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Day 12 – May 2

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## Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

### *Psalms of Joy and Praise*

Readings: *Psalm 103, 104, 113, 114, 117*

#### **Reflections:**

- Psalm 103: Another incredibly beautiful song about God’s character. The themes of God’s justice, love and mercy are strong and clear. The psalm begins outlining the progression of how God transforms a life. 1) forgives sin (we are lost in sin); 2) heals our diseases (we are bound by the effects of sin - physical, emotional, mental diseases); 3) redeems your life from the pit (takes you out of your dysfunctional and broken life context); 4) crowns you with love and compassion (pours his limitless love into your life); 5) satisfies your desires with good things (grace comes to you to surprise you with his abundant provision to meet your needs beyond anything the world can offer). Conclusion: What is the result of all of this? Your youth (vitality, energy, vision, and passion for life) is renewed like the eagle’s (perpetual renewal with great strength and endurance). In a very real way, Ephesians follows this basic progression of transformation and the story of the prodigal son does as well. The psalm then goes on to expand on this transformation. “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.” This love is as “high as the heavens” and he has removed our sins as far as the “east is from the west.” “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers we are dust.” What incredible words to sink deeply into our hearts as we understand and experience this kind of deep security and love before God that changes the heart from the inside out. Ultimately we only truly know God’s love at this depth through his Spirit entering our lives.
- Psalm 104: A song about God being in control and providing for his children. Key verses: “These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.” This is a psalm of hope that reminds us to trust in God in both life and death, knowing he is in control and he will care for us. This psalm also gives us an interesting verse about the Spirit: “When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.” This may be a prophetic passage looking forward to the coming of Spirit following the Messiah or it may be looking even further into the future at the

restoration and renewal of all creation at the end of time. Possibly it applies to both times as this simply describes the work of the Spirit in creation and re-creation.

- Psalm 113: God's heart for the poor again shines through. "He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes....He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children..." Children ensured care and security for women as they grew old. If they had no children and their husbands died they were left very vulnerable relying on other family members to care for them.
- Psalm 114: A quick reminder to Israel about the power of God in delivering them from Egypt and providing for them in the desert. We need those quick reminders of how God has worked powerfully in the past because we so often easily forget who God really is and all he has done for us.
- Psalm 117: A very short song all about God's love and faithfulness.