

# Watching Daily At My Gates

## The Song of Zion

### A Psalter-Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign, Covenant God

#### July 4 Read I Samuel 19:18-21

Psalm 143:9-10 In verse ten we have the words, “Teach me to do thy will.” We should all take heed to these words and make them part of our daily prayers. By nature we do not wish to do Jehovah’s will. In fact by nature we wish to do the opposite of Jehovah’s will. The psalmist knew, and we must learn this as well, that God’s way is best for us. God’s spirit is good the verse says. Is this our testimony? Let us learn the will of God. Let us walk in that will. Let us bow before Jehovah’s teaching as he leads us into the land which flows with milk and honey where we will receive our eternal reward with the whole church triumphant. As we prepare to enter God’s house tomorrow, let us go to sleep with this prayer on our lips, “Teach me to do thy will.” Sing Psalters 389:5, 390:3, and 391:2-3.

#### July 5 Read Psalm 143

Psalm 143:11-12 In verses seven through twelve of this Psalm we have a series of pleas from the Psalmist. There are ten of these petitions. Take the time this Lord’s Day to find them and ponder their meaning. Do this personally and also with your families. The last five words of the Psalm give the reason why David could make these petitions. He knew that he was the servant of Jehovah. Only one who depends on a master can plead for such help. Is this our plea? Do we confess that we are God’s servants? Did we worship that way today? Do we live that way throughout the week? Let us think about being a servant, and then let us seek the help of our Master the almighty God. Only in that way can we find the good life here on this earth, but especially in our heavenly home. Sing Psalters 389:6 and 391:4.

#### July 6 Read Psalm 144

Psalm 144:1-2 In this Psalm of praise, David blesses Jehovah who is everything to him. David has experienced much in his life. Throughout his life David has learned that in all things he must trust Jehovah. David acknowledges that he is a man of war. Even in this he knows that he has done all things only with God’s help. It was not the man David who “killed his ten thousands;” it was Jehovah who had made that possible. Do we, in the station and calling that God has placed us, acknowledge Jehovah as the One who gives to us the abilities to carry out that station? Do we daily

give credit only to God? We must do this, you know. To do anything else is to claim that we have abilities of ourselves. In claiming that, we would claim that we have a part in our salvation. This we may never do. Let us daily praise God who doeth all things in and through us. Sing Psalter 392:1.

### **July 7 Read Hebrews 2:1-10**

Psalm 144:3-4 David continues in his confession that he is nothing and God is everything. Here we see the same words as used in the familiar Psalm 8. These words were repeated in the book of Hebrews as its writer prepares the defense that Christ, alone, is the source of salvation. David looked back at his life; from man's point of view it looked illustrious; from his enlightened eyes he saw it for what it really was: nothing! Can we do this? Do we do this? Do we claim credit for our accomplishments and even for our salvation? If we do, we are sadly mistaken. We are making ourselves puffed up with pride and are in danger of falling as those who have committed the dreadful sin of pride. Let us confess that man is nothing, emptiness. Let us fall upon our knees now and daily and give all glory to God. Sing Psalter 392:2.

### **July 8 Read Isaiah 64:1-8**

Psalm 144:5-6 David had many enemies in this life. Just contemplate the account of Samuel as he ran from Saul and later became king. But David realizes that these were not just his enemies; more importantly he realized that these were God's enemies. He understood that these men were the agents of Satan, who were trying to rid the world of the church and to prevent Christ from coming to save his people from their sin. Therefore he prayed this imprecatory prayer for deliverance. Do we use this language today? Are we so jealous for the cause of Christ in this world that we pray such a prayer? We should and we must for this is the will of God. Sing Psalter 392:3.

### **July 9 Read Judges 5:24-31**

Psalm 144:7-8 David continues his plea for help against those who war against him and God. Now he gives the basis for that plea. The wicked are fountains of lies and deceit. They constantly take God's Word and deceitfully use it. We, too, must be zealous about God's Word. Like David we must be offended at the misuse and mistreatment of that Word. Are we? Do we, as a course of habit, express our dislike of the misuse of God's Word, name, attributes, and works? This is unpopular, you know. We, in America, like to claim freedom of speech in all things. This misuse of God's things is not covered under the freedom of speech. Let us use God's Word correctly in our lives and let us be jealous for that Word in our daily lives. Sing Psalter 392:4.

