



**PSALMS:**  
THE PLAYLIST  
FOR OUR LIVES

**DEVOTIONAL**

November 18-24



## *Psalms: The Playlist for Our Lives*

Without a soundtrack, movies lack suspense and drama, and lose the audience's attention. Without music blaring at a Thunder game, "Loud City" would hardly live up to its name and the excitement of it all would be severely diminished. Without music, parades, long drives, and dance parties would be boring. Moreover, different genres and styles are appropriate for specific situations: you don't expect a Mariachi band serenading guests at a Japanese steakhouse, nor for a football team to enter to *Sherry* by the Four Seasons, nor do you expect Michael Jackson's *Beat It* to be a newlywed couple's first dance song at their reception!

In short, music plays such a profound role in all of our lives, and the song choice for any given moment is key. It's no wonder God calls us to worship Him with song and hymns, and has even provided an anthology of musical selections: The Psalms. Each Psalm was written for specific situations—all of which are appropriate for us today. While we may no longer know the tunes, the lyrics of the Psalms speak to us and our own life situations today, offering us words of wisdom, prayer and praise.

Join us for this series as we explore the appointed Psalms, seeing them as a sort of "Playlist for Our Lives," with each week's "Psalm of the Day" given a fitting title borrowed from modern songs.

### **We invite you to join us each week, too!**

Daily devotional booklets like this one will be provided each week in an effort to connect the Sunday messages with your daily life.

The Sunday devotional offers a "review" of the morning's Scriptures and message, allowing opportunity to reflect on that day's sermon. The rest of offers a daily Psalm passage and a few thoughts to consider.

We pray these devotionals will be a blessing to you and your family, and in your Christian life! And, if you miss a Sunday, you can always find our services and sermons online at [www.holytrinityedmond.org/sermons](http://www.holytrinityedmond.org/sermons)

### *Psalms: The Playlist for Our Lives*

- October 14: *Waiting on the World to Change* | Psalm 62:1-8
- October 21: *Hopeless Wanderer* | Psalm 119:9-16
- October 28: *Shake, Rattle and Roll* | Psalm 46
- November 4: *At Last* | Psalm 149
- November 11: *Unchained Melody* | Psalm 146
- November 18: *Only Wanna Be With You* | Psalm 16
- November 25: *King of My Heart* | Psalm 93

# I Only Want To Be With You

## Sunday Sermon Review

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*Not to be confused with Hootie and the Blowfish's "Only Wanna Be With You," today's playlist title comes from a hit song released 55 years ago this month. Dusty Springfield was the female vocalist who put this song on the charts as the second artist of the "British Invasion" with a hit on the top 100 (behind the Beatles). The writer of the song penned the lyrics shortly after being married in 1961, reflecting upon his own romantic feelings for his beloved. "I don't know what it is that makes me love you so; / I only know I never want to let you go, / 'Cause you started something, can't you see, / That ever since we met you've had a hold on me. / It happens to be true, I only want to be with you." Such lyrics certainly drip with young love! There are, perhaps, a few ways we might consider these lyrics in light of our own lives. First, we are naturally inclined toward sin, to the point that we can't let go (and maybe we don't want to); sin has a hold on us. But then, secondly, we might look at these same lyrics of love from God's perspective—who knows what it is that makes Him love us so? But He does! Finally, in response to His love, we see, as the Psalmist sung of the Lord, "in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures." Christ has conquered our sin and brings us into God's presence. We experience God's presence through His Word & Sacrament in worship, and on the last day we will be with Him forever!*

### The Scripture Lesson Summaries for Today:

**Daniel 12:1-3:** The prophet speaks of the Last Day when God's people will be delivered from this fallen world, and the dead will rise.

**Hebrews 10:11-25:** The author tells how, because of Christ's perfect sacrifice, we have access to worship God ourselves! Let us take advantage of that reality!

**Mark 13:1-13:** Jesus speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem. There will be many signs and rumors of the coming Last Day, and Christ's followers will suffer. In the face of these things, He calls us to endure by faith and the Spirit's working.

### Reflecting on Today's Sermon:

1. At what point was I confronted with the Law?
2. What comfort did the Gospel bring?
3. What story/phrase/teaching stuck out to me?
4. What did I learn about God from this sermon?
5. In response to the Word of God, I will...

