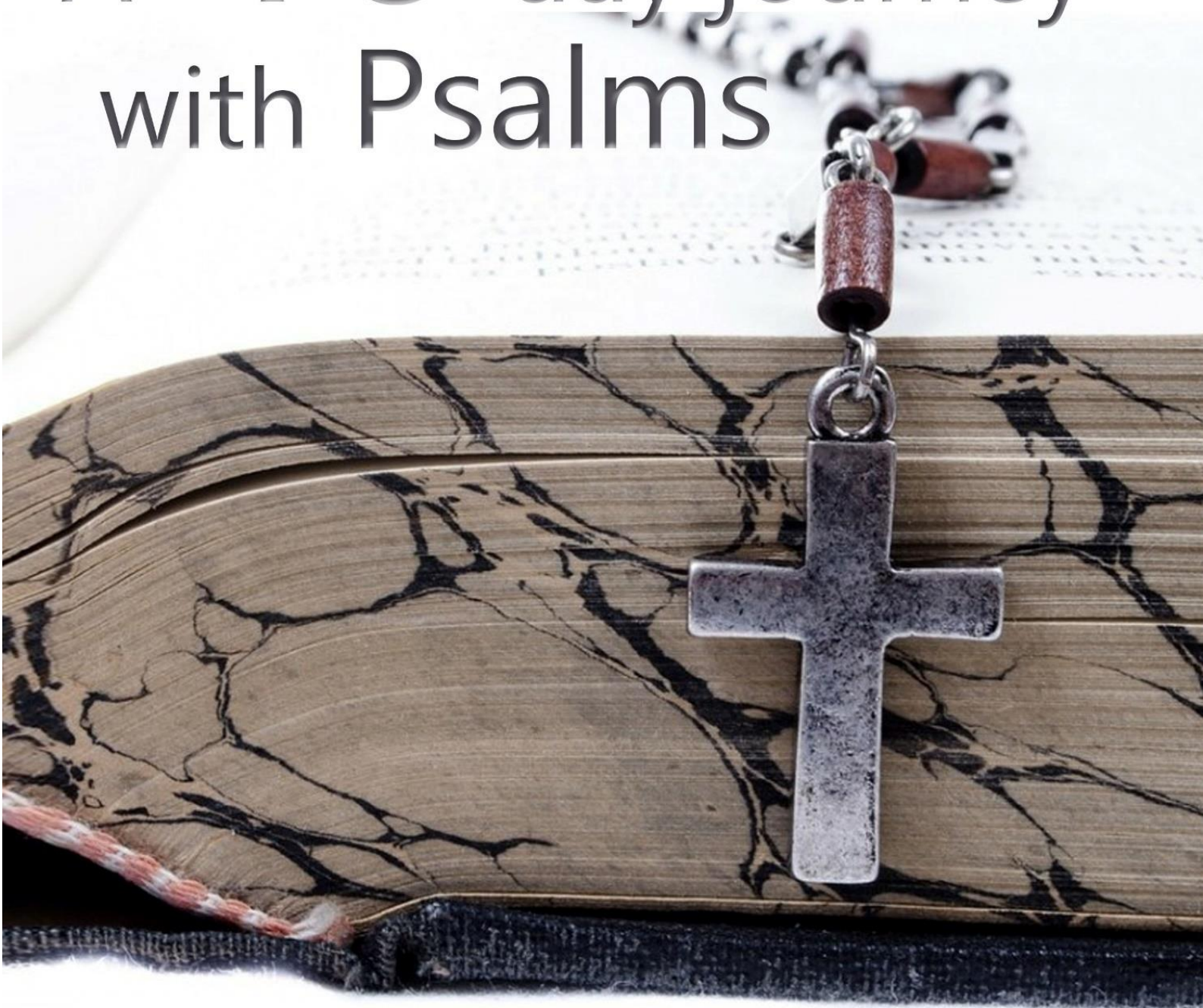


Finding Hope

A 40 day journey
with Psalms

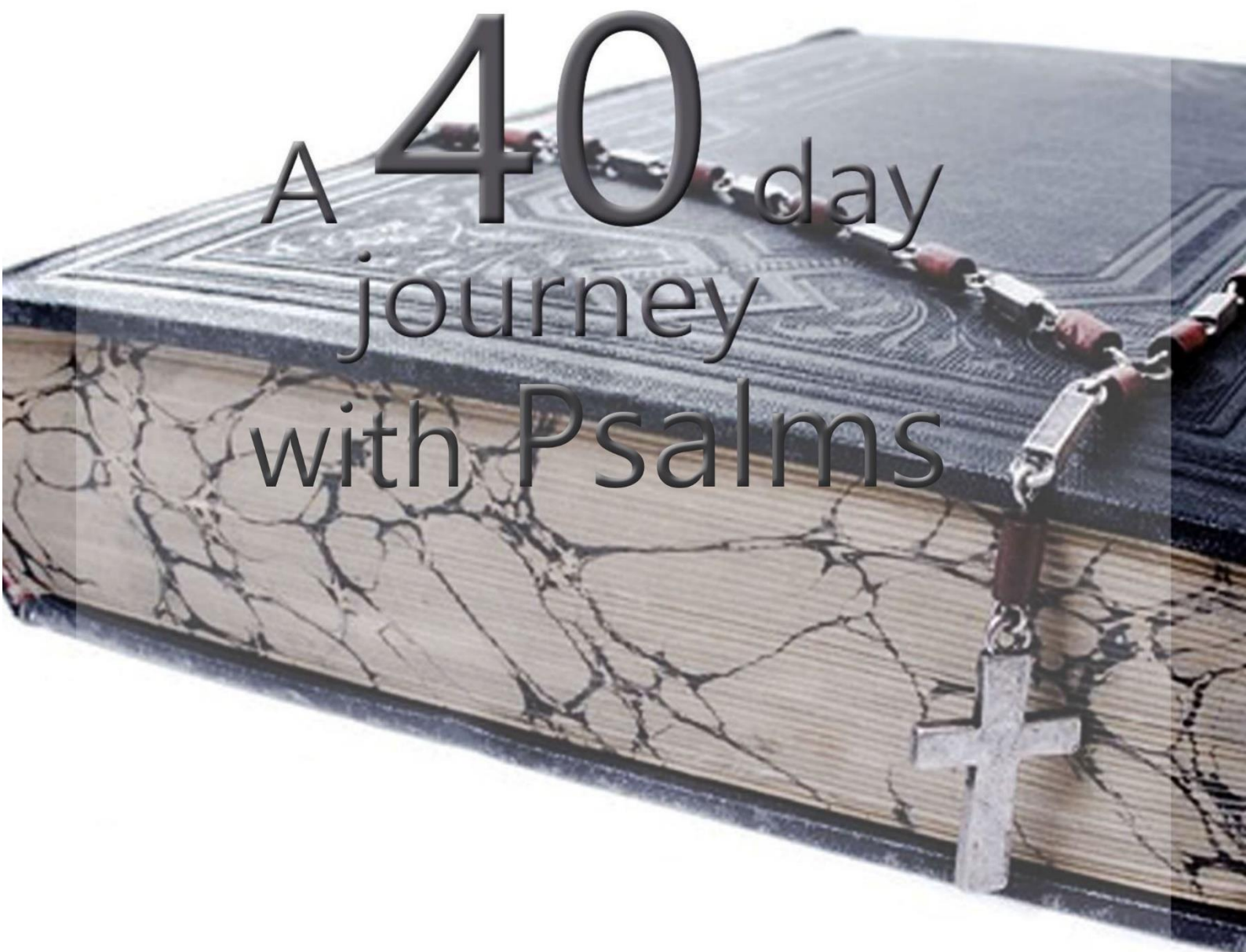


CHRIS GRIBBLE

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Finding Hope

A **40** day
journey
with Psalms

A close-up photograph of an old, thick book with a marbled cover and a dark, textured spine. A rosary with red beads and a silver cross is draped over the book.