### **July 10 Read Revelation 5:6-14**

Psalm 144:9-10 In gratitude for his deliverance, David declares that he will sing a new song of thanksgiving unto God. It is a new song because it is not polluted with man's sin. It is God's song written for his praise. These verses show to us a correct interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism on this point. We must have knowledge of our sin. We must confess that our deliverance is only through the blood of Christ. And we must give gratitude for such deliverance. This gratitude is not legislated by man's ordinances; this gratitude comes from a thankful new heart given by God. Let us praise God daily for our salvation and let us do it with the songs that he has given to us. We need to use no other words! Sing Psalter 392:5.

### **July 11 Read Nehemiah 13:23-31**

Psalm 144:11 In today's text we find reference to a problem that the church of all ages has experienced. There are those in the church who are strange because they have no use for God. In today's reading, Nehemiah found the same problem in Jerusalem after the captivity. This problem, too, is common in the church of all ages. There are "strangers" there brought in when men and women of the church marry men and women in the world. True, God can bring someone into the church from the outside. Think of Rahab or Ruth. But this is the exception not the rule. God saves his people in the line of continued generations. Parents, pray for your children that they do not bring strange children into God's church. Sing Psalter 392:6.

### **July 12 Read III John 1-11**

Psalm 144:12 Why must we keep those who speak a mixed language out of the congregation? The answer is given in the beautiful words of today's text. We do this for our children's sake. We are not isolationists. We are not elitists as some would claim. We are a people who must care for the covenant seed that God has given to us. As a farmer rids his farm of weeds so that the desired plants can have all the nutrients, the Church of Christ must make sure that her sons and daughters receive all the spiritual nutrients showered upon them by God. As a mason chips away all unneeded parts of a rock so that he can have the right one for his building, so must we chip away the pollution of sin out of our children's lives. This is an awesome calling. Let us pray for the grace to carry it out. Sing Psalter 393:1.

### **July 13 Read Leviticus 26:1-13**

Psalm 144:13-14 When we do all that is possible to nurture the covenant seed, God will bless us with spiritual plenty. Even though the text speaks of physical things, we know that these are pictures of the spiritual. It is true that our physical lives are affected by our spiritual strength and weakness. But we must be concerned about the spiritual climate in the church and in our congregations. Why? Simply because it is

the Church of Christ, and it is our duty to be jealous toward the body of Christ. To do anything but to care for our children in the best way possible is to cause the church to go into ruin. Root out those evils in our houses and in our lives that are damaging to God's children. Pray for the strength to bring those children up in the fear of Jehovah. In doing this God will bless us both in this life and in the life to come. Sing Psalter 393:2.

### **July 14 Read Psalm 144**

Psalm 144:15 In the first verse of this chapter David speaks well of Jehovah and his works. In this final verse he declares that the people of God are blessed or happy in the way of their keeping the Word of Jehovah. A happy church is not one which has a social program for every need that can be imagined. A happy church is not one whose order of worship is "up-to-date and meaningful." A happy church is one which brings its children up in the fear of the Lord. This church catechizes its children and young people diligently in God's Word. The parents and elders make sure that catechism as well as church is attended faithfully with no thought of skipping for some "good" reason. The happy church is one which loves God's Word and teaches its children to love God's Word. Is ours a happy people? If not, why not? When God is Lord over all things in our lives, we will be happy. We do not make him Lord; he is Lord! And we must bow to him in all that we do. Sing Psalter 393:3.

### **July 15 Read Psalm 145**

Psalm 145:1-3 In these opening verses of this beautiful Psalm of David, we find David giving all glory to God. As we have said before, David had a life in which many men would like to boast. David accomplished many things which would land him in all sorts of halls of fame in this world. As David neared the end of his life, he saw that all of his accomplishments were little in comparison to the greatness of God. Children and young people, have you fallen prey to the philosophy of the world that you have to be number one in this life? If you have, reread these verses and reread them daily. Our greatness is nothingness. God's greatness is everything. Let this be our daily confession. Sing Psalters 394:1, 397:1, and 399:1.

