

God Speaks: An Evening In The Psalms

Introduction: "The Creation of Man" is one of Michelangelo's masterpieces painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. It is indeed a *masterpiece* and a captivating study. In it God is depicted as a commanding figure with His arm outstretched to its full capacity reaching out to Adam. Even His index finger is extended to add just a few more inches, seemingly to remain as close as is possible for as long as possible. His reluctance to leave and His concern for this first man is brilliantly portrayed.

Adam is in a sitting position with one arm resting on his knee which is bent up in front of him. His arm is also extended in a weak gesture of response, but his hand hangs limp with one finger slightly extended and a small gap exists between God's extended finger and Adam's limp response. You sense that God longs to grab him and hang on to him, but He has made Adam with a free will, and now He must leave him to exercise it. Your own heart is heavy as you view the scene, aware that one day the small gap between them will be replaced by a great abyss. You know the day will come when Adam will reject the sovereignty of his Creator and choose instead to impose his own lust and desires above the wisdom and guidance of His loving God.

Throughout human history our God has ardently pursued Adam's children longing to reestablish the close relationship and communion that was lost. He reveals Himself in countless ways as He vies for the attention and affection of any and all who will respond. He longs for us to again choose His sovereignty and love over our own destructive inclinations. Tonight we will follow His trail of love in the Psalms. We will see His pursuit of Adam's race woven into His great creation and strewn throughout the ages of man's existence as He appeals to every individual to again choose the life He always intended His beloved creatures to enjoy.

Narrator: In Romans 1:20 the Lord tells us

From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see His invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God.

God has surrounded us on every side with indisputable evidence, confirming that only an infinitely wise and competent Creator could have conceived of such a world as ours. Without even considering the intricate checks and balances that make life on this planet possible, any sincere person would be forced to acknowledge that every living thing around us is a miracle of God's wondrous creative powers. And consider, all the millions of varieties of plants and living creatures come from the same dust. Each one is intricately planned and instilled with its own special version of life. In Psalm 104, the Lord gathers up the corners of His Creation and in it He identifies just a few of the unique beings He has carefully placed in their own special habitat, each given its own space to accommodate the distinctive way of life designed for it.

As you listen to this psalm being quoted, don't miss the many forms of life the psalmist has been careful to include.

Psalm 104:1-27 (First Quoter)

Omit: (Praise the Lord, O my soul.)

O Lord my God, you are very great;

you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
He wraps Himself in light as with a garment;
He stretches out the heavens like a tent
and lays the beams of His upper chambers on their waters.
He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.
He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire His servants.
He set the earth on its foundation; it can never be moved.
You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.
But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;
they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.
You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.

He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains.
They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches.
He waters the mountains from His upper chambers;
the earth is satisfied by the fruit of His work.
He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for man to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth:
wine that gladdens the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.
The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees.
The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coney.

The moon marks off the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down.
You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God.
The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens.
Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening.

How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number -
living things both large and small.
There the ships go to and fro, and leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

Narrator: If, per chance humankind fails to notice the hand of a Creator who prudently planned every aspect of life around them, He has written His message in the heavens and beamed it to every part of the globe in every language.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims His handiwork.

All the twinkling stars that fill the night sky loudly and constantly proclaim awesome truths about their Creator. Scientists have now determined that there are more stars in the night sky than grains of sand in the world's deserts and beaches. Astronomers from some of the world's leading universities established

that there are 70 thousand, million, million, million or seven followed by 22 zeroes, stars visible from the earth through telescopes. This is said to be the most accurate estimate ever made.

Grains of sand are very small and very close together, but when you apply this scenario to the size of stars and the distance between them, it far exceeds our ability to comprehend. Our sun is our nearest star. Earth is 7,900 miles in diameter, almost 8,000 miles. The diameter of the sun is more than 800,000 miles in diameter, (865,000), more than 100 times that of our planet. The distance even to the nearest star (beyond our sun) has to be measured in "light years". A light year is almost six trillion earth miles. (This is *six with twelve zeros*.) Our sun is approximately 8 light minutes away. The next nearest star is 4.8 *light years* away.

These mind boggling disclosures are particularly interesting when we realize that with the estimated six thousand years of man's existence, this generation, *our* generation is the one that has been given these astounding revelations. Up until 1920, it was thought that the Milky Way was the only galaxy in the Universe, now astronomers estimate that there may be as many as 100 billion galaxies in the Universes and that there may be as many as 400 billion stars in our galaxy alone.

It seems the Lord is bombarding us, this generation, with ever more incredible, but undeniable data, in an effort to force His creatures to acknowledge Him as their Creator. Surely, this generation of all generations will be held *without excuse*.

(Note: it would be best for both the quoters of Psalm 19 and Psalm 8 to come to microphones at the same time and for the one quoting Psalm 19 to remain there while Psalm 8 is being quoted. The one quoting Psalm 8 can then return to his seat when finished without waiting for the completion of Psalm 19.)

Psalm 19:1-11 (Very Slowly) (Second Quoter)

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world

In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun,

which is like a bridegroom coming forth from His pavilion,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is hidden from its heat.

Yes, man is just a minuscule being on a tiny planet like a microscopic grain of sand in the universe. And we might wonder just where he fits into this vast scenario of existence. In Psalm 8 David tries to bring it into perspective.

Psalm 8:1-9 (Third Quoter)

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise
because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.

You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet:
all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Narrator: Yes, there is a vast and seemingly endless universe strewn out in the heavens, but on this special little planet man was put in charge. Man is the crown of God's creation on this earth. But because he no longer enjoys the uninhibited one on one communion he once enjoyed with his Creator, our Lord has been careful not to leave him ignorant of divine laws and guide lines for life and happiness in a world now dominated by an evil adversary.

Creation loudly proclaims our Lord's eternal powers in indisputable ways. But nature cannot speak of His holiness, His mercy or His love. These and many other aspects of His character are specifically spelled out only in Holy Scriptures that have been carefully recorded and preserved. In them we are also given guidelines on how to interact with our great Creator and how to live happily in His wonderful creation. In them we learn about His great plan of redemption. Yes, and in His living, powerful Word we find constant nourishment and truth for our parched, sin sick souls.

In Psalm 19 David speaks of God's message proclaimed in the sky, as we have heard, but He is very careful to also emphasize the further revelation He has given us in His written Word. As we continue in this Psalm, you will be blessed by His reference to pure truth that explicitly addresses the spiritual aspect of our beings.

Psalm 19:7-11 (very slowly) (Second Quoter)

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.
By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Narrator: In Psalm 147:4 we are told that our Lord:

. . . counts the stars and calls them all by name.

Hm! If the Lord so meticulously tends to each star and if there are more stars in the sky than grains of sand on the beaches and deserts of the world, could it be that He is so busy taking care of all the jillions of stars that He has no time for what is happening on a tiny, little ball bobbing around on the edge of the Milky Way? Not so! Jesus assures us that His Father is so tuned in to what is happening on this little globe that not even an insignificant little sparrow falls to the ground apart from His will.

Yes, our Lord counts the stars in the vast Universe. He also counts the hairs on your head. Yes, He watches over the seemingly endless heavens. But He is also intimately involved in the creation of every little baby formed in his mother's womb from the very moment of conception. Before we were born he saw our lives as if they were already lived. He knows our every word before