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Introduction to the “Found” Psalms

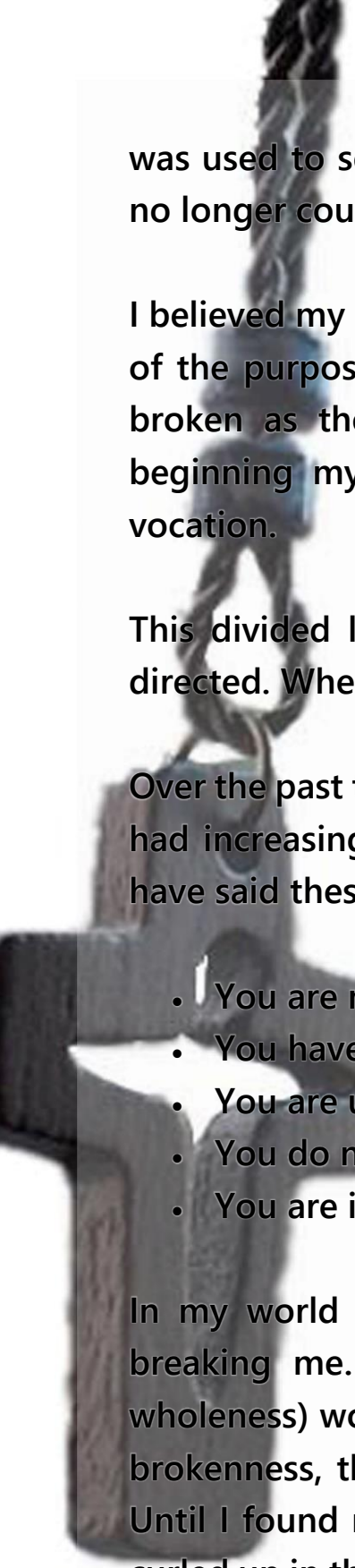
I tell you this
to break your heart,
by which I mean only
that it break open and never close again
to the rest of the world.

—Mary Oliver, Lead

I “found” the Psalms recently after going through one of the darkest periods of my life. From the beginning of 2014, I realised that I was living a life of increasing desperation because my desire for wholeness and to live a life that is congruent with my core passion felt divided.

This desperation began showing through in my closest relationships. I was not immediately aware of the cracks that were forming in my inner life. At first they were not immediately visible even to myself but as time went on my wife began to chip me for certain behaviours. Then my broken behaviours began spilling into the rest of my life.

It was during this period that I arrived early to my annual retreat group to visit my fellow retreat facilitator before we started. He had recently constructed a labyrinth in his yard. In it he had a number of sculptures to enable the labyrinth's visitors some inspiration and a prompt for reflection. I was drawn to the bits of a large pot that were stuck in the ground. All the bits were there but the original pot was no longer recognisable. I sat with this pot and it brought to me my own brokenness. I could no longer find myself in any of the usual ways that I



was used to seeing me. All I could see of myself were broken bits that no longer could serve the purpose it was designed for.


I believed my life had little economic value, it could no longer serve any of the purposes that I had committed myself to. As a person I felt as broken as the pot that I was sitting with. For the first time since beginning my journey with God I had lost all sense of calling and vocation.

This divided life is the outcome of diffusion in where my passion is directed. When my passion is divided my heart is broken.

Over the past two years I had engaged in a conversation with myself that had increasingly focused on my own sense of failure. Over and over I have said these words:

- You are not good enough
- You have failed
- You are useless
- You do nothing right.
- You are incompetent

In my world the thing that I was directing my passion toward was breaking me. My heart and my soul, as Parker Palmer (A hidden wholeness) would say, is divided and the result of this was a deepening brokenness, the divisions causing the cracks in my life to grow wider. Until I found myself sobbing at the most inconsequential issues. Lying curled up in the shower for some unknown reason, except I knew that at least in the shower I didn't have to face it now. Dreading each afternoon because it meant that I was getting closer to night and that meant a few short hours of sleep followed by hours and hours of rumination over what the new day may bring.



The emotions that went with this division led me to despair. I wondered about the value of life, the burden that I had become to the business and my family. The best way to describe my feeling was like living in a fog. But, the pain that I felt every day went to the depths of my soul.

Putting the pieces together


Sometimes our world disintegrates to such a level that healing cannot be done in a moment. The consequences of the amount of brokenness in a person's life mean that recovery may take time. When a person breaks, it's like with Humpty Dumpty, the entire king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put him together again. Even when reconstructed the new person that emerges can look very different to what previously existed.

Some days I felt my life is an impossible task of trying to mend something that is irrevocably broken. I want to find a quick answer and I want my heart to feel better. I don't want to dread the evening because it means that soon I will go to sleep and then wake a couple of hours later filled with anxiety about my coming day's work. I don't want to feel that anxiety as soon as something out of the ordinary happens. I don't want to continue in this pain.

Finding the Psalms

As I have emerged from this shadow I rediscovered the Psalms. In them I have felt with David the raw emotion that comes with dealing with adversity, coping with harsh words and wondering where God is in the midst of this.

Healing takes time. But, the words that have come to me as I have read and entered into David's pain have been an important part of moving past the shadows. Most of all they have brought me to God.



One definition of found poetry is, “it’s the literary version of a collage”. In finding these Psalms I have gathered together my emotions, feelings and pain and sought to “find” my understanding of what David was saying. It’s the worst possible translation methodology but it’s been a great personal re-discovery of God.

I Thought

I thought that I was strong,
I thought that anything was possible,
All I needed to do,
Was to believe enough in myself,
And, it could be done.

I thought that I was in control,
I thought that I determined my future,
All I needed to do,
Was to have enough things,
And, my world was secure.

I was wrong.

- Chris Gribble

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A Reflection on Psalm 1

Life takes new meaning,
When I choose to go God's way,
I don't worry about what other people are doing,
They can do their own thing,
My heartfelt joy is found in doing God's will.

When I take the time,
To listen to his voice,
And, think about what he wants for me,
I realise this is the truly creative life,
That has eternity's mark,

The other choice is to do what everyone else does,
But, I know what they do won't last,
What they do is here today and gone tomorrow,
Their mighty deeds will count for nothing,
When they are judged from eternity's perspective.

God watches over his child,
Day and night,
Listen to him – Walk with him,
This is the only life that will truly satisfy.



A Reflection on Psalm 2

Why are intelligent, powerful people so stupid,
They make idiotic plans,
Then they expect people to follow them,
But, their plans never consider God,
Reality is they actually oppose God.
Then as their stupidity grows,
Their plans become plots to destroy God,

All this doesn't scare God,
Laughter is his response to their idiocy,
God's plans cannot be changed by humans,
Even humans who think that they are in control,
His plans involve his children,
They are protected against the powerful,
When they use their power to bring down the weak,
God's response is steely look,
That should strike terror into their hearts.

I will praise God this morning for his protection,
I will celebrate that I am his child,
My experience this morning is a loving look,
Today my plan is to have God in his right place in my life.



A Reflection on Psalm 3

My Lord, My Lord, I feel like I am treated like the faithless,
They look at me and think that I am weak,
But I want you God to lift my head up,
I want your glory,
What do you say to me?
I heard you Lord, in the night's stillness.
You take my independence and teach me to rely on you,
You say, I need to put all my confidence in you,
Even though I think that it looks I'm crazy,
Tonight Lord I pray that I will sleep well,
Confident in your provision,
Knowing that I am your child,

I am blessed
I am your child.
I am blessed,
I am your Son.
I am blessed,
I am your beloved.
I am blessed,
You have delivered me.



A Reflection on Psalm 5

Please hear me this morning God,
I really need to talk to you,
And, to know that you are listening to what I need.

