

your having redeemed me, but also through your having created me; and I am “the son of your handmaid;” that is, I am not simply a purchased slave, because my mother, too, is a slave of yours, by creation as well as by redemption. He calls himself the son of the female slave, not of the male, because no matter how free the father, when the mother was a slave, the child was one too. Hence Sara said to Abraham, “cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” Thus Ishmael was a slave by reason of his mother having been one, though Abraham his father was no slave. “Thou hast broken my bonds.” He tells us he is a servant to the Lord, but that the service is a good one and that he has been rescued from a bad one. As the Lord in the Gospel encourages those who labor, and are heavily laden, to take up his yoke; “for his yoke is sweet, and his burden is light,” he does not absolutely free us from the yoke and the burden, but, instead of a rough yoke, he imposes a sweet one, and substitutes a light for a very heavy burden. Thus God completely “broke the bonds” that Satan had bound about us, the bonds of sin and the burden of concupiscence, that weighed us down to the lower regions; in place of which he binds us down by the sweet yoke of his law, and the light burden of his love, through which we are raised and exalted to heaven. “Thou hast broken my bonds;” you have delivered me from a most cruel state of servitude, and wished me to be your servant, your service being, in my mind, a throne. I will, therefore, “sacrifice to you the sacrifice of praise,” and no longer invoke false gods; mammon to wit, the appetite, wealth, and honors, to all of which I was heretofore a slave; but I will constantly “call upon the name of the Lord,” who alone deserves it.

18. “I will pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all his people.”

19. “In the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.” This is a repetition of verse 5, with the addition of, “in the courts of the house of the Lord;” to give us to understand that the servant of God should offer his vows, his confession, and himself to God, in the Church, indicated by Jerusalem; for they who work outside the Church derive nothing from it.

END OF PSALM 115

You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST
IN THE
LORD *and do good;*
dwell in the land and
enjoy safe pasture.
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 115

This in the Hebrew is joined with the foregoing Psalm,
and continues to express the faith and gratitude of the Psalmist.

10. I have believed, therefore have I spoken: but I have been humbled exceedingly.
11. I said in my excess: Every man is a liar.
12. What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?
13. I will take the chalice of salvation: and I will call upon the name of the Lord.
14. I will pay my vows to the Lord, before all his people.
15. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.
16. O Lord, for I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bonds:
17. I will sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.
18. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all his people:
19. In the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 115

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

10. "I have believed, therefore have I spoken: but I have been humbled exceedingly." He refers to the words, "I will please the Lord in the land of the living;" and, as if a person asked, how do you know of the existence of such a place at all? He replies, that he knows it through faith. "I have believed" that such a place exists, though unseen by mortal eye, and, by reason of such faith, I said, "I will please the Lord in the land of the living." St. Paul quotes this passage way he says, "but having the same spirit of faith, as it is written, I have believed; therefore I have spoken. We also believe, and, therefore, we speak, knowing that he who raised up Jesus will raise us up also with Jesus, and place us with you;" where he teaches that the resurrection of the body, and the true of the living in which we are to be located with the Lord Jesus, is to be learned in the spirit of faith, and not by any human demonstration. And, as such faith requires a soul truly humble, that it may be subject to the obedience required by faith, he therefore adds, "but I have been humbled exceedingly." I have believed, because I have not relied on my own abilities, but I have exhibited the greatest humility and docility to the Holy Spirit, as the Lord says in Matthew 11, "I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones;" and in another place, John 5, "how can you believe who receive glory one from another?"