### **July 16 Read Psalm 78:1-8**

Psalm 145:4-5 Summer time! Parents, are you instructing your children? Catechism has recessed. We are in the middle of school summer vacation. Who is teaching the covenant seed? Is it the television? Is it some day care worker? Is it a baby sitter? Is it Satan? Parents, who is instructing your children this summer? We have much to teach our children about God. What better time to do it than when our children are not encumbered with the busyness of school and other activities. We need to tell the Bible

stories to them. We need to show our children God's hand in nature. Are we making the most of our opportunities this summer? If not, why not? Sing Psalters 394:2, 397:2-3, and 399:2.

### **July 17 Read Acts 4:19-31**

Psalm 145:6-8 We need to contemplate the truth of verse eight daily. Our sins rise up before God and in his righteous anger we should be destroyed in and because of our sin. But in his righteousness, God is also merciful. He loves us with a love that cannot be found on this earth. He is gracious to us poor sinners and gives to us eternal life with him in heaven. As we busy ourselves this summer with all of our plans, let us stop and contemplate this truth. Then let us fall upon our knees and pray, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Sing Psalters 394:3 and 397:4, 5.

### **July 18 Read John 1:9-18**

Psalm 145:9 One of the truths that we must teach our children is the goodness of God. This goodness extends to the whole creation as the whole creation goes about its calling to glorify God. Are we in the middle of drought? God is good! Has a dreadful storm ravaged our town? God is good! Have you seen the beautiful sunset? God is good. Even the lilies know the goodness of God. Even the sparrows are under his watchful eyes. God is good; of that there is no doubt. Are we teaching that goodness to our children? Are we teaching them about the ultimate goodness of God? That goodness, of course, is his great love for his people expressed in his sending his Son to die for their sins. God is good. What a truth! Sing Psalters 395:1 and 397:6.

### **July 19 Read Romans 8:19-27**

Psalm 145:10-11 Do we confess the greatness and goodness of God to those around us? Our children must learn to do this even as they mingle with others. Our young people need to be guided to make public confession of faith before God and his church. The whole church must publicly confess God, his goodness, and his love in whatever place we are put in this life. This means that in the workplace we must rebuke those who sin. We must give God the glory when it is due to him. Our children must learn to sing and listen to the songs of Zion and not of Satan as they are with their peers. They will not do this if they are instructed by those who do not confess every truth of God. We must open our mouths daily and in all places and speak about the glory of our great God. Pray for the grace to do that, and pray for your children as well. Sing Psalters 395:2, 397:7, and 399:3.

### **July 20 Read I Kings 10:1-13**

Psalm 145:12 There are two accounts of a king of Israel or Judah showing his kingdom to a worldly monarch. Here we have Solomon's experience with the queen of Sheba. Later on Hezekiah shows his kingdom to ambassadors from Babylon. Christ mentions the Queen of Sheba's visit while he was on this earth. With this example he condemns those who do not believe him. God reprimands Hezekiah because of his sin of pride. We, like Solomon, must speak of what God has done in our lives and not what we have done. We must make "I" a little used word in our vocabulary except when daily confessing our sins. Let us give God the glory due to his name. Sing Psalter 395:3.