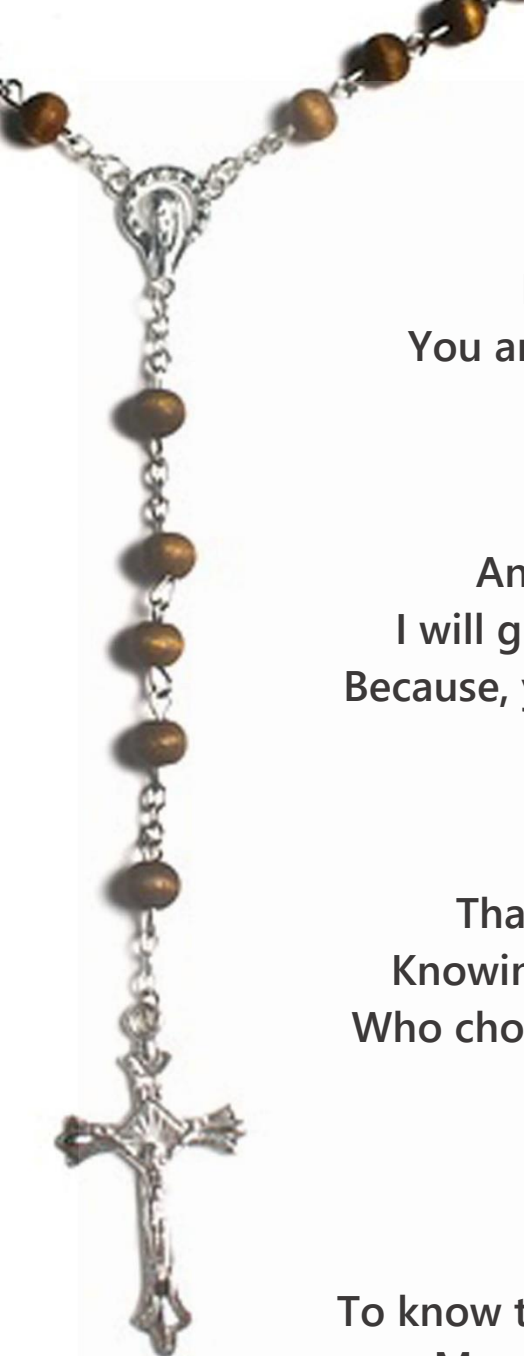
I know that you hate certain things:

- Pride;
- Arrogance;
- Selfishness;
- Cruelty;
- Contempt.

I know that there are people like this,
Some who say they are my friend,
But, behave like my enemy,

Words can be hurtful,
When they become weapons,
That are used to maim,
To the point that I want to die.

I don't want their words to control me,
Instead this morning I seek your assuredness,
I want to hear your words to me,
So that I can keep moving in the direction,
That you have planned for me.



Enemies – will come,
I will let you deal with them,
You are not confounded by their deceit,
You see truth,

And, that they are opposing you,
I will give their words and actions to You,
Because, you Lord are in control of everything.

I know that this morning,
As I take my refuge in you,
That I can be content and satisfied,
Knowing that there will always be people,
Who choose to be enemies instead of friends,
You will protect me.

This morning Lord,
I will learn to be content,
To know that I will be eternally singing joyfully,
My appreciation of your faithful love,

What a blessing to be your child,
Surrounded by love,
Happy because your words are kind,
My heart kept safe.



A Reflection on Psalm 6

Lord, I know that my choices have brought me here,
My prayer is that you will not give me what I deserve,
Please give me relief.

You can see my deep pain,
And the hurt that I have caused,
You know that I have turned away from sin,
You can see my deep anguish,
Over how I didn't follow you,
When I should have known better.

Please Lord,
Let me sleep,
Without waking in the morning's early hours,
Anxious and wishing that I was dead.

My choice is to leave behind,
Those who don't follow you,
Not because I stopped caring,
I want a God first approach to life,
It's a much more merciful life,
That opens up more of God's grace.

Those who choose to oppose you and me,
They have worn me out,
I will have to leave them to you God.
They will have to live with their choices,
Let them see what they have done,
Hit them in the face with its full impact,
So that they will turn to you.



A Reflection on Psalm 8

When I think about you Lord,
I think of awesome power wielded gently,
When I think about your creation,
With its amazing intricacies,
Its ongoing life rhythm
All of which you control,
I am amazed.

In the midst of your creativity you made me,
Not just for fun,
You wanted to care deeply for me,
Picked out of creation,
To be called by my name,
You are not afraid to show;
Awesome power loving flawed perfection.

What a way to understand God!
My God who knows my name,
I continue to be amazed by infinite love,
Expressed by your relationship to life.



A Reflection on Psalm 10

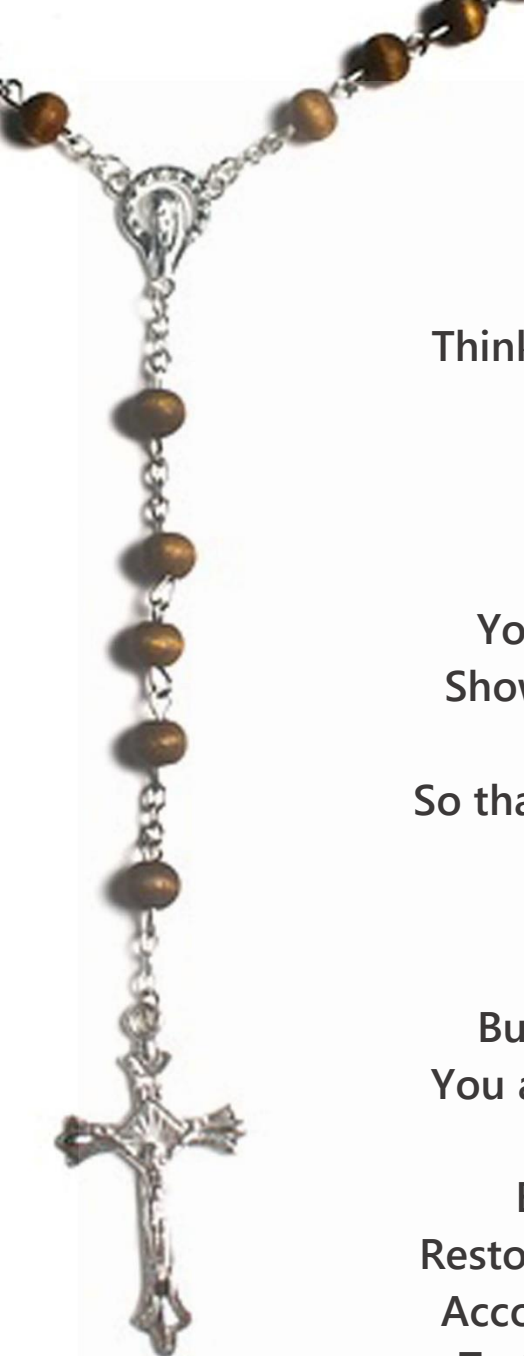
Sometimes God I wonder where on earth you are?
When the going gets tough – I feel like you are gone.
Here is my situation – that highlights how I feel.

I can see that there are people who get away with rejecting you,
They do this arrogantly,
They look like they are succeeding,
Everything is going their way.

I have felt this personally,
With the enemies that have looked successful,
And, have openly rejected you,
Thinking that they are invincible.

This person's main weapon is contempt,
He even thinks he is better than you God!
Why do you put up with this?
Do you really see what he is doing?

He is a destroyer,
Full of lies,
Arrogant and proud,
Full of his own ability,
Preying on me when I was weak,
Watching for ways to trap me,
Attacking me and my family.



And, it looks like he won,
He continues on his way,
Thinking that he is the righteous one,
Saying arrogantly:
“God won’t see my lies”.

Please wake up Lord,
You know what is going on here,
Show me that you are my protector,
Demonstrate your power,
So that he can see it’s you and not him,
Who is really in control.

I am a broken person God,
But, I know that you care for me,
You are bringing justice to this world,
I will leave this to you,
Because, you will get it right,
Restoring everything how it should be,
Accountability is a frightening thing,
To the arrogant and the vindictive,
Their day is coming.

Our world is in your hands – Lord,
I pray and you listen,
I know that you hate arrogance,
Especially when it targets weakness,
I put my trust this morning,
In how you will put it right.



A Reflection on Psalm 13

I have waited impatiently Lord,
Trapped in my own fears,
Sad and full of self-blame,
For my failures.

Waiting means uncertainty and anxiety,
And, in the meantime,
It looks like I am passive,
Letting others run over me,
They say I am a failure,
They even think they are better than You.

