

Soundtrack to your life

We're starting out on a journey through the psalms—the Bible's songbook—that will probably stretch over the next five years.

In *Explore*, we tend to look at the psalms on a Sunday. According to feedback from *Explore* readers, they like this because they either skip Sunday, or use it to catch up on one they have missed out during the week!

That's understandable—but it's also a great shame, because the psalms have always been a place of great comfort, encouragement and help for Christians in our prayers and praises (we need help for both!); and a mirror to reflect our changing emotions. There are songs for us when we are filled with doubt or anger; for when we are bewildered and disappointed. There are songs to give voice to our joy and words to give shape to our thanksgiving when our hearts burst with gratitude. They are the soundtrack to our Christian lives.

Blessed life

Read Psalm 1 v 1

- ❓ *What do you understand by the word “blessed”?*
- ❓ *Think about your life. You may be weighed down with frustrations and sadnesses; but can you think for just a while now about the ways in which you are truly blessed?*

The word “blessed” has a whole range of meanings. But fundamentally it means “favoured by God”—and so truly happy. Psalms will tell us about the blessed life. What it is; how to find it; how to live it.

Real life

Read Psalm 10 v 1; 20 v 1; 30 v 1; 40 v 1

- ❓ *What does this little sample of psalms tell you about the “blessed” life?*

It's about real life. This is not a songbook full of romantic daydreams. It is about what we all struggle with day by day. God's blessing on our lives is experienced through and in everything. Bible-reading is not about escapism. It is about matching our view of reality with his.

Jesus' life

Read Psalm 22 v 1

Ultimately, this book is about Jesus. These are the words Jesus shouted from the cross (Mark 15 v 34)—the psalms were the soundtrack of his life, death and resurrection. These songs are revealing to us the blessed life of our Lord, and how we can only be truly blessed in and through him.

- ❓ *Why not try to memorise Psalm 1 as we work through it, and recite it each morning?*

Pray

The great Reformer, Martin Luther, said that to understand the psalms we must learn to pray them. Talk to the Lord about Psalm 1 v 1 now.