11. "I said in my excess: every man is a liar." This relates to a vision he had, in which he got such a view of the aforesaid country of the living that he declares that anything that might be said regarding human happiness, when compared to it, is a lie. "I," who humbled myself so much have been, in consequence, so exalted by God as to be favored with a vision, or an excess, and, seeing in that vision how vain and fallacious are the things that seem good and solid to men, I said, "every man is a liar;" that is to say, every man who speaks in the ordinary manner of men concerning happiness, and sets great value on the frail and perishable things of this world is a liar, for true and solid happiness is not to be found but in the country of the living. This explanation solves the sophism proposed by St. Basil. If every man be a liar, then David was a liar; therefore, he lies when he says, every man is a liar – thus contradicting himself, and destroying his own position. This is answered easily; for when David spoke he did so not as a man, but from an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It may be also said, that being a liar, and always telling lies, are different things, as the former may sometimes happen to tell the truth, especially if he be so inspired by God; for man is said to be mendacious by reason of his being naturally subject to error and falsehoods in which sense we read, "but God is true, and every man a liar;" that is to say, lies are impossible to God alone, but all men are liable to them, but it does not, therefore, follow that they are always telling lies.

12. "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?" Feeling himself overwhelmed with so many favors, both in having got a knowledge of the country of the living and a foretaste of the joy to be found therein, he asks what he can give the Lord in

return for such favors. He made me out of nothing, redeemed me from iniquity, showed me the country of the living, promised me a place in it. What shall I render to him for all these favors?

13. "I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord." This is universally understood of the sufferings and passion of Christ, concerning which our Savior himself said, "can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink?" And again, "let this chalice pass from me;" and again, John 18, "the chalice which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" And it is not only in the New Testament that the word chalice is used for a bitter draught of tribulation, but it also occurs in the same sense in many passages in the Old. Thus, in Psalm 74, "for in the hand of the Lord there is a cup of strong wine, full of mixture;" and in Isaias 51, "stand up, O Jerusalem, which has drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath." In Jeremiah 25, "take the cup of wine of this fury at my hand." In Ezekiel 23, "thus saith the Lord God: thou shalt drink thy sister's cup deep and wide: thou shalt be had in derision and scorn, and thou shalt drink it and drink it up, even to the dregs." In Hab. 2, "thou art filled with shame instead of glory, drink thou also and fall fast asleep; the cup of the right hand of the Lord shall compass thee, and shameful vomiting shall be on thy glory." The just man, who loves God, then says, "when I have nothing better to offer my Lord in return for all he has conferred on me, 'I would take the chalice of salvation.' I will cheerfully drink the chalice of the Lord, however bitter it may be, whether it consists in tribulations, dangers; or even death itself. For his own honor's sake he will support me; for I know that this chalice, however bitter, will be wholesome. And, as I do not rely on my own strength, but, with God's help, can do everything. "I will, therefore, call upon the name of the Lord' to give me the grace to drink this cup courageously." The Church, in ordering this Psalm to be sung on the feast of a martyr, confirms this explanation.

14. "I will pay my vows to the Lord, before all this people."

15. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Being prepared to drink the chalice of suffering, he says with great confidence, I will offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, not alone in nooks and chambers, but openly and publicly before all the people, enemies included, and even though I may be satisfied of my death being the consequence; for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;" that is, God sets great value on the death of the saints, when suffered for his honor and glory; just as valuable gems, such as those worn in the crowns of monarchs, and which are of great value, are highly prized by mankind. See, says St. Basil, what glory is in store for the martyrs, whose souls are not only crowned in heaven, but even whose relics are highly valued on earth. Formerly, anyone touching a dead body was looked upon as unclean, but at present, anyone touching the bones of the martyrs is supposed to acquire fresh sanctification.

16. "O Lord, for I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bonds."

17. "I will sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call upon the name of the Lord." The holy soul who offers himself entirely in sacrifice to God, has no pride in him; he rather acknowledges his debt of service, and, agreeable to the command of our Lord, says, "I am an unprofitable servant, I have done that which I ought to do." "O Lord," he says, what great thing have I done in paying my vows publicly, in even daring death; in doing so, I only did what I was bound to do; "for I am thy servant," redeemed from the slavery of the devil by the precious blood of your Son. I am thy servant, not only through