Waiting means trusting,
Certain of your love,
Instead of being anxious,
I will look for expressions of your eternal love,
Life's eternal breath,
Breathed into me,
Gives me a confident voice,
Daily declaring your goodness.



A Reflection on Psalm 14

I could never say that God is not there,
That would be stupid.

Lord you have seen my heart,
And, you know how much I desire to know you,
I am eternally grateful that you reached out to me,
Your hand touching mine,
To guide me to your truth.

There are those who choose to ignore you,
They oppose good people,
Thinking they are powerful,
But, they only have themselves,
Living in a word constricted by fear,
Their truth is quickly shown as lies.

Your hands protect me,
I see your Son's hands,
Shouting salvation,
Joyfully restoring,
Your intention.



A Reflection on Psalm 15

The Beloved's Blessing (A reflection in Psalm 15)

Resting in;
Weakness transformed
Responding in;
Caring truthfully
Reminding in;
Integrity lived
Rejoicing in;
Loving relationship.

(Chris Gribble)



A Reflection on Psalm 17

When I pray my broken hearted prayers,
I know my failures are obvious,
Thankfully God sees more than this,
Beyond my shortcomings,
He saw my desire was to serve,
I never ceased in that desire.

This was rejected by the liar,
He closed his heart against me,
Daily acts of violence were committed,
Lashed unceasingly,
By a continuous contemptuous glare,
My daily work became torture,
I curled up and sought to die.

From the confusion,
I heard a Voice,
It quietened my anxious heart,
Words that offered protection,
Confronting the lies,
Showing them for what they are,
Futile rebelliousness against God,
The Voice speaking order and calm,
Love's words offering truth and trust,
"You are my child – I see you –
What I see calls me to love you more"



A Reflection on Psalm 19

God's voice is shouting out his presence,
Stop and listen,
Truth is God's gift to his children,
We don't need to try to find the answers,
God gives them to his children,
Stop and listen.

Each day is an opportunity,
To hear more of God's words,
I love seeking to understand daily,
To sift out the lies that begin,
When I forget to listen.

I love my Father's honesty,
He sees my heart,
His truth pierces any lie,
Everything is exposed to him,
There's no point pretending,
I look forward to his approval.

Tomorrow is a fresh start,
The day will begin with a shout from God,
As the sun begins its daily trek,
I will stop and listen,
With my heart open and ears pricked,
Ready to hear my Father's words.



A Reflection on Psalm 20

Life is full of distress,
It's a relief to know that God is always with me,
He looks closely at my heart,
To see if my actions come from my love of him.

God wants his children to be happy,
He wants us to shout out our praises to him,
Praises that come from a heart of thankfulness,
Praises that see God's provision,
Praises that cannot be kept to ourselves.

Here's what I know to be true,
This is because I've seen God do these things,
There is only one person that is totally trustworthy,
That's God,
Follow him and you will not be limited by difficulties,
Opposition has no hope against God,

Lord hear my heart today,
I love seeing your hand at work in my life,
Thank you that you see me through my troubles,
To help me emerge more confident in you.



A Reflection on Psalm 22

What are you doing with my trust God?
You are treating me like my enemies,
My voice is lost among creation's lament,
I shouldn't be in this position,
Where I am begging for you to listen to me.

My enemies exhaust me,
Their putrid words dripping with hate,
Words creating fear and division,
Ripping at my heart,
I feel sick – sick enough to die,
My enemy gathers likeminded haters,
They crowd around me hungry for the kill,
Lashing me with contemptuous barbs.

My legacy will be declared by my children,
That my God delivers,
He will speak praise words,
That will echo through humanity's heart,
Even the deaf haters will hear him,
And have to endure eternity's praise,
Witnesses of worship given to the rightful king.



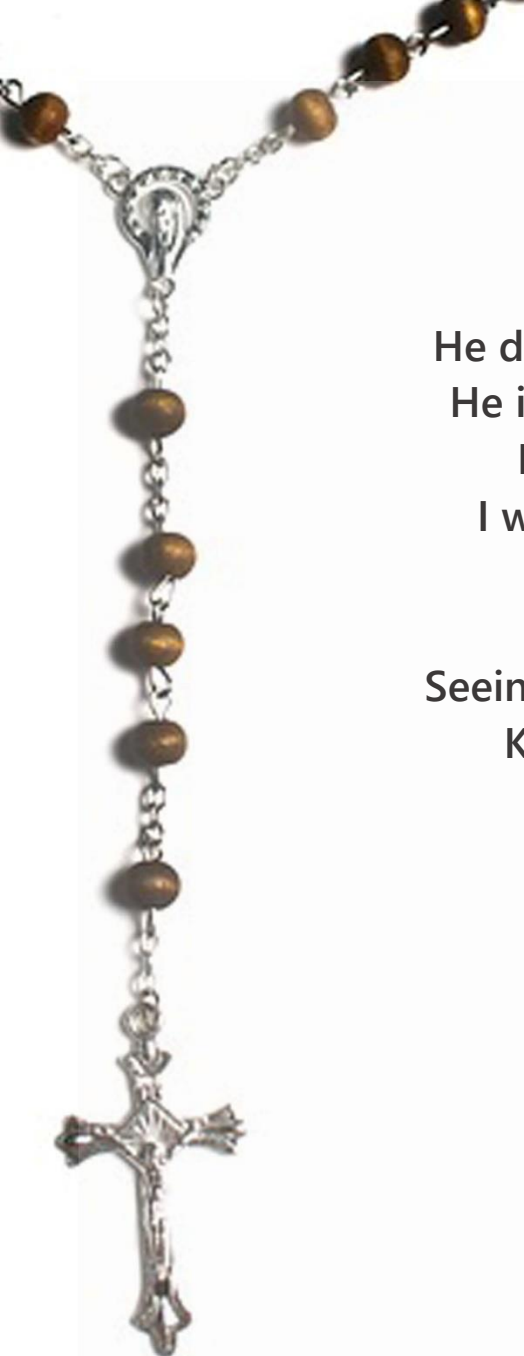
A Reflection on Psalm 25

Every day there are new things to learn,
I pray this morning for humility,
For the wisdom to see the things that I don't know,
That today may become a day of discovery and wonder,
Not stuck in the same old rut.

Why do fearful cowards surround me?
They don't want to face who they are,
Instead they prefer to attack me,
They focus all their energy on my downfall,
Wielding their hate weapons,
All day they seek to find new words,
To create despair in my life.

Surely God sees all this?
He knows everything,
He can see the haters hearts,
And, he must see my heart.

I stopped and was still,
God's voice broke into the stillness,
His voice breathed love,
My friend, My Creator,
He saw the deep wounds inflicted by bullies,
Loving hands wrapped around me,
His embracing action a balm to the hate words,
Love spoken heals the abuse.



God is faithful to me,
He doesn't cave into hate's demands,
He is not swayed by its accusations,
He never deviates from love,
I want to follow him everywhere,
Listening to his voice,
Learning new things daily,
Seeing hate's voice quietened by love,
Knowing that he has my back.



A Reflection on Psalm 26

God sees every part of me,
There is no stone unturned in my heart,
God you know I have followed you for years,
Seeking to be an obedient child,
Wanting to follow in my Father's footsteps.

You showed me that the bully is a liar,
Incapable of speaking truth,
I had to stop listening to their sweet sounding lies,
To be able to hear your hard truths.

Breaking free from the bully is hard,
They are clever in their deceit,
They know how to charm – then destroy,
My best weapon is to put God first,
It disarms deceit,
All the bully can do is run in circles,
Making lots of noise.

Resistance is futile when God is put first,
– Light against fog,
– Hope against depression,

The right choice is obvious,
Waking to praise brings hope,
There's no cover up – Praise fills my life.



A Reflection on Psalm 29

God's creative voice is all around,
He uses it as his megaphone,
Why don't we hear it's message?
Everywhere I look creation is speaking of its author,
Saying this is the Creator's work!

A beautiful sunrise that shatters light over the earth.
An awesome storm with ear splitting thunder,
The ocean's relentless power breaking down the earth's edge,
The sunset reminding of the sun's fiery daily journey.

Then God chooses a life,
He chose my life and to love me,
Daily power witnessed,
Becomes my strength,
In the midst of creation's relentless activity,
My God whispers, "enjoy".