**Pray:** *Lord, our sinful nature causes us to love ourselves, to love possessions, and even to love sin. Sin has a hold on us. Yet You love us unconditionally for some reason, and in Christ, You show us the depth of Your love. By Your Spirit, You make us alive and we learn the joy it is to be with You! Lord, let us continually seek Your presence rather than worldly desires. Teach us to desire You and the things which are pleasing to You. Amen.*

## Why?

Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018

By Lindsey Duerr, DCE

*Text:* Psalm 17

*Emphasis:* Verse 15: “*But I will see your face in righteousness; when I awake, I will be satisfied with your presence.*”

I remember distinctly laying down at the end of a Michigan dock at a retreat when I was a freshman in college. The Holy Spirit surrounded me that weekend in a very distinct and clear way – a way I will never forget. God’s presence was so tangible that weekend and it became obvious to me that we serve a *Real.Present.God* (to steal from the LCMS National Youth Gathering theme for next year).

A friend gave me some lyrics from a song during that weekend reminding me that I have to come down from that mountaintop experience in order to share what I had learned with others. What I didn’t realize was all too soon it would be simple to slip back into the business of everyday life. It wasn’t leaving the mountain that was difficult, it was navigating it again.

In leaving that mountain I faced some tough decisions ahead. I felt God was calling me into ministry and I had to decide if I was going to pursue that push. I ventured to a new state, a new school, and eventually new friends. To be honest, it wasn’t what I thought it would be. I learned pretty quickly that not everyone is a Christian at a Christian school.

It seemed my journey has been filled with all sorts of highs and lows – moments when God’s presence, will, and purpose for my life was clear, and moments where I questioned where He was. What I love about this Psalm is that, even in the low moments, the doubts, the questioning, David is trusting God and realizing that someday he, too, will understand. “*God please be with me and I will be satisfied with your presence.*” He’s asking God to save Him, but above all, He realizes God’s presence is what’s important. Whether it goes how David planned or not, he will be satisfied because God is there, and David realizes he will see God’s face in righteousness.

We may not understand the “why” behind everything that happens on this side of eternity. We will never have the answer to every question. But we can remain confident in this: one day, we will see God’s face in righteousness and everything will make sense. We’ll see the big picture and most importantly, God in all His glory. For the time being, we can trust in Him and be satisfied with His presence in our lives.

*Pray:* Gracious Father, You give us glimpses of Your glory and of the life to come. We know we won’t always understand everything that happens here on this earth, but we know that You are with us and that is enough. Thank You for sending Your Spirit and help us to see and share You each day. Amen.

## Are You Lonesome Tonight?

Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

By Vicar Joshua Brakhage

**Text:** Read Psalm 88

**Emphasis:** Verse 8: *“You have distanced my friends from me; you have made me repulsive to them. I am shut in and cannot go out.”*

Rates of depression are climbing. Suicide rates have spiked. Use of psychiatric medications is at an all-time high. In fact, medical experts label this an “epidemic” that’s costing thousands of Americans their lives every year. But what’s at the heart of this epidemic? Researchers have found a surprising answer: loneliness. Though we live in one of the most connected countries on the planet, in the most connected era of human history, a shockingly large number of people – up to 46% of Americans – report significant feelings of loneliness.

“When I began my tenure as [U.S.] Surgeon General,” says Dr. Vivek Murthy, “if you had told me that I would be thinking about and talking about loneliness as much as I have, I would’ve told you you’re absolutely wrong.” Murthy is among the growing chorus of health experts pointing to the impact of loneliness on both our emotional and physical health. The chronically lonely have higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, dementia and substance abuse. And doctors have found that loneliness measurably reduces your lifespan. “The mortality impact is as great as smoking 15 cigarettes a day,” Dr. Murthy adds.

This may not be a cheerful topic as we gather on the doorstep of a warm and happy holiday, but this time of year magnifies the feelings of loneliness in many people’s lives. Those of us who find ourselves divorced, widowed, single, neglected, or misunderstood can dread it. We can be tormented by photos and stories of others’ holiday gatherings and by our own memories of holidays past. As one commentator puts it, “being lonely is a living hell.”

It’s time for the Church to address loneliness. And not just in vague, generic terms. It’s time for the Church – you and me – to seek out those who echo David’s cries in today’s psalm: *“I am shut in and cannot go out... You have distanced loved one and neighbor from me; darkness is my only friend.”*

Experts say the only prescription to cure the epidemic of loneliness is meaningful relationships. Real conversations. Quality time. Face-to-face interactions. As the Church, when we show genuine care and concern in tangible ways, we offer our neighbors suffering from loneliness the opportunity to find a meaningful relationship with us and with their Savior, Jesus.

