

Sunday 1st February

Psalm 14

Welcome

- Are you a fool sometimes? What was a silly, funny, even innocent mistake, that you made recently?
- How would you define a fool? What makes someone foolish? What is foolish behaviour?

Word

Read Psalm 14:

The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

² *The Lord looks down from heaven on all mankind*

to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.

³ *All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.*

⁴ *Do all these evildoers know nothing?*

They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the Lord.

⁵ *But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous.*

⁶ *You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the Lord is their refuge.*

⁷ *Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!*

1. What is the definition of a fool according to verse 1?
2. How does acknowledging God make you wise?

3. Do you think the denying God leads to corruption and vile acts in today's world? If yes, then in what ways?
4. How can we stay true to God within a culture that often denies that God exists? Do you find it hard or easy?
5. What practical steps can we take to cultivate a heart that acknowledges and reveres God daily?
6. Is there anything we can do about disbelief in God within our community?
7. Does disbelief in God lead to moral degeneration as described in this Psalm? If so how?
8. In what ways are God's people threatened according to the Psalm and how does God respond?
9. How does God respond to the plight of the 'righteous' in verses 5 & 6?
10. What does the word 'omniscience' mean (use a dictionary or google) and what does this Psalm say about God's omniscience?
11. How should knowing that God is omniscience affect our lives?
12. How does the conclusion of the Psalm inspire hope and joy in the midst of challenging circumstances?
13. How does the promise of "salvation from Zion" in verse 7 point forward to Jesus Christ and the New Testament message?
14. Can we find hope in God's promised restoration, even when going through tough times? How?
15. Does this Psalm motivate you to be more conscious about the presence of God in your life?
16. Have a look at Psalm 53 what do you notice?

Psalm 14 is one of the prophetic psalms of the Messiah. These psalms state that eternal salvation will come out of Zion and the people of Israel will be impacted by it. It promises that God will bring His deliverance to His people.

Read Romans 1: 20-23:

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

17. What is the evidence to God's existence that is 'clearly seen'?
18. Why do you think people miss this evidence or fail to connect it with God?
19. What do these verses in Romans 1 tell us about the results of not acknowledging God?
20. Are there similarities to what Psalm 14 says?
21. (Optional extra: Psalm 14 is quoted in Romans 3: 10-12 take a look)

Everything points to God – so it is foolish to deny him. We all live as if God doesn't exist sometimes – this is what being a fool is – ultimately this is sin. The New Testament provides an answer to this universal sinfulness – it is God's grace provided by Jesus.

22. How does recognizing our collective sinfulness deepen our appreciation for God's grace?
23. Do we sometimes look at people who don't acknowledge God and know that we are more 'righteous'? **Read Luke 18:11:**
The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector....

So, we have to ask you the question, “Are you a fool?”. I don’t mean that you don’t believe in God, but do you live as a fool? Do you live whole days acting as if God doesn’t exist? Or do you leave God out of certain parts of your life – for example: your money, certain relationships, your life at work etc. Do you need to make a change in one of these areas and be less ‘foolish’?

Worship & Witness

- How have you acted “like a fool” – according to the definition of Psalm 14 – this week?
- Identify at least one area of your life where you operated as if God did not exist, or that you did not need him, or that he was less important.
- Be specific. How did you think, what did you desire or dream about, how did you act, or what did you say, that was only possible because you acted in isolation, like a fool, as if God was not present (or less important) in that time and place?
- What were the consequences of that foolishness? Confess and say sorry for your foolishness, both vertically to God and horizontally to the person you sinned against in your moment of foolishness?
- How can you act wisely when the same or similar situation repeats itself in the future?