A Reflection on Psalm 30

When I hit rock bottom,
Lord you were there,
When I was sinking into a deep hole,
Of depression and despair,
I knew you were the only one who could save me,
Even when the knife was stuck into me,
By my friend who wanted to destroy me,
You brought me back from the brink of death,
You always protected me.

I am in constant wonder,
How you turned my life around completely,
You have brought me to a place of happiness,
Every day I want to shout this out to the world.

I know now that security is only found in God,
His love is the only constant in this world,
It is love that will go on eternally,
And, this eternal love has been turned to me,
I have experienced Grace,
I can never settle for second best again.



A Reflection on Psalm 32

It's so good to live freely,
Unencumbered by guilt,
To bear no malice to anyone.

When I lived selfishly,
Trying to do it all in my strength,
I collapsed and could not go on,
My strength was not enough,
I really wanted to die,
I thought that would stop the pain.

But, thankfully you kept your eye on me,
Protecting me even when I didn't know it,
Giving me a new story of hope,
Constructed from love.

I choose to live according to God's love,
It's the only trustworthy thing,
That can really make my heart glad.



A Reflection on Psalm 34

My daily search for God's voice,
tells me that God cares for me,
He overlooks my mistakes,
When I was lost in a downward spiral,
Free falling into an abyss of fear,
My pitiful cries were heard,
When lying on my stomach every morning,
My face buried into the floor,
Sobbing because of my fear of the day,
God reached out and lifted my head,
He looked into my eyes with love,
He spoke to me – he heard me.

Those who threw their bitterness at me,
They will hear God's voice too,
Bitter words will quickly fade,
They have no place in eternity.

Hope returns even when fear still speaks,
Fear seeks to drown out hope,
Truth corrects deceit,
Bringing back possibility,
God searches for truth and befriends it,
My heart finds an ally,
Who is always on my side,
My broken heart restored.



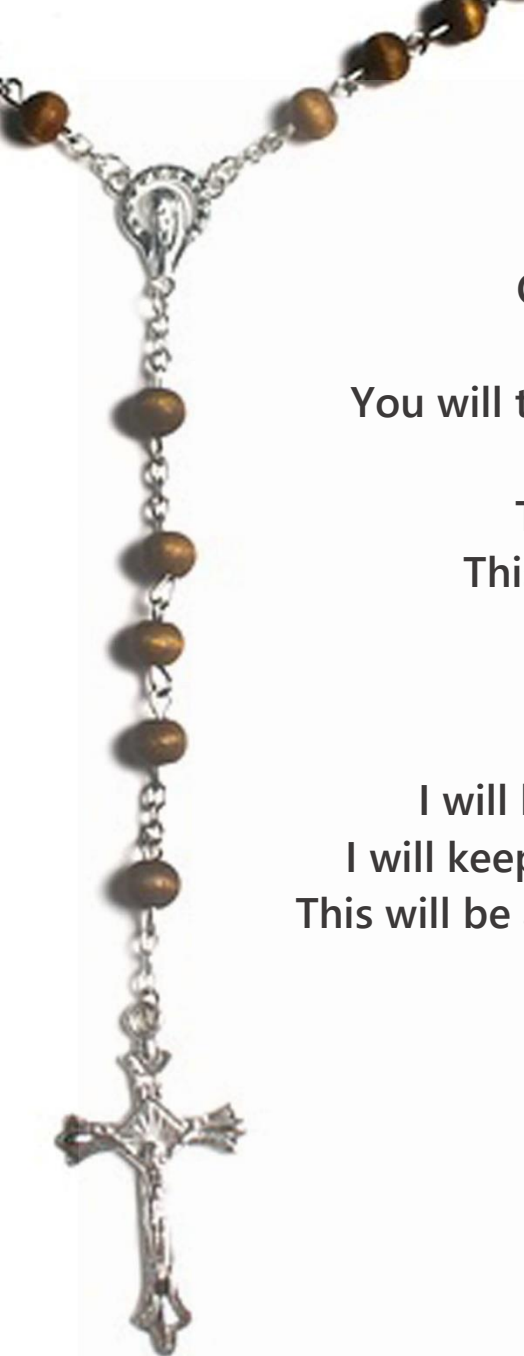
A Reflection on Psalm 35

Why do some people seem hell-bent on my destruction?

They are well armed,
Wielding their weapons of mass destruction,
Against me personally.
What do I do with my enemies God?

I don't wish ill on anyone yet I still have enemies,
God I am turning to you to protect me.
When someone comes against me,
With attacks that don't let up,
Even when they have me down,
They keep coming with more vindictiveness,
Watching for every opportunity
To put in the knife,
Stabbing me in the back,
Twisting it to cause maximum pain,
This is really is an attack against you, God.

For a long time,
I thought you were ignoring me,
Enemies were gloating at my distress,
I was trying to do my best,
My best was never good enough,
Every little failure was an opportunity,
To twist that knife a little more,
To make sure that I could never feel good.



One day justice will be done,
All in your good time God,
You will turn their gloating into a cry for help,
Lies will be exposed,
Truth will win out in the end,
This will be your opportunity God,
To set things right.

In the meantime,
I will keep serving you wholeheartedly,
I will keep trusting you have my best interests,
This will be an opportunity to tell others about you.

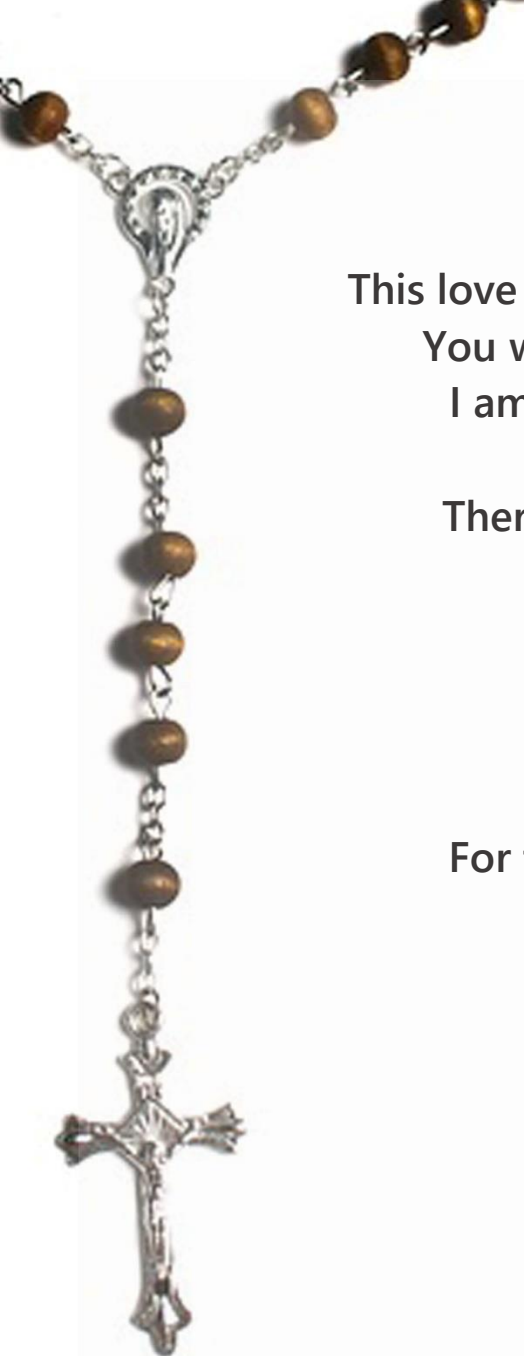


A Reflection on Psalm 36

Some people choose a path of self-destruction,
They don't care about you God,
Because they think more about themselves,
Elevating their own importance,
Flattering themselves by crushing others.

Sooner or later the truth comes out,
They trap themselves in their own lies,
Ensnared in a deceitful path,
They fight its death trap,
Even when they try to sleep,
The truth of their actions haunt every waking hour.
Evil has its consequences,
Sooner or later its perpetrator's,
Will face the music.

