

CHARLES
SPURGEON

40

MORNINGS &
EVENINGS IN
PSALMS



A 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL



WHITAKER
HOUSE

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

Boldface type in the Scripture quotations indicates the author's emphasis.

40 MORNINGS AND EVENINGS IN PSALMS: A 40-Day Devotional

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PREFACE

MORNINGS

Morning devotions anchor the soul, so that it will not very readily drift far away from God during the day. They perfume the heart so that it smells fragrant with piety until nightfall; they hold up the soul's garments so that it is less apt to stumble; they feed all their power so that the soul is not permitted to faint.

The morning is the gate of the day and should be well-guarded with prayer. It is one end of the thread on which the day's actions are strung and should be well-knit with devotion. If we felt the majesty of life more, we would be more careful of its mornings. He who rushes from his bed to his business and does not wait to worship is as foolish as if he had not put on his clothes or washed his face. He is as unwise as one who dashes into battle without being armed. Let us bathe in the softly flowing river of communion with God before the heat of the wilderness and the burden of the way begin to oppress us.

In writing these short reflections on the Psalms, I wanted to assist the believer in his or her private meditations. A child may sometimes console a desolate heart that might not otherwise have been cheered. Even a flower smiling upward from the ground may turn our thoughts heavenward. It is my hope that, by the Holy Spirit's grace, as the reader turns, morning by morning, to read a simple page, he will hear in it a still small voice that will speak the Word of God to his soul.

If there is not time to read both the morning devotional and a portion from Scripture, I earnestly request that this book

would be set aside, for it would be a sore affliction to me to know that any family read the Word of God less on my account. I would be disappointed indeed if, after all, I frustrated my own purpose by diverting one moment of time to the perusal of my remarks that should have been given to searching the Word of God itself.

EVENINGS

When the noise and turmoil of the day are over, it is sweet to commune with God. The cool and calm of evening agree most delightfully with prayer and praise. The hours of the declining sun are like quiet alleys in the garden of time wherein man may find his Maker waiting to commune with him, even as of old the Lord God walked with Adam in paradise in the cool of the day.

It is fitting that we should set apart a peaceful season before the day has quite ended, a season of thanksgiving for abounding grace, of repentance for multiplied follies, of self-examination for insinuating evils. To leap from day to day like a mad hunter beating the bushes is an omen of being delivered over to destruction. But the solemn pause, the deliberate consideration—these are means of grace and signs of an indwelling life. The ocean tide stays awhile at ebb before it resolves to flood again; the moon sometimes lingers at its fullest size. There are distinct hedges in nature set between the seasons—even the strike of the bell is a little warning that men should not remove landmarks; instead, they should frequently examine the boundaries in their lives and keep up with due interval and solemnity the remembrance of

the passing of days and months and years. Each evening it would be well to traverse the boundaries of the day and take note of all that it has brought and all that it has seen.

The reading of the Word and prayer are as gates of precious stones to admit us into the presence of the august Majesty. He is most blessed who most frequently swings those gates on their sapphire hinges. When the stars are revealed and all the hosts of heaven walk in golden glory, then surely that is the time when the solemn temple is lit up and the worshipper is invited to enter. If one hour can be endowed with a sacredness above the others, it must be the hour when the Lord looses the cords of Orion and leads forth the Bear and its cubs. (See Job 38:31–32.) Then voices from worlds afar call us to contemplation and adoration, and the stillness of the lower world prepares an oratory for the devout soul. He surely never prays at all who does not end the day as all men wish to end their lives—in prayer.

By this work, if I may lead one heart upward that otherwise would have drooped, or sow in a single mind a holy purpose that otherwise never would have been conceived, I will be grateful. May the Lord send us such results in thousands of instances, and His will be all the praise. The longer I live, the more deeply I am conscious that the Holy Spirit alone can make truth profitable to the heart; therefore, in earnest prayer, I commit this volume and its companion to His care.

—*Charles S. Spurgeon*

MORNING 1

I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

—Psalm 89:19

Why was Christ “*chosen out of the people*”? Speak, my heart, for heart-thoughts are best. Was it not that He might be able to be our Brother in the blessed tie of kindred blood? Oh, what relationship there is between Christ and the believer! The believer can say, “I have a Brother in heaven. I may be poor, but I have a Brother who is rich and is a King. Will He permit me to be in need while He is on His throne? Oh, no! He loves me; He is my Brother.” Believer, wear this blessed thought like a diamond necklace around the neck of your memory. As a golden ring, put it on the finger of remembrance and use it as the King’s own seal, stamping the petitions of your faith with the confidence of success. He is a “*brother...born for adversity*” (Proverbs 17:17); treat Him as such. Christ was also “*chosen out of the people*” so that He might know our needs and sympathize with us. He “*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15). In all our sorrows, we have His sympathy. Temptation, pain, disappointment, weakness, weariness, poverty—He knows them all, for He has felt them all. Remember this, Christian, and let it comfort you. However difficult and painful your road may be, it is marked by the footsteps of your Savior. Even when you reach the dark valley of the shadow of death and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, you will find His footprints there. In all places, wherever we go, He has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry has once been laid on the shoulders of Emmanuel.

Take courage! Royal feet have left a blood-red track on the road and consecrated the thorny path forever.

EVENING 1

Serve the LORD with gladness.

—Psalm 100:2

Delight in divine service is a token of acceptance. Those who serve God with a sad countenance, because they do what is unpleasant to them, are not serving Him at all; they bring the form of homage, but the life is absent. Our God requires no slaves to grace His throne. He is the Lord of the empire of love, and He would have His servants dressed in the uniform of joy. The angels of God serve Him with songs, not with groans. A murmur or a sigh would be mutiny in their ranks. Obedience that is not voluntary is disobedience, for the Lord looks at the heart, and if He sees that we serve Him from force, and not because we love Him, He will reject our offering. Service coupled with cheerfulness is heart-service and, therefore, true. Take away joyful willingness from the Christian, and you have removed the test of his sincerity. If a man is driven to battle, he is no patriot; but he who marches into the fray with flashing eye and beaming face, singing, "It is sweet to die for one's country," proves himself to be sincere in his patriotism. Cheerfulness is the support of our strength; in the joy of the Lord we are strong. It acts as the remover of difficulties. It is to our service what oil is to the wheels of a railroad car. Without oil the axle soon grows hot and accidents occur; if there is not

a holy cheerfulness to oil our wheels, our spirits will be clogged with weariness. The man who is cheerful in his service to God proves that obedience is his element; he can sing,

Make me to walk in Your commands,
’Tis a delightful road.

Reader, let me put this question to you: Do you “*serve the LORD with gladness*”? Let us show the people of the world, who think our religion is slavery, that to us, it is a delight and a joy! Let our gladness proclaim that we serve a good Master.

MORNING 2

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.
—Psalm 91:3

God delivers His people “*from the snare of the fowler*” in two senses: *from* and *out of*. First, He delivers them *from* the snare; He does not let them enter it. Second, if they should be caught in it, He delivers them *out of* it. The first promise is the most precious to some; the second is the best to others. “*He shall deliver thee from the snare.*” How? Trouble is often the means whereby God delivers us. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction, and, in mercy, He sends the rod. We say, “Lord, why is this happening?”—not knowing that our trouble has been the means of delivering us from far greater evil. Many have been thus saved from ruin by their sorrows and their crosses; these have frightened the birds from the net. At other times, God keeps His people