

MERCY AND JUSTICE IN PSALMS AND PROVERBS



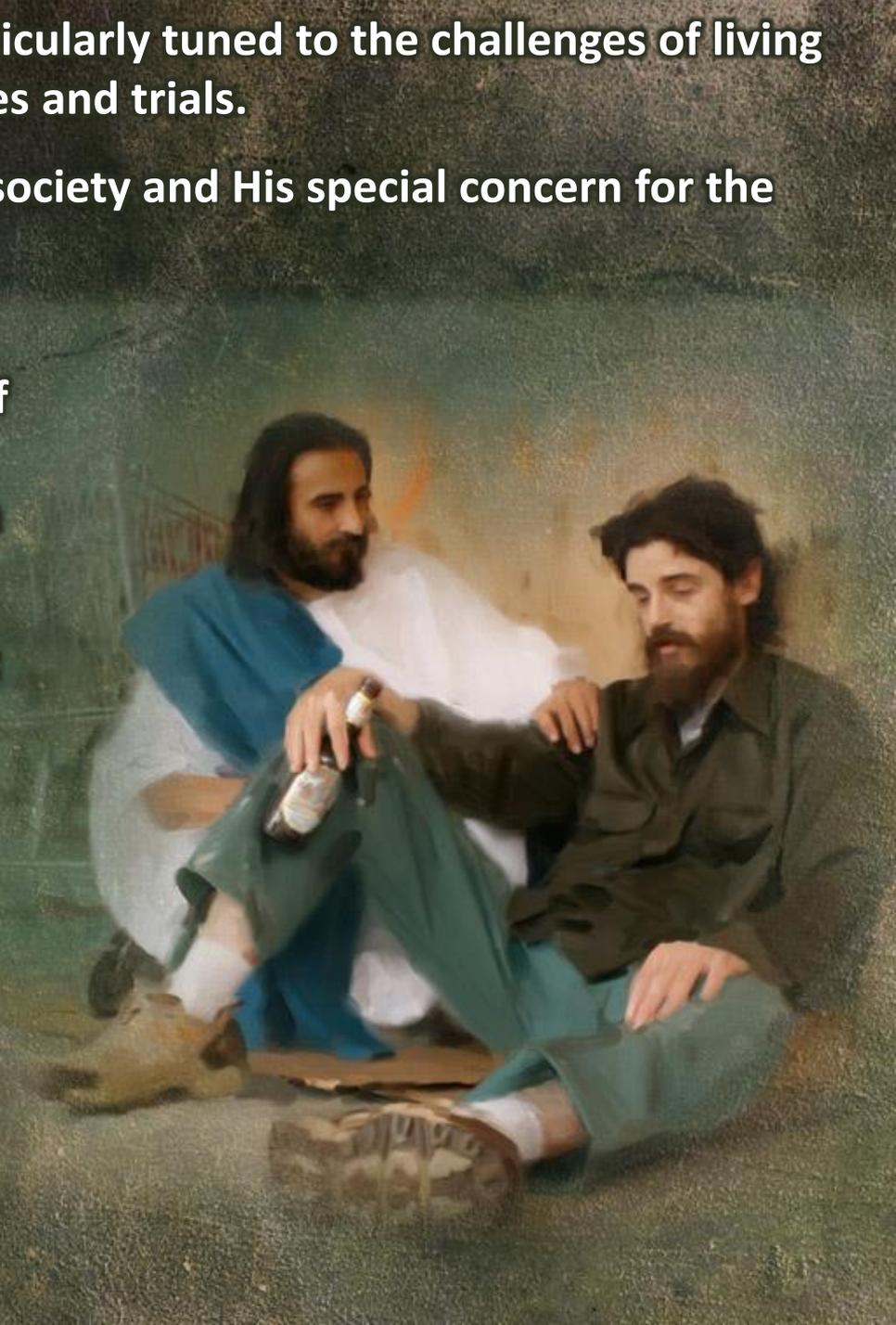
Lesson 4 for
July 27, 2019

Psalms and Proverbs are two books particularly tuned to the challenges of living faithfully amid life's common experiences and trials.

Both offer insights into God's vision for society and His special concern for the poor and oppressed.

The cry of the Psalms and the wisdom of Proverbs are that God does notice and will intervene to protect those too often ignored or exploited.