Short term gain is not the right path,
for those who love God with all their hearts,
I will take your protection every day,
Trying to save myself is too hard,
You are the one that saves.



This love is returned a hundred times my God,
You will protect me against the proud,
I am protected by your word to me,
That says I am your child,
There is nothing that I don't control,
Trust me to protect you.

The time is fast coming,
Where things are set right,
There will be no escape,
For those who choose to reject you.

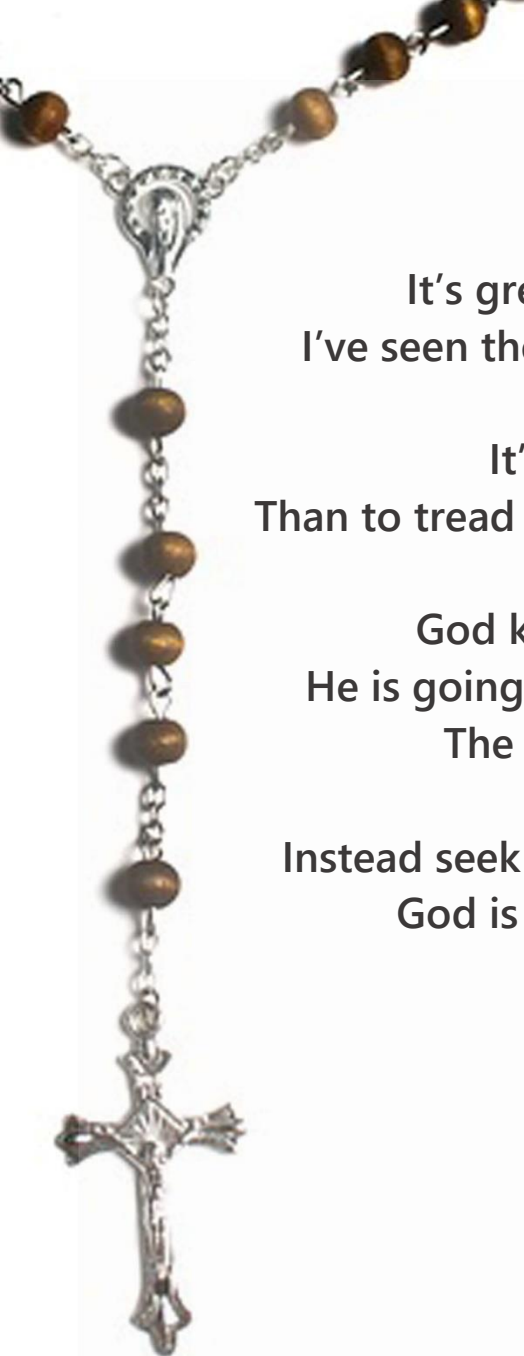


A Reflection on Psalm 37

I need to not worry about what others do,
Or think they are getting ahead,
What they create won't last,
If it doesn't come from a heart,
Turned to you God.

This is the path God has for us:
Trust in God – Live creatively.
Seek God's will- Live obediently.
Listen to God – Live attentively.
Don't worry – Live freely.

God's opposition don't have long,
The outcome of their actions,
Will be held to account,
Their words will come back to bite them,
The people that they sought to bring down,
Will be given a place of privilege by God.



It's great to live life being cared by God,
I've seen the outcome of selfishness over and over,
It doesn't work,
It's much better to give it away,
Than to tread on others for the sake of selfish ambition.

God knows the reasons for our actions,
He is going to reward those who have sought him,
The day of selfishness is nearly over,
It's future is short,
Instead seek God and eternity is there to be grasped,
God is waiting to share it with us forever.

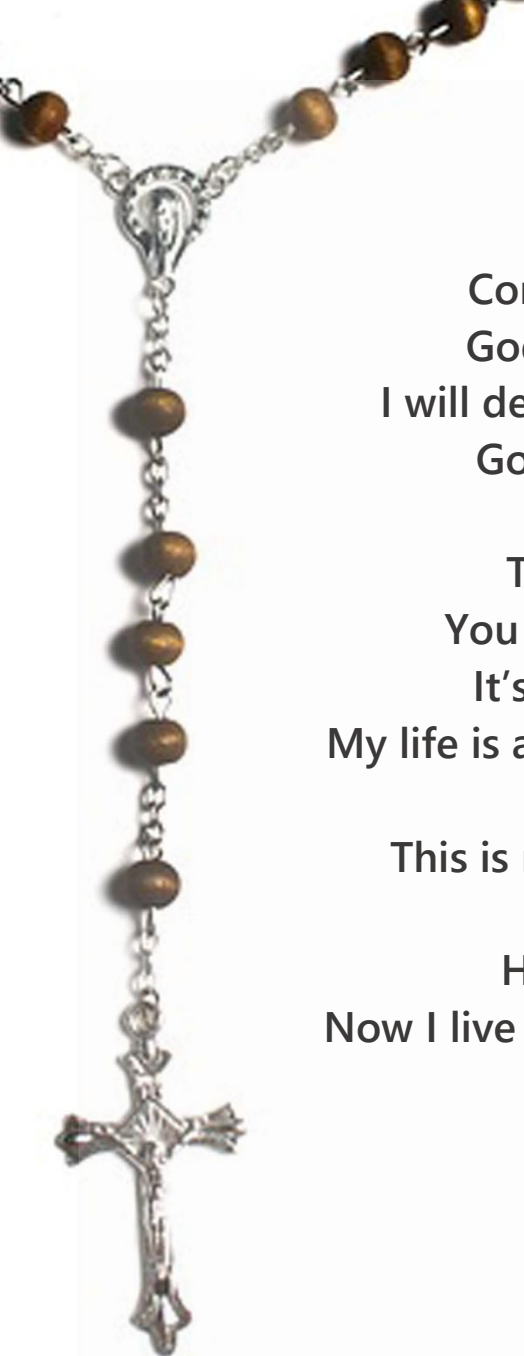


A Reflection on Psalm 40

Rock bottom is the worst place to go to,
It's the place where all hope appears to be lost,
I've been there.

Making it much worse,
Was that my "friend" wanted to destroy me,
He wanted to see me with nothing,
I am glad he will reap what was sown,
His actions are his shame,
I trust God's wisdom in sorting out what was done to me,
I am not worried about it anymore,
My life has taken a new turn,
It's the God shaped life,
That can't be touched by anyone.

When I was really down,
I cried out to you,
I couldn't help myself,
I was a total mess,
I needed someone to rescue me,



Compared to other offers of help,
God's help has no ulterior motive,
I will declare this to anyone who will listen,
God now you are my first choice.

I should have known better,
Than to trust anyone but you,
You don't care what I think I can do,
It's all about what you do for me,
My life is a witness to your power and provision.

This is my declaration to the whole world,
My God is my Saviour,
He delivered me from despair,
Now I live with hope as my constant companion.



A Reflection on Psalm 41

Enough is enough,
I will no longer cower,
Scared of lies and malicious intent,
My loyalty repaid with contempt,
This is not the life that God has for me.

I am ready God,
To walk with my head high,
To face hatred and stare it down,
I have heard my dear enemy's voice,
Let the destructive hate words,
Eloquently put together but bathed in malice
Spoken with their foul smelling voice,
Be collected and be discarded with their faeces,
My enemy spends too much time in destruction,
I choose to seek honesty,
Honesty is about God's truth,
Spoken as a love song,
My enemy is confounded,
Because my heart continues to sing
Praise that reaches my Source,
Sung with the breath of Eternity.



A Reflection on Psalm 43

Disappointment is a constant companion,
Opposition seems to dog every step,
Love isn't my natural response,
To those who use confusion as their weapon,
Even those on my own side are difficult,
Saying one thing but doing another,
They should be sticking up for me,
But, they are blocking my light,
I can't see a way forward,

What will I do?
I will find ways to praise God,
I won't give up,
My praise will show the way forward,
Worry will be put in its place,
Praise will lead others,
Praise is unstoppable,
Praise will celebrate my delight in God.



A Reflection on Psalm 52

My dear enemy,
Why do you think you are so right?
You pretend to care,
While planning selfish destruction,
Words are used to confuse the truth,
Relishing in unleashing each painful barb.

