

Faith Family Worship Guide – Week 21

MEMORIZE

- For those with 1st-5th graders at Brook Hills, focus on the verses that they are memorizing in Children’s Ministry for this unit.
 - 1st Grade – Matthew 22:37-39
 - 2nd Grade – Matthew 5:14-16
 - 3rd Grade – Proverbs 3:5-7
 - 4th Grade – Proverbs 4:10-15
 - 5th Grade – 1 John 4:9-12

READ

As our church reads through the Bible for the next two years, each day will include a chapter from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As a family, decide if you want to read one or both of these passages. The Faith Family Worship Guide will look ahead to the readings for the upcoming week.

Read: Psalm 84:1-2, 10-11

Questions:

- What “dwelling place” of God would the psalmist have been writing about?
- What is the psalmist’s attitude towards God’s dwelling place? Why?
- Where does God live?
- Why should we want to go to Heaven? What makes Heaven so great?

Bottom Line: Believers enjoy God’s presence and long to be with Him forever.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship him together.

Preschool

- Where is Heaven?
- Who lives in Heaven?
- Who will go to Heaven?
- What is the best part of Heaven?

Children

- Can you think of a place you don’t think you could ever get enough of? The beach? The baseball field? Disney World? Kids Camp? The dwelling place of God?
- The dwelling place of God? What is that? Keep it in mind as you read Psalm 82:1-2 and 10-11 with your family.
- The psalmist, David, longs for the dwelling place of God.
- God’s dwelling place is the place where God lives is with His people.
- When God’s people gather together He is right there with them.
- Do you love being with God’s people when we are all together? You are gathered together with God’s people right now, the members of your own family.
- Read Psalm 84:2 one more time. What does David do in verse two? He sings for joy. Do you know a song of joy you could sing with your family right now?

Students

- This passage talks a lot about being near or in the presence of the Lord.
- What is so appealing about being close to God?
- Have you ever wondered what Heaven is going to be like?

- Do you think it's going to be boring? Why? Why not?
- Have you ever really thought about what you get when get heaven? Make a list.
- David Platt recently said, *"Don't get caught up in telling people all the benefits they get when they know Christ....All those things are wonderful. They are great things but they're not what you ultimately get. Ultimately you get God...if we can have heaven without God we don't want heaven without God."* Do you want to spend time with God or do you just want the benefits of being a Christian (e.g. no hell, streets of gold, etc.)?
- How might a right understanding of heaven change our everyday lives? How might it change our relationship with Jesus?

SING

This week's FFWG song is "Christ Forever" written by Josh Poore and David Leonard in 2011. Psalm 84 tells us of the joy that is found in the presence of God, specifically in the temple. As children of God on the other side of the cross, we look forward to being in the presence of God for eternity because of Christ's atoning work on the cross. Jesus will one day return for His people, and on that day, sin and sorrow will cease and we will be face to face with the Lord of Hosts forever. As you continue in worship, sing "Christ Forever."

Visit our website for a link to this song: www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Readings for May 26-June 1

Numbers 35-36, Deuteronomy 1-5, and Psalm 79-88

Where We Are In The Story (Numbers)

Background of Numbers: Within two years of leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrive on the fringes of the Promised Land and enthusiastically send in twelve spies to scout the land, but instead of trusting in God's promises to give them the land, the people fearfully rebelled and made plans to return to Egypt (Num. 14:1-4). Written by Moses, this book contains the record of what happened to the Israelites during the forty years of wilderness wanderings that occurred because of their disobedience and doubt. The English title of Numbers refers to the prominent census accounts in the book that reflect the fulfillment of God's promise that none of the people who had experienced God's deliverance from Egypt would enter into the Promised Land, except for Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14:20-35).

Structure of Numbers:

- Numbers 1:1-10:10 occur while Israel is still at Mt. Sinai, and it picks up where Exodus leaves off.
- Numbers 10:11-12:16 describe the Israelites' journey from Mt. Sinai to the outskirts of the Promised Land.
- Numbers 13:1-20:13 contain significant accounts of disobedience by the nation, a Sabbath-breaker, Korah, and Moses, and it includes God's response and instruction in light of those events.
- Numbers 20:14-22:1 tell of Israel's military victories against several hostile nations and emphasizes God's preservation of His people.
- Numbers 22:2-36:13 conclude the book with a census of the people, a reiteration of the laws and feasts given by God, and a transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua as the people prepare to enter the Promised Land after their wilderness wanderings.

