

**47B\* THE TIMELESS PSALMS:  
A CALL TO WORSHIP  
AFTER PENTECOST 8B [ORDINARY 15B] & [PROPER 10B] 2018  
PSALM 85: 8-13**

Communicating God: We come to hear God's living words of grace to us.  
**We come, because God lovingly listens to our prayers and answers them.**

Most Generous God: We come to give thanks for God's great mercy to us.  
**We come, because we are blessed through God's presence with us always.**

Peace-gifting God: We come to be blessed by God's peace; and to then  
bless each other as we worship, praise and pray to our God - the Holy One.  
**We come, because God "...speaks peace to his faithful people..." and God's  
"...unfailing love and truth..." helps us lead lives that are pleasing to our God. Amen.**

**PSALM 85: 8-13**

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah

8 I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying,  
for he speaks peace to his faithful people.  
But let them not return to their foolish ways.  
9 Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,  
so our land will be filled with his glory.

10 Unfailing love and truth have met together.  
Righteousness and peace have kissed!  
11 Truth springs up from the earth,  
and righteousness smiles down from heaven.  
12 Yes, the LORD pours down his blessings.  
Our land will yield its bountiful harvest.  
13 Righteousness goes as a herald before him,  
preparing the way for his steps.

**PRAYERS OF THANKFULNESS & CONFESSION:  
AFTER PENTECOST 8B [ORDINARY 15B] & [PROPER 10B] 2018  
PSALM 85: 8-13**

Communicating God: today we come to hear again God's living words of grace to us all—and because we trust God to listen to our prayers and to answer them in ways that fulfil God's plan for creation. We give thanks for God's gracious promises to us, and for the gift of hope and trust that God's love is greater than our own sinfulness. We confess that there are times when we fail to understand that God calls us to 'righteousness', and that we often struggle to understand what that really means to and for us. We confess that even though we have committed ourselves to a trusted relationship with God, that our living and loving do not always bear witness to that commitment. We give thanks for your gifted people who provide us with answers to help us deal with life's challenging questions; and who encourage us to live our lives in ways that are pleasing to God, the Holy One.

Most Generous God: we come to give thanks for God's great mercy to us; and we give thanks because we are blessed through God's presence that is always with us. The long-ago psalmist guides us with our daily living and loving by reminding us that God's *"...Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed! Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness smiles down from heaven. Yes, the LORD pours down his blessings..."* We confess that we do not live each day in ways that please God; that our love often fails; and that we bend the truth to suit ourselves and our lifestyle. Lord, we ask for mercy: *"...Dear Lord and Father...forgive our foolish ways; re-clothe us in our rightful mind: in purer lives thy service find, in deeper reverence, praise..."*<sup>[1]</sup>

Peace-gifting God: we come to be blessed by God's peace; and to then bless each other as we worship, praise and pray to our God. Today we come, because God *"...speaks peace to his faithful people..."* and God's *"...unfailing love and truth..."* helps us lead lives that are pleasing to our God. We come to confess that our minds often become distracted when we pause to pray or meditate; that our chosen priorities diminish our times of spiritual renewal; and that often in the most significant times during shared worship, our minds are busy with peripheral things. *"...Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace... O still small voice of calm..."*<sup>[1]</sup> Loving God, forgive us our distracted minds; and our failures to be still before God, and to be forgiven, blessed, renewed and encouraged in our faith journey. Amen.

**A PERSONAL MEDITATION:  
AFTER PENTECOST 8B [ORDINARY 15B] & [PROPER 10B] 2018  
PSALM 85: 8-13**

I have written many times about the Hebrew word 'hesed', but Professorial brothers Rolf and Karl Jacobson add fresh insights to what was God's early and classic self-disclosure to Moses: "...One way to approach the question of the theology of the psalms is to come at the question in this way: 'Is there one fundamental assumption about God that all of the 150 poems of the Psalter share?'... We believe that the Psalter as a whole assumes the basic conviction that Israel believed in 'a God of loving faithfulness'... The phrase 'loving faithfulness' actually translates a single Hebrew word "hesed". In the Old Testament, the word describes both God's internal character as well as the fundamental characteristics of God's external actions... The importance of this term, along with a small constellation of related terms, can be gleaned by an examination of Exodus 34:6-7... The passage consists of one of the most ancient, creed-like fragments from the Bible... from the earliest days of Israel's relationship with the Lord..." [2]

Creative pause: God's amazing self-disclosure to Moses.

The context of the Exodus text was God's initiation of a covenantal relationship with the people of Israel; which meant little to those people when Moses left them 'for a long time' when he ascended the mountain to again meet with God. The people were worried that they were without leadership, so they told Aaron that they needed a God they could see, so they built a golden bull as their 'new god'. God sent Moses back to their camp to sort out the people again, and he then returned back up the mountain to be with God again. (Exodus 32) "...Then the LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with Moses; and he called out his own name, Yahweh. The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected - even children in the third and fourth generations..." [3] The term 'God's loving faithfulness' became Israel's declaration that God was there for them - for the long haul.

Creative pause: God's promise: "...I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin..." [3]

If we accept the general concept that a generation is 30 years, God promised to lavish love for one thousand generations, that is, approximately 30,000 years – in other words God's love for humanity and all of creation is beyond time's limitations! So for you, which are the most challenging of God's promise made to Moses? "...I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin..." [3] OR "...I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations..." [3] I guess that your answer to that question would depend on your current circumstances. I recently quoted one of Monica Brown's songs and her words fit this reading as well! "...to know the joy of being so dearly loved..." [4] and to know: "... it's all simply a gift, when you know yourself, to be loved..." [4] To be truly loved and fully known by God, and to realise that despite the 'knowing' - there is still God's love freely offered to us - is surely some of life's most precious of all blessings!

Creative pause: Are you challenged or comforted by God's promises?

[1] From "The Australian Hymn Book" #519  
"Dear Lord and Father..."

Words by John Greenleaf Whittier - Words are in Public Domain

[2] Text by Professors Rolf A & Karl N Jacobson  
From "Invitation to the Psalms – a readers guide for discovery & enlightenment" © 2013 Chapter 6, Page/s 151-153

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MI 49516-6287, USA

[3] Exodus 34: 5-7 (NLT)

[4] From CD "A Special Collection" Track 17

"Isn't it beautiful to be loved?"

Words and music by Monica Brown

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[joanstott16@gmail.com](mailto:joanstott16@gmail.com)

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