### **July 21 Read Micah 4:1-7**

Psalm 145:13 One truth that should afford us great comfort is that God's kingdom is everlasting. It has no beginning and no ending. Nothing can threaten its existence. No power, whether earthly or otherwise, can overthrow it. Satan attempted to do so throughout the Scriptures. But God always, by his power, said I am King. This is great comfort for the child of God. We need not fear anything that may happen upon this earth. As Paul in Romans 8 confesses, "nothing can separate us from the love of Christ." Let us hold on to these comforting words. Let us rest assured that nothing will harm us since our King's kingdom is everlasting. Sing Psalters 395:4 and 397:8

### **July 22 Read John 5:1-9**

Psalm 145:14 The people of God in this life are often the weak in this world. We constantly fall either because of our sinful nature or because we are oppressed by those that hate the cause of Christ and his gospel. But each time we fall, we find our God picking us up and setting us on our feet once more. When we are oppressed in the world, He makes it possible for us to hold up our heads proudly and to say, "My God is Jehovah." The prophets in the Old Testament knew this. The afflicted in Christ's day felt his personal healing hand upon them. This can be our confidence today as well. No matter how we are afflicted, God will hold us up. Let us make that part of our daily prayers to him. Sing Psalter 396:1.

### **July 23 Read Matthew 6:25-34**

Psalm 145:15-16 In this day of plenty, it is hard for us to look unto Jehovah for the fulfillment of our physical needs. Most of us have food enough for day, week, and even several months stored up in our houses. Most of us have much in the way of clothing. We have houses that protect us from all types of weather. Our physical bodies are cared for by doctors through means of modern medicine. But yet we must look upon our heavenly Father for all of our spiritual needs. He is the Giver of every

good thing. He will supply all of our needs. Let us pray daily for our daily bread and wait upon the open hand of God for all things. Sing Psalters 396:2 and 398:1.

### **July 24 Read James 4:1-12**

Psalm 145:17-18 It is the experience of the child of God that he has needs. These needs may be spiritual or they may be physical. Usually they are a combination of the two. Just as a child cries out in the night for his mother or father, the child of God will cry out in this night of sin for his heavenly Father. The earthly child has confidence that his parents will attend to his needs. He knows that mom or dad is just in the next room. The child of God can also have the same trust and confidence. His heavenly Father is always near to him and is always ready to help him. When the elect call upon God, he will help them because he is near. Let us rest in that confidence each day of our lives. Sing Psalter 396:3.

### **July 25 Read I John 5:12-21**

Psalm 145:19 What is our heart's desire, people of God? Is it wealth, health, or earthly happiness? Do we desire the well-being of our children? Are we concerned about our last days on this earth before death closes our eyes? What is our desire? According to this text, the elect have a desire. This desire is very different from that of the wicked. Oh, we might share their desires at times, and our earthly desires might even overshadow our one true desire. We desire eternal bliss. This cannot be achieved by any thing that happens on this earth. There is nothing that we can do to achieve it. We know this quite well. But we need not despair. God is near unto us; he will hear our cries; and he will save us. What a beautiful truth and comfort this verse is! Meditate on it daily and through the night. Sing Psalters 396:4 and 398:2.

### **July 26 Read I Peter 1:3-12**

Psalm 145:20 This verse is an example of the well-known Hebrew antithetical parallelism. This is a poetic device used quite often in the Psalms and in Proverbs. The second part of the verse provides a stark contrast to the first part. These two parts are absolute concepts. God will save the elect; God will destroy the wicked. There are only two kinds of people in this earth: elect and reprobate. Every human being is one or the other. God takes the elect to heaven; he condemns the wicked to hell. There is no other final destiny for any person in this life. Because these are two sure things, we can rejoice in them. We rejoice in that God's word is sure, and that he will take us to our final glory. Let us ponder these things as we attend church and worship the sovereign God. Sing Psalter 396:5.

### **July 27 Read Psalm 145**

Psalm 145:21 David has come full circle in this Psalm. He starts out by proclaiming that he will bless God for his greatness. Then he recounts many of these greatnesses in the Psalm. In this last verse he again says that he will bless God and he calls on others to do so as well. Is this what we do? Do we bless God publicly? Do we encourage and even command others to do so as well? This is our command in this life. Let us bless God from whom all blessings flow. Sing Psalters 396:6 and 398:3.

