

THE CASE FOR MEMORISING SCRIPTURE Peter Burton

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

We can certainly do it!

Peter began by reflecting on the 2 previous talks - Pete Greig on Num 13 and Adam Heather on the Word, Works and Wonder of God. Reminder: Whatever demands our attention possesses our thoughts, which anchors our hearts, which becomes what we worship. *The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.* Rom 8v6. Dallas Willard says, "We live at the mercy of our ideas." How can we learn to have good thoughts and ideas?

*** Controlling our inputs**

Many ideas in the world are not helpful, and the amount of brain stimulus has expanded exponentially. The increase of devices and social media has resulted in increased anxiety especially amongst our young people. Research shows that Gen Z are resentful of smartphones - "the kids are not all right". Artificial Intelligence will make it worse! No longer a quiet peaceful world. AI will blur truth and falsehood. We have the power to choose what we allow into our minds.

One of Peter's good inputs is: <https://onbeing.org/poetry/the-peace-of-wild-things/>

Dallas Willard says that memorising Scripture is the primary discipline for the thought life, knowing longer passages like 'the back of our hands'. We can memorise other things, so why not Scripture? It will reorient our life around God. We choose to focus on him and spend effort on a permanently worthwhile activity.

*** Paying Attention: The case for memorising the Psalms**

1. Memorising Psalms - we're drinking from a deep well. It's the prayerbook of God's people. Psalms are the heartbeat of Scripture. Jesus knew and quoted them. They cover the full range of life: Hurts, Hallelujahs and Hates. We use shared language, it's our inheritance.
2. Memorising Psalms - will deepen our prayer life. Eugene Petersen chose 7 Psalms, one per day for reflection and as an aid to spiritual development. Maybe pray through Psalms in a month (5 a day!) but it takes time! Rather, don't rush - savour the different language, it's poetry. Go slow. Read to be changed. Read aloud - it helps to internalise the truth. Psalms are set prayers and help us focus. Ps 127v1-3 used as example.
3. Memorising Psalms - we'll be ready for battle. In difficult or traumatic times having Psalms to call to mind can bring equilibrium and give us solid ground to hold on to when life is challenging. "The boldness of the Psalms and the extremities of our experience are brought together" (Brueggemann)

*** How do I do it?**

1. Start small - choose a psalm with 5 or 6 verses, Ps 1, 8, 23, 100
2. Experiment to find the best method for you - speak it out, listen to Dwell Bible app, write it down,
3. Always use the same version - it will have the same motif. Notice the style of translation: ESV is more poetic than the NIV.
4. Buy a good book on praying the Psalms, ie Answering God (Eugene Petersen), Praying the Psalms (Walter Brueggemann). These will help you understand Hebrew poetry (ie parallelism, etc).
5. Work up to memorising longer Psalms. They will begin to shape you and help you develop longer prayers.
6. A helpful website is everypsalm.com (Poor Bishop Hooper)

Conclusion was reading Ps121 together.

For Reflection in Collective:

- What has been our experience of memorising Scripture?
- What might stop or hinder us from beginning to memorise some of the Psalms?
- Can we commit to encouraging each other to memorise a Psalm this week?

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