

God is Holding Your Life

A Journey of Assurance for the New Year



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"The works of God's hands are faithful and just." - Psalm 111

Life is a series of exclamations from "O No!" to "Help!" to "Oh Yeah!" We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. There are also seasons of our lives when we feel inundated with more of one than the others. As we enter the new year, we had hoped we would be past the "O No!" of the last several months. Instead we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for "Help!" The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust and even give our thankful "Oh Yeah!" because God is, indeed, holding our lives.

Week 1: "These Lives are Precious"

Week 2: "Awe and Wonder"

Week 3: "Where Can I Go?"

Week 4: "In God Alone"

Week 5: "Whole Heart Hallelujah"

Week 6: "We Wait, We Hope, We Stay"

Week 7: "The One is Shining Forth"

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Weekly Scriptures and Synopses

[please note: these are simply fragments of the fuller scriptures used in the scripts]

Week 1 “These Lives are Precious”

“God delivers the needy when they call.” - Psalm 72

We do not live in a land ruled by Kings, as the hearers of our first Psalm of this series did. Nevertheless, the petitions of the psalmist for justice, deliverance, defense of the poor and oppressed, and peace for all peoples is an undergirding theme of our faith. We are reminded that a just society is one that proclaims “these lives are precious” and worthy of protection. God, indeed, is holding our lives. Let this *be* our “epiphany” in this new year.

Week 2 “Awe and Wonder”

“My God gives strength to the people and blesses the people with peace.” - Psalm 29

Strength and peace is the prayer of the Psalm this week. The Psalmist says “let me count the ways” that we can know the strength of the Holy One. With awe and wonder we behold the presence of God in all the elements of creation—water, fire, air, earth. And it is this glory that assures us that God, indeed, is holding our lives.

Week 3 “Where Can I Go?”

“You have searched me and know me.” - Psalm 139

This week’s Psalm text brings home this message: we are in an intimate relationship with God. There is nowhere we go that God is not present—no state of our being that results in our being abandoned. God has knit us together, has woven us, knowing us from before our beginning. God, indeed, is holding our lives.

Week 4 “In God Alone”

“God alone is my rock and salvation... I shall not be shaken.” - Psalm 62

“My one and only!” So many songs have utilized this phrase to express devoted love. This week we see that this tradition goes back all the way to the poets of the psalm tradition. This is a love psalm of trust in the Holy One and Only who is the rock and refuge in the midst of life that sometimes feels as fleeting as breath. We put our trust in the One who, indeed, is holding our lives.

Week 5 “Whole Heart Hallelujah”

“The works of God’s hands are faithful and just.” - Psalm 111

One mode of poetry in the Psalms is all-out praise and thanksgiving, such as the one for today. We also find praise even in Psalms of lament and complaint because “God is good all the time and all the time God is good!” Life is not always good, but when we engage in gratitude, we remember the evidence of God at work in our lives and we remember that indeed, God is holding our lives, even now.

Week 6 “We Wait, We Hope, We Stay”

“God heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.” - Psalm 147

Today’s Psalm comes late in the Book and offers a glimpse of a time when the exiled outcasts are gathering back together and seeing their world built back up. We too, yearn for a re-gathering and a day when we sing our praises and play our instruments with abandon together again. We wait, we hope, we stay firm in our faith, knowing as our ancient ancestors did, that God is indeed holding our lives.

Week 7 “The One is Shining Forth”

“God speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.” - Psalm 50

The Psalm that comes at the end of our series speaks of an active God whose light shines for all time and in all places. God is not silent, but calls the people to remember that they, too, can act on God’s behalf, holding all suffering peoples in hands of prayer and care and transforming the world that will shine bright into the future. May it be so.