### **July 28 Read Psalm 146**

Psalm 146:1-2 This is the first in a group of Psalms which is a doxology for the whole book of Psalms. Their theme is quite simple. Praise ye the LORD. Another way of saying this is Hallelujah! We might wonder why so much space is given over to this theme. But then we must remember whom we are praising. Then as the psalmist states in verse 2, we realize that we must praise the Lord every day of our lives. Every breath which comes from our mouths must have Jehovah's praise in it. This is a foreign idea in this day and age of man-praising. We would rather praise others and especially ourselves than to praise God. As we study and meditate upon these Psalms, let us learn about the praise of our covenant God. Sing Psalters 400:1 and 401:1.

### **July 29 Read Ecclesiastes 3:16-22**

Psalm 146:3-4 One of the first reasons for praising Jehovah is simple: who is man? Why should we praise him or even trust in him? Man is a creature whose days upon this earth are numbered. We cannot be sure that a man will be here the next day to help us. We cannot be sure that a man is even trustworthy since by nature he is not. God, on the other hand is eternal. He will always be here. He is trust in himself. When he makes a promise, we can be assured that it will be carried out. Don't trust in man, people of God, trust in God, and you will never be disappointed. Sing Psalters 400:2 and 401:2.

### **July 30 Read Matthew 5:1-12**

Psalm 146:5 Do you want happiness in this life? This is a question that is found in advertising. It is found on the lips of doctors of all types. It is found as the titles and themes of countless books and magazine articles. In this verse we find the formula for happiness. To be happy we must have God as our help. When God is our aid we will truly be blessed. We will be able to put our hope in something that will stand forever. This is not an uncertain hope, but rather it is a certain and sure hope. We will find true and blessed peace and happiness in this life when Jehovah is our God. Sing Psalter 400:3.

### **July 31 Read Genesis 1:1-13**

Psalm 146:6 The next few verses of this Psalm explain who the God of our trust is. The psalmist first identifies him as the Creator of all things. This is both basic and necessary. If we do not believe that God is the supreme Creator, we might as well give up immediately. To dismiss the truth of creation is to dismiss all truths. We see this truth in the words of Jeremiah 33:25-26: “Thus saith the Lord; if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.” Throw away the doctrine of creation as it is laid out in Scripture and you can throw away the rest of Scripture with it as well, including our salvation. It is that plain! Sing Psalter 400:4.

### **August 1 Read I Kings 17:8-16**

Psalm 146:7-8 The next identification of our God is that he is help of the helpless. In this world God has made many to be oppressed. This oppression can be caused by many things. It could be sin, physical disability, or affliction of men. No matter what the cause is; God is our help. We can trust in him to deliver us from all manner of oppression. Now this deliverance may not be as miraculous as the widow of Zarephath. It may be that our deliverance may be the “no” that the apostle Paul received concerning the thorn in his flesh. But this we know, that God’s grace is sufficient for us. Because of this we can trust in him and trust that he will care for us in all circumstances in this life. The reason for his care upon us? It is simple: he loves us. Sing Psalters 400:5 and 401:3.

### **August 2 Read I Kings 17:17-24**

Psalm 146:9 Once again we come upon antithetical parallelism. You remember what that is, do you not? If not, just go back a few days and read the explanation. The historical account that we have read the past two days fits well with these verses. This widow who was a Gentile had a hard life. She was a widow, she was poor, and eventually her son died. Into her life God brought Elijah and a word of grace. In seeing the miracles she tasted the goodness of God. There were many widows in her town, but she was special because she was chosen by God to taste of his grace. The others who trusted in Baal were turned upside down in their affliction, but this widow was set on high. Trust in Jehovah who cares for his people because he loves them. Sing Psalter 400:6.

### **August 3 Read Psalm 146**

Psalm 146:10 This Psalm, as all others in this section, ends how it starts: “Praise ye the LORD.” After reading this Psalm, is that your confession, people of God? Young

people, are you willing to have the praise of Jehovah fill your mouths? Do you let the world of your friends know that Jehovah must receive the praise and not man. Have you turned off the man-boasting songs on your audio equipment and replaced them with God's praises? This is not just the psalmist's confession; it is his command as he was moved by the Holy Spirit to write this words. Praise Jehovah. Hallelujah to him who reigns forever and ever. Praise ye the LORD. Sing Psalters 400:7 and 401:4.