**Pray:** *Jesus, You suffered loneliness and hell itself for the sake of all humanity. As a member of Your Church, use me to free others from the living hell of loneliness. In my times of loneliness, help me build meaningful relationships with others within the Body of Christ. Amen.*

## Wild Thing

Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

By Vicar Joshua Brakhage

*Text:* Read Psalm 73:21-28

*Emphasis:* Verse 28a: *“But as for me, God’s presence is my good.”*

“You can take the animal out of the wild, but you can’t take the wild out of the animal.” That phrase is popularly used to convince people that treating wild animals like pets is a bad idea: both for the animal and for the people. You don’t have to do much Googling to find countless stories of the damage done when people treat tigers, lions, crocodiles, and bears as something other than the wild animals God created them to be. And this is the metaphor our psalm borrows to describe the human instinct to recoil and lash out when we feel wounded. We turn into feral animals, attacking friends, family, and even God – biting the hand that feeds us, that holds us.

I know this is true, because I’ve lived it. No, I don’t literally turn into a rampaging rhinoceros whenever I get my feelings hurt. But the impact can be the same. And while I’ve never truly *been* a wild animal, I have been a petulant toddler, a pouty teenager and a know-it-all adult. And when I feel wounded, it’s easy to revert to throwing childish tantrums, indulging in self-imposed isolation, or trampling others in vainglorious arrogance. Once again, I find these ancient psalms do a remarkably accurate job in diagnosing my contemporary human condition.

Yet, when the fury drains from my eyes, I clearly see what the psalmist sees: *“I am always with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me up in glory.”* The hand I’ve just bitten holds me still. With His wounds still showing, my Savior still wraps His bloodied hand around mine to patiently guide me. I cannot help but see how the wounds in His hands, His feet, His side and His brow were all my doing, yet in my wildness, He loves me still and chooses to take me up in glory to be where He is forever.

I love the way this translation renders verse 28: *“God’s presence is my good.”* The nearness of my Savior is my good. Because I won’t find any good in myself, just wild desires and untamable impulses. But my good is God’s closeness to me through Jesus Christ. My good is the Spirit alive inside me. Though my wild history ought to earn me a “Warning: Dangerous Beast” tag to hang around my neck, God brings Himself near to me, choosing to touch me with His Word and embrace me within His family of faith. Wilder yet, He offers His own body and blood for me to eat and drink, because He knows even better than I do: God’s presence is my good.

*Pray:* Thank You, saving Lord, for wrapping Your hand around mine to guide and preserve me. And when my wildness seeks to draw me away from You, hold me closer still for Your presence is my only good. Amen.

## Give Thanks

Thursday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

By Lindsey Duerr, DCE

*Text:* Psalm 95

*Emphasis:* Verse 2: “Let us enter His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout triumphantly to him in song.”

I don't even think I knew what “Friendsgiving” was before moving to Oklahoma. Not that it wasn't a thing, I just never was a part of it. So I didn't really know about it. (For those of you pondering – it's Thanksgiving with friends instead of with family.)

Anyways, every Friendsgiving get together we always go around the room saying one thing that we are thankful for (something I had never done before, and thought was really neat). I remember one year a young kid said he was thankful for toilet paper – which I thought was a really good answer, in case you are needing any ideas.

But have you ever thought about being thankful for God's presence? Not for His presents, but just for God, for His presence?

I think it's easy at Thanksgiving to make a long list of all the things we are thankful for, and, I would assume at least, that God and/or His sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, makes it somewhere on that list. Now don't get me wrong, I don't want to undermine this gift because it is 100% a saving grace and should remain on the list...but God's presence – what a thing to be thankful for, too!

Can you imagine serving a ‘god’ who was hands off? Who left his creation to figure it out on their own? Unfortunately, some people think this is how God works! But, thankfully, He doesn't!

God made it clear that a Helper was coming – the Holy Spirit who would help guide us in our faith. God also left His fingerprints all over creation and He works to sustain His creation each day. On top of this, His Word is living and active in our lives. Through the Word He makes Himself tangible in the Sacraments. Because of Jesus, we have the opportunity to come before God in worship and prayer. We get to call on His name and hear His voice in our lives.

So this Thanksgiving, let's not just thank and praise God for what He has done – His presents – His Son, the Holy Spirit, etc., but also for who He is – His character and *presence* in our everyday lives.

(P.S. props to you if you were able to get through this devotion without singing!)

*Pray:* Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Your Son Jesus as a sacrifice for us as well as for making Your presence known on this earth – for revealing Yourself through Your creation and the Word. You are a personal God who cares deeply about His creation and we praise you for both what you have done, and who you are. Amen.