Dear enemy you appear to be powerful,
It's an illusion and I fear for your future,
When God completes his plan,
Truth will be brought in the daylight,
Self-declared truth will be seen as foolishness,
People are already incredulous at your self-deception,
Your plan won't work in the end,
Getting ahead is never about destroying others,
God's way is about lifting people up.

I choose to put my roots in God,
I choose to trust God,
I choose to praise God,
I choose to put my hope in God,
I choose to declare this daily.



A Reflection on Psalm 55

God are you there?
You must be able to hear what is said about me?
Aren't you my protector?

I love how you show up self-declared power,
Before you it looks pathetic,
My enemy speaks words against me,
But they are contributing to his downfall,
He gathered an arsenal of put downs,
I felt like he used every last one of them against me,
He was so good at it,
I started believing him and not you God.

I doubted myself,
I stopped sleeping,
I imagined the worst,
I thought that I would die.

None of this was true,
The worst was transformed into peace,
God turned up,
I visited the shadow but now live in the light.



My dear enemy continues to gather words,
In the hope that he can overcome God,
It's a futile hope,
But he clings to it with a death grip,
Sucked in a downward spiral into darkness.

I know what anxiety is,
I know what fear is,
I have tasted failure,
Yet God is still with me,
He hears my prayer this morning,
My Saviour.

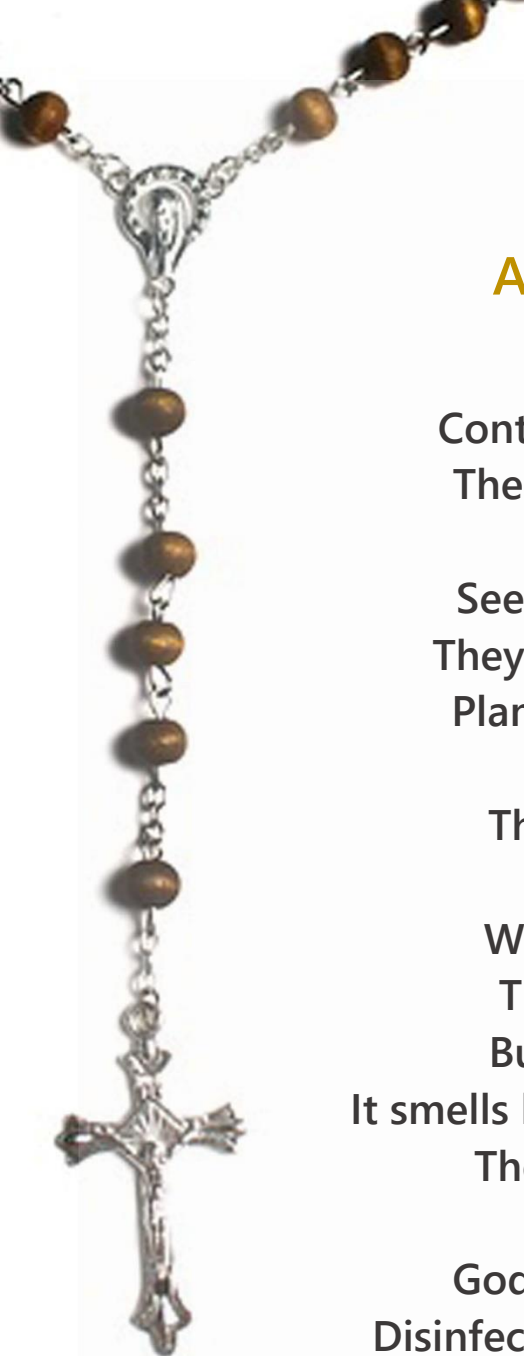


A Reflection on Psalm 58

From birth speaking deceit,
Impressed by a words power,
To control by paralysis,
Evil only hears its own voice,
Charmed by its own sound,
The pain of injustice is no longer heard.

Their destructive outbursts,
Don't worry God,
He watches as they harmlessly echo into nothing,
Powerless to harm language's creator.

When God speaks deceit will bow,
It will choke on its own spit,
Humility will watch on,
When God's voice corrects deceit,
Humility hears its sound,
Deceit is silenced.



A Reflection on Psalm 59

Contempt burns in my enemy's eyes,
Their eyes haven't seen love's light,
They are dark pits,
Seeking to drag me into their pain,
They are ingenious in their scheming,
Planning to inflict their pain on me.

Their word vomit is continuous,
The stench of their breath,
Warns me that they are coming,
They think no one can smell it,
But, I know when they are near,
It smells like a dead animal left in the hot sun,
The unmistakable smell of death.

God is going to clean up the vomit,
Disinfectant's sting will be a painful rebuke,
To the pride vomit stench,
My enemy loves his own stink,
But, my room will smell like a fresh garden,
Promising fresh life born in fertile soil.



A Reflection on Psalm 61

Today I feel like giving up,
Opposition is all around me,
It never seems to let up,
Are you listening God?

When the fear rises up inside of me,
I can taste its foul stench,
I feel sick with worry,
About what can go wrong.

When my enemy wears me down,
I must learn to look to God,
I can't solve my enemy's problems,
I know You have protected me in the past,
And, You will continue to protect me in the future.

Praise is the best response to fear,
Fear shrinks when God is praised,
God's will is fulfilled in praise.



A Reflection on Psalm 62

Lord, I have felt like everything is wrong,
It feels like all hope has been lost,
Overwhelmed with sleepless nights,
I think constantly of my failures.

This is the time when I cried out to you God,
In the middle of the night,
In the early morning,
When the shadow of depression touched my soul,
When I feel only darkness,
When my friendships are shattered.

In all of this you are speaking to me,
Waiting for my response:
I choose to praise – not hate,
I choose to live powerfully – in your strength,
I choose to love – forgiving wrongs,
I choose life – eternity with my Father.



A Reflection on Psalm 62

Peace is such a beautiful place to find,
I have discovered true rest with my Father,
He has helped me withstand the personal attacks,
He will confront the lies that were told,
The lies that were intended to destroy me,
They were destruction veiled as truth,
I watched as my enemy took delight,
In seeing me hit rock bottom.

I know now how to take a true rest,
So that those lies no longer affect me,
Truth relies on God – not on my enemy,
I have learned to pour my heart out to God,
So that my ears hear only truth.
The great reversal is coming,
Where God sets it all right,
In the meantime I am learning what is important,
Rich or poor the end result is the same,
We must keep close to God,
Trust him above everything else,
This is the only safe place in this world,
Eternal love expressed with truth is the result.



A Reflection on Psalm 64

I don't understand why people plan evil,
Isn't doing good a better option?
It's happened again though,
My dear enemy has promised good,
But delivered hate,
They keep telling me that it's love!
Confusion is created again,
Too many words wreaking havoc,
Hate relishes confusion,
It gives opportunity for destruction.

A much better way is to plan good,
God doesn't tolerate duplicity,
He will set it all straight,
My dear enemy will face the truth,
Words used to destroy me,
Will entrap them in their own confusion.

I love how my God works,
Protecting me against my dear enemy,
Turning the tables –
My enemy's power becomes weakness,
Even if they don't see it,
It is a witness God's power to the world.



A Reflection on Psalm 68

My constant cry to my God is "help".
The haters are circling,
I am on my knees,
Well aimed kicks,
Are coming from every direction,
It feels like the end is too close,
I am at the end of my strength,
I feel like giving up.

But, In the face of defeat,
I will trust my God,
He knows what to do with haters,
He turns their arrogance into shame,
They begin to attack each other,
In their rage they lose all sense,
Their angry spit spraying malice,
God turns the destruction intended for me,
And the haters destroy themselves.

Destruction by hate is a terrible death,
I have felt its painful lash,
But when God let the haters loose,
And they turn on each other,
It becomes a bloodbath,
Their bloodlust has no friends,
It revels in destruction.



I can watch the final battle from safety,
My scars completely healed,
Now life is praise, continuously,
The pain a distant memory,
I am safe forever.



