________?
   b. Verses 7-11 speak about ____________________________?

5. We need God’s instruction (a better translation of the word “Law” in this Psalm). What is the purpose of God’s instruction? (Law).

6. The Psalmist sees the creation, and hears God’s instruction (Law). Then in verses 12-14 he is moved to respond. What is his response?

Investigating our lives
Consider reading this Psalm every morning for a week and think about how it might impact your daily living.

7. Do you think there are ways that you might worship creation sometimes, rather than the Creator?

8. What is your response to God when you see his creation and hear his instruction from the Bible? Is it similar to verses 12-14?

9. Do you take the time to meditate on God’s creation as well as his Word?
Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
   Why are you so far from saving me,
   so far from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
   by night, and am not silent.

3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
   you are the praise of Israel.

4 In you our fathers put their trust;
   they trusted and you delivered them.

5 They cried to you and were saved;
   in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,
   scorned by men and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;
   they hurl insults, shaking their heads:

8 "He trusts in the LORD;
   let the LORD rescue him.
   Let him deliver him,
   since he delights in him."

9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;
   you made me trust in you
   even at my mother's breast.

10 From birth I was cast upon you;
   from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me,
   for trouble is near
   and there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls surround me;
   strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

13 Roaring lions tearing their prey
   open their mouths wide against me.

14 I am poured out like water,
   and all my bones are out of joint.
   My heart has turned to wax;
   it has melted away within me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
   and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
   you lay me in the dust of death.

16 Dogs have surrounded me;
   a band of evil men has encircled me,
   they have pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I can count all my bones;
   people stare and gloat over me.

18 They divide my garments among them
   and cast lots for my clothing.

19 But you, O LORD, be not far off;
   O my Strength, come quickly to help me.

20 Deliver my life from the sword,
   my precious life from the power of the dogs.

21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
   save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

22 I will declare your name to my brothers;
   in the congregation I will praise you.

23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
   All you descendants of Jacob, honour him!
   Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

24 For he has not despised or disdain
   the suffering of the afflicted one;
   he has not hidden his face from him
   but has listened to his cry for help.

25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the
   great assembly;
   before those who fear you I fulfil my vows.

26 The poor will eat and be satisfied;
   they who seek the LORD will praise him—
   may your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth
   will remember and turn to the LORD,
   and all the families of the nations
   will bow down before him,
Psalm 22 is a lamentation psalm. It is well known because of verse 1, being the words used by Jesus on the cross. However, this Psalm then moves to become thanksgiving and ends with great praise. It speaks of being delivered from oppression and then turning in praise to God, who will deliver us. It is a Psalm that takes us through a helpful process in facing our times of despair.

When Jesus quotes this Psalm, he intends for us to remember the whole Psalm, not just verse 1 – so we remember how the Psalmist wrote – that despair gives way to hope, thanksgiving, and praise to God – who never fails to deliver us from our enemies!

Investigating the text

1. **PART 1: Read verses 1-18.** What picture do we get of the attacks of the wicked on the righteous (God’s people)?
   And how does the Psalmist recognise the faithfulness of God in delivering his people in the past?
   Which verses remind you of the suffering Jesus endured at the cross?

2. **PART 2: Read verses 19-21.** What does the Psalmist ask of God?
   In your own times of despair, do you ask similar things of God?

3. **PART 3: Read verses 25-31.** Do you think the Psalmist has been rescued by God? Or does he just anticipate that he will be rescued?
4. Look back at the three parts of the Psalm again – can you find one verse in each section which summarises the feelings of the Psalmist?

Part 1: ____________________________________________________________

Part 2: ____________________________________________________________

Part 3: ____________________________________________________________

5. Have a look at the Psalm that comes next. Do you think this Psalm follows on well from Psalm 22?

__________________________________________________________________________

6. Do you notice what place the community of the believer has in this Psalm?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Investigating our lives
Consider reading this Psalm every morning for a week and think about how it might impact your daily living.

7. This Psalm encourages us to express our despair to God (Part 1). But also to reflect on God’s character and his history of rescuing his people (Part 2). Then it moves us to praise God, perhaps even before we have been rescued from despair (Part 3).

Think of the last time you faced despair or hopelessness. How might this Psalm be able to help you face that sort of despair?

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8. **An important note:** Many people in our community suffer from differing mental illnesses which can leave a person feeling such things as despair, hopelessness, and loneliness. It is often *unhelpful* to suggest to a person suffering from such an illness that reading a Psalm like this should lift them out of that sort of clinical depression (like some sort of magic spell!) In order to help people, listening is often one of the best things we can offer. If anyone in your group has experience of this, perhaps they can share their wisdom.

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9. How important is community in facing times of despair in our life?

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