## Pass It On

Friday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

By Pastor Jonathan Meyer

*Text:* Psalm 109:21-31

*Emphasis:* Verse 30: *I will fervently thank the Lord with my mouth; I will praise him in the presence of many.*

I grew up attending a Lutheran school (K-8), much like our own HTLS. We had chapel in the Church Sanctuary every week. It was there, sitting in those pews chapel—in God’s presence, and in the presence of other young Christians—that I learned the song, “Pass It On.” Here’s the first verse:

*It only takes a spark to get a fire going / And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing. / That’s how it is with God’s love, once you’ve experienced it; / You spread His love to everyone / You want to pass it on!*

Kurt Kaiser, who wrote that song (among others), recently passed away. Following his death, a few articles came out discussing Kaiser and that beloved song. Kaiser had been working on a musical “Tell it Like it Is,” a show written to get young people involved in the church in 1969. He said, after writing the musical, they needed a “closer.” A modern day “Just As I Am.” While sitting by the fireplace, looking at the remnants of a recent fire, the lyrics just came to him. His wife suggested something about shouting it from the mountaintops, and the third verse came along:

*I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I’ve found. / You can depend on Him, it matters not where you’re bound. / I’ll shout it from the mountaintops, I want my world to know / The Lord of Love has come to me! / I want to pass it on!*

I remember at the end of that phrase, “I’ll shout it from the mountaintops,” we would always yell “HEY, WORLD!” Then, after “I want my world to know,” some of us would say, “JESUS LOVES YOU!” If you know the song, perhaps you have your own memories of it—whether in chapel, at a campfire, in a car, or wherever.

Throughout this week our sermon and devotionals have focused on being in the Lord’s presence. That is our ultimate desire and goal—to be with the Lord forever. In Christ Jesus, God makes that a possibility for us all, for He has overcome sin and death which separate us from our Creator!

The psalm verse quoted above begins by echoing yesterday’s thoughts of thankfulness at God’s presence. But the verse continues. Beyond thanking God, the Psalmist says he “*will praise Him in the presence of many.*” In other words, he’s going to tell others what God has done! This is our task, too.

The Lord of Love has come to us! It’s our turn to sing our praises in the presence of others—those who don’t know Jesus. It’s our time to speak what God in Christ has done. It’s time to shout it from the mountaintops: “HEY, WORLD! JESUS LOVES YOU!” It’s time to pass it on.

*Pray:* *Lord of Love, we thank You for Your many blessings, especially for coming to us and working in us. Help us to pass on Your message of salvation to others. Amen.*

## Escape

Saturday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018

By Pastor Jonathan Meyer

*Text:* Read Psalm 139

*Emphasis:* Verse 7: *Where can I go to escape your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*

A man saw a young boy returning from Church one day. The boy had a Bible tucked under his arm. So, the man—an atheist who thought he could give the boy a “real” lesson on God—offered the child a dollar if he would show him where God is. The little boy got a puzzled look on his face and turned to the man saying, “Mister, I’ll give *you* a dollar if you show me where God ain’t!”

We live in a culture convinced that God does not exist. Many think He is just a figment of your imagination; a myth; a childish, imaginary friend. While many have put the question of Jesus’ historical existence to rest, they still doubt His divinity. Rather, most prefer to trust in what they can see or evaluate for themselves. And that’s the problem.

Too many people are looking to see something specific; to experience a grand vision. It would literally take a miracle for them to believe...or so they think. Jesus, however, is pretty clear that if one doesn’t believe on account of the Word, a miracle won’t do either.

By faith, which itself is a miracle manifested by the Spirit’s working, we trust and we KNOW that the Lord is present. We don’t have to see Him with our eyes. He is everywhere. There is no escaping Him. And, as we’ll see in tomorrow’s readings and sermons, there is no escaping the return of Christ the King on the Last Day.

There is no escaping God’s presence. There’s no escaping the Last Day. But there’s also no escaping God’s love. When we sin, when we distance ourselves from God by our thoughts, words or actions, there’s no escaping His love. His love is real and present for you. And even for those who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ as Lord—His love is real and present for them, too. Little did Enrique Iglesias know he would be inspiring a devotional when he released his 2001 hit song, *Escape!* “*You can run, you can hide / But you can’t escape my love!*” That’s how it is with God’s love! There is no escaping it.

I often tell my students, and I’ve said it in sermons before, too: “God loves you, and there’s nothing you can do about it. Christ died for you, and there’s nothing you can do about it.” In other words, you can run, you can hide, but you can’t escape His love! Amen!

*Pray:* Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us so fiercely in spite of our sin, and for surrounding us with Your presence. Let us daily rejoice in Your ongoing love in Jesus. Amen.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and School does not necessarily condone any particular message or lifestyle choices represented from the musicians or songs mentioned or included in this series. Song selections were made purely for the sake of the title reflecting the particular message of the Psalm of the Day.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible<sup>®</sup>, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible<sup>®</sup> and CSB<sup>®</sup> are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.



HOLY TRINITY  
— LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL —

405.348.3292 | HOLYTRINITYEDMOND.ORG