And if that's what God's about, it's what we should be about, as well.



 **Psalm 9. Hope in the Judgement**

 **Psalm 82. Judging with justice**

 **Psalm 101. Fair leaders**

 **Psalm 146. A merciful God**

 **Proverbs. Mercy and justice**

Psalm 9

HOPE IN THE JUDGEMENT

**"For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever."
(Psalm 9:18)**

The injustices in this sinful world result in suffering. They may also lead to a life of poverty and exclusion.

**God is "a refuge in times of trouble"
(Psalm 9:9) for the poor and distressed.**

**Above all, we have the hope that God will do justice: "He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity"
(Psalm 9:8 NIV).**

Those suffering injustice in this world can be sure that a fair judgement is coming.

In that day, the only fair and just Judge will give each person their reward or punishment.



JUDGING WITH JUSTICE

"Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked." (Psalm 82:4)



God enacted fair laws which punished oppression and inequality.

He's the supreme Judge, and He delegated judicial duties to people who should judge following His fair law. He called them "gods" (v. 1, 6).

If they don't "deliver the poor and needy... from the hand of the wicked" (v. 4), they're not acting with justice. This results in social injustice, and God will demand an explanation (v. 7).

We may suffer because of a wrong judicial verdict, but we can appeal to a Judge above all judges (v. 8).

FAIR LEADERS

"My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me." (Psalm 101:6 NIV)

Are the leaders of a country responsible for the injustice in it? David understood the implications of the unfair and capricious misbehavior of the leaders of the country (Saul and his counselors).



Once he was crowned, he surrounded himself with upright people and rejected the proud and those who defame, defraud, lie and do any act of iniquity (v. 5, 7, 8).

Justice and mercy are essential for good leaders: "I will not look with approval on anything that is vile." (v. 3 NIV)

A MERCIFUL GOD

"Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help,
whose hope is in the Lord his God." (Psalm 146:5)

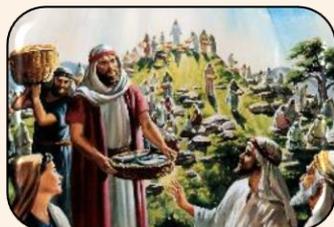
Psalm 146:6-9 encourages us to praise God our Creator,
and to trust Him because...



He keeps
truth forever



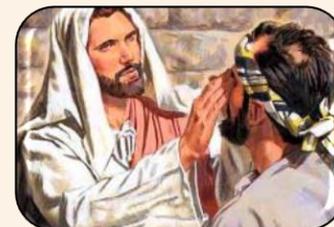
He executes
justice for the
oppressed



He gives food
to the hungry



He gives
freedom to
the prisoners



He opens the
eyes of the
blind



He raises
those who
are bowed
down



He loves the
righteous



He watches
over the
strangers



He relieves
the
fatherless
and widow



He turns
upside down
the way of
the wicked

The best way we can worship God is by acting as He does, to the best of our ability.

“As the things of nature show their appreciation of the Master Worker by doing their best to beautify the earth and to represent God’s perfection, so human beings should strive in their sphere to represent God’s perfection, allowing Him to work out through them His purposes of justice, mercy, and goodness.”

MERCY AND JUSTICE

Wise advice from Proverbs for our daily life:

10:4

- Don't be negligent, or you will become poor

13:23

- Manage your possessions wisely, even if you don't have much

14:5, 25

- Be a true witness. Be honest

14:31

- Don't oppress the poor, be merciful to them

15:15-16

- Be happy with what you have

16:8

- Don't benefit yourself by being unfair

16:11-13

- Always make fair transactions

17:15

- Don't justify evil. Don't condemn a righteous person

19:17

- Give to the poor, you're lending to God

22:22-23

- Don't rob the poor or oppress the afflicted. God pleads their cause

28:14-16

- Fear God. Don't extort. Reject greed

30:7-9

- Don't leave God, no matter how rich or poor you are

“Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures. 'And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.' Every merciful act to the needy, the suffering, is regarded as though done to Jesus. When you succor the poor, sympathize with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriend the orphan, you bring yourselves into a closer relationship to Jesus.”

E.G.W. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, cp. 2, p. 25)