A Reflection on Psalm 70

Lord, I have reached the end of this path,
I need you to point me in the right direction,
Opposition has drained me,
Haters words are cruel,
They delight in seeing my pain,
Desiring to declare my weakness,
and use it against God,

I know I sound pathetic,
Asking for help again,
The victim of my own choices,
Don't you desert me too God,
Let me see that again you rescued me,
I want to shout this message out,
God hates the haters.

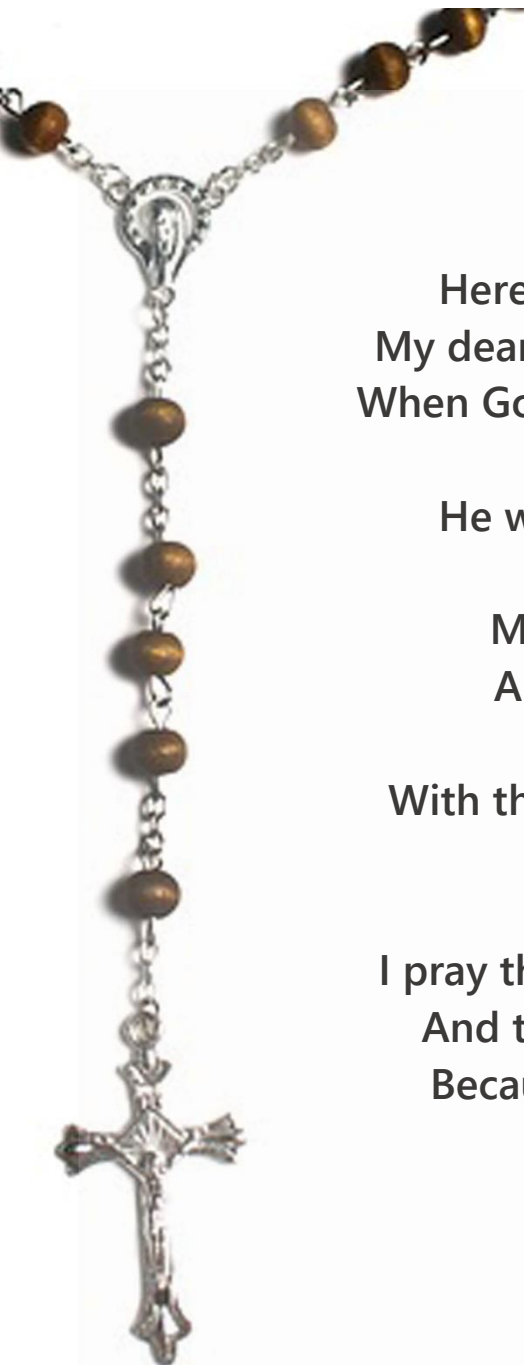


A Reflection on Psalm 79

Lord, my past is so shameful,
My stupidity reaches to the heavens,
I spend all day counting what I have done wrong,
But, you don't do this to me,
Your count keeps going back to zero,
Totally forgetting all my past mistakes.

My dear enemy doesn't do this,
He takes delight in pointing out what I have done,
He piles stupid on stupid,
To show me my idiocy,
Over and over he has circled,
Looking to make the final blow,
To find one more stupid thing,
That will destroy my life.

God's way is so different,
He circles to wrap his arms around me,
Not to point out my stupidity,
His arms are loving and his voice is soft,
Affirming me, whispering love sounds,
That comforts my pitiful weeping.



Here's what God's says will happen –
My dear enemy is going to feel very stupid,
When God sees the damage he sought to do,
God won't take it lightly,
He will show the enemy who is right,
He won't get away with it,
My enemy will receive his dues,
And, it won't be pretty for him,
When God let's loose,
With the loving anger of a protective dad.

I love feeling safe with Dad,
I pray that my children will see God's work,
And that they will have the same trust,
Because they know how God delivers.



A Reflection on Psalm 83

Hate's storehouse,
Distributes vindictiveness freely,
Anger accumulated,
Burns indelibly into my heart,
It creates a seething ferment,
Of malicious words aimed directly at me,
My dear enemy's storehouse is full,
The hot poking iron of his anger,
Is burned into my heart.

Out of hate emerged a destructive plan,
Of retaliation and hurt,
Disguised as caring,
The evil intent is clear,
The lie seeking alliances,
To wreak more havoc in my life.

I wait for your Voice to be heard,
Love's storehouse accumulates justice,
When truth creates order,
It shames hate and anger and malice,
Hate's words will quickly fade,
When truth is all that's heard,
Anger will be in the past.

My dear enemy will be completely disarmed,
No longer able to cling to past weapons,
Lies no longer heard by anyone,
Truth's Voice will be heard by everyone.

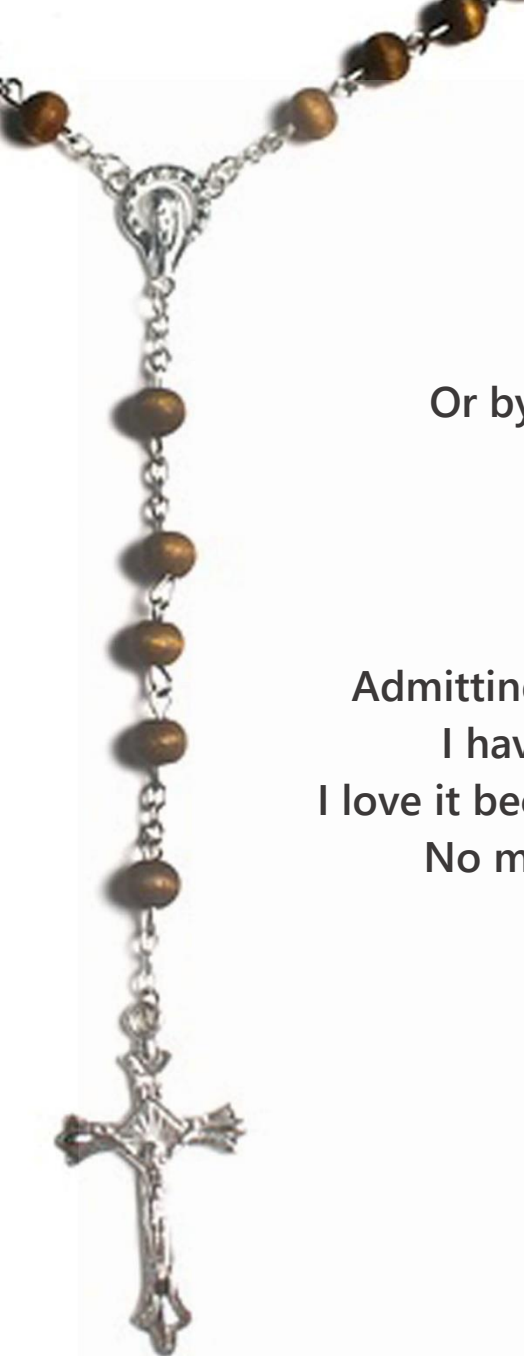


A Reflection on Psalm 84

My life is full of Incessant activity,
I feel like I am on a treadmill,
Working really hard but getting nowhere,
Tiredness is the constant cry of my world,
I want to get some really good sleep,
However, it eludes me because there's more to do.

But, rest is waiting for me,
It's God's gift to his children,
Those who are worn out by the treadmill,
God's way first brings us a cool drink,
It refreshes as if I had worked in the sun all day,
Then he keeps bringing me cool drinks,
Whenever the day gets hot,
His hand is outstretched with a full glass.

I've tried lots of ways to find rest,
Increased efficiency wasn't the answer,
It worked for a short time,
Then I was back to where I started,
the only way was to return to God,



I found the answer –
It wasn't by doing more,
Or by trying to be better at what I do,

No.

It's simply by trusting God,
Admitting that I couldn't succeed on my own,
I have my own room in God's house,
I love it because my Father spent time creating it,
No more worry about where I will live,
It's completely paid for,
A home built for eternity.



A Reflection on Psalm 86

When I consider your goodness Lord,
It highlights my poverty,
I have realised how much I need you,
It's finally got through my thick head,
That I need your forgiveness,
Without it my life is wretched.

Thank you for restoring me,
You have brought joy to my life again,
By helping me to remember,
That I belong totally to you.