This Week in Numbers: Since the Levites did not receive any land like the other tribes of Israel, God designated forty-eight towns throughout Israel in which the Levites could live (Num. 35). God assigned six of these towns to be "cities of refuge" where anyone who had killed someone unintentionally could find refuge and receive a fair trial instead of being subject to vigilante justice or acts of revenge. Joshua 20 informs us that the six cities of refuge were Kadesh, Shechem, Kiriath-Arba (a.k.a. Hebron), Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan.

Numbers 35 also spells out what constitutes as murder and describes the means for capital punishment, and Numbers 35:33-34 explains the ultimate concern – defiling the land. Since this was the land that Israel inhabited and since the sanctuary, the place of God's presence, was in this land, the impurity caused by murder clashed with His holiness. The land could only be purged through justice, which in this case was the blood of the murderer. God gives a mandate for the death penalty in Genesis 9:3-7 on the basis of people being His image-bearers. Because of who people reflect and who made them, people have great value, and because of the worth God places on human life, the only punishment for

someone who takes a life is for the murderer's life to also be taken, which is talionic justice (an eye for an eye).

Numbers concludes with a legal matter regarding the inheritance of Zelophehad's daughters (see Num. 27) and what would happen to the land should those daughters marry men from other tribes. This case resulted in the ruling that the daughters should marry someone from their own tribe and, thus, keep the land within its tribe. It established the precedent of land *not* transferring from one tribe to another.

Where We Are In The Story (Deuteronomy)

Background of Deuteronomy: Deuteronomy picks up with Moses' word from the Lord to the Israelites at Mount Horeb at the end of their forty years of wilderness wanderings. Deuteronomy presents the Law (much of what is in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers) in a preached format, and it contains three of Moses' sermons to the people of Israel that both rehearse their history and instruct them in how they are to live as God's people in the Land of Promise. While Moses wrote this book, the end of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) has an unnamed author since Moses did not write about his own death in Deuteronomy 34.

Structure of Deuteronomy:

- Deuteronomy 1:1-4:49 review Israel's history from Mt. Sinai through their wilderness wanderings.
- Deuteronomy 5-28 rehearse God's covenant with Israel and exhorts the people to keep the covenant.
- Deuteronomy 29-30 record a renewal of the covenant between God and Israel.
- Deuteronomy 31-34 report Joshua's succession of Moses, Joshua's commission, a song of Moses, and the death of Moses.

This Week in Deuteronomy: The last time that Israel stood ready to enter the Promised Land, they feared the land's inhabitants more than they feared God, and their rebellion resulted in forty years of wandering in the wilderness while the rebellious generation died off. As the nation prepared to take the land at the end of the forty years, Moses reminds them of their history and of God's promises as well as how God protected and provided for them during their wilderness stint (Deut. 1-3). As they remember God's faithfulness to them in the past, Moses exhorts them to trust the Lord with their future and to obey Him (Deut. 4). To follow this exhortation, Deuteronomy 5:1-23 reviews the Ten Commandments, which sets forth what God requires of His covenant people.

Deuteronomy repeatedly urges the reader to "remember" and warns of what happens "lest you forget" what the Lord has done, and it does this to demonstrate how quickly we disobey when we forget the Lord and how remembering Him strengthens our faith. Like a muscle, our faith either atrophies or grows. Other themes in the book include "possession" and "inheritance," driving home the sovereignty of God over the land and the authority He has to give this land to Israel. While they lack the ability to take the Promised Land, God would give them victory over its inhabitants and keep His promise to them. As their history exemplifies, God is all-powerful and trustworthy.

Where We Are In The Story (Psalms)

Background & Structure of Psalms: God used many different writers to write Psalms: David, Moses, the sons of Korah, Asaph, etc. The book is arranged in five parts, and this arrangement occurred after the people of Israel returned to the land after the Babylonian exile. A doxology concludes each book or arrangement of psalms (Psalm 41:13 for Book 1, Psalm 72:18-19 for Book 2, Psalm 89:52 for Book 3, Psalm 106:48 for Book 4, and Psalm 150:6 for Book 5), and the entire book of Psalms climactically ends with a grand doxology of several psalms (Ps. 146-150).

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

This Week in Psalms:

- Psalm 79 describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple that occurred when the Babylonians took the people captive around 586 B.C., and in this psalm, Asaph laments the destruction of both the city and its people that occurred during that invasion. Through prophets such as Isaiah and Nahum, God informed the people that He would allow the nation of Israel to be judged for their sin through seventy years of exile, and this prophecy was fulfilled with the Babylonian captivity. A lament, Psalm 79 cries to God for forgiveness and for Him to judge the enemies of His people.
- A communal lament, Psalm 80 petitions God for restoration for the nation after some sort of destruction that had occurred. The refrain “restore us, O God” naturally divides the psalm into three parts: the introductory cry (vv. 1-3), the lament about the nation’s devastation (vv. 4-7), and the rehearsal of God’s past dealings with the nation and prayers for God’s mercy (vv. 8-19). It compares Israel to a vine that God planted and cultivated, questions why God allowed it to be cut down, and asks Him to restore them.
- Psalm 81 contains both praise of God and His admonition of the Israelites. Verses 1-3 calls the people to worship Him, verses 4-7 praises God for delivering the people from bondage in Egypt and for providing for them during their wilderness wanderings, verses 8-10 contain His admonishment of the people, and verses 11-16 record what happens when His people obey Him and when they disobey Him. The purpose here is to urge the people to obey as a response to God’s deliverance.
- Psalm 82 indicts wicked judges for their partiality and injustice and is an oracle of judgment on them. The psalmist refers to these human judges as “gods,” but the psalmist also uses this term in reference to evil angelic beings. Both would be judged and destroyed by God because of their wickedness.
- Psalm 83 stands as both a national lament and as an imprecatory (invokes or calls down [evil or curses] as upon a person) psalm. It contains the structure of a lament: an introductory cry to God (v. 1), a description of the lament which is threats from other nations (vv. 2-8), a petition for God to destroy their enemies (vv. 9-16), and a prayer for God to take action for His great name (vv. 17-18). The nature of Israel’s requests for God to obliterate their enemies are what classify the psalm as imprecatory. The psalmist can make such imprecations because of a recognition of God’s righteousness and His promises to His covenant people, and the requests to destroy those who threaten the covenant people stem from the understanding that the wicked deserve God’s judgment. Overall, the psalm makes these petitions on the basis that God should reveal His sovereignty, so the nations will acknowledge Him as Lord of all.
- Because Psalm 84 focuses on the sanctuary in Jerusalem, it is a Song of Zion. The psalmist longs to be in the place of God’s presence, describes the pilgrims who make their way to the Lord’s house, and meditates on the Lord’s character and the blessings He bestows on the upright. What the psalmist wrote about longing for to be in the Lord’s sanctuary should be true of believers of all eras, and these desires will ultimately be satisfied when believers are in the heavenly sanctuary.
- Psalm 85 requests God’s restoration (vv. 1-7) and affirms His steadfast love and faithfulness (vv. 8-13). While we do not know the circumstances surrounding this psalm, the context makes reference to Israel being judged because of its sin, and the psalm centers on the people’s confidence in God to forgive, restore, and revive them.
- Psalm 86 begins as a personal lament (vv. 1-7) and transitions into praise of God (vv. 8-10), a request (v. 11), a vow to praise God for answering prayer (vv. 12-13), and a restatement of the lament and requests (vv. 14-17). Because of his confidence in the Lord as a gracious and steadfast God, he asks for deliverance from the wicked and trusts God’s compassion for the righteous. Statements of faith resound in this psalm and bolster the psalmist’s confidence in the Lord (vv. 5, 8-10, 13, 15, 17).
- A Song of Zion, Psalm 87 recounts how God has faithfully fulfilled His divine plan for the city as the place of His sanctuary and presence; therefore, it was the place where the nations could come to worship Almighty God. Ultimately, this psalm points to the heavenly city of God, the new Jerusalem described in Revelation 21.
- Written by a Israelite man named Heman, Psalm 88 contains his lament regarding the betrayal of a close friend as well as other afflictions. Unlike other laments, this psalm contains no expressions of hope or praise; in fact, the only expression of confidence in the Lord is the fact that the psalmist chooses to cry out to Him and sees Him as powerful enough to alter his circumstances. The psalm ends with the prospect of death looming before the psalmist and with his perseverance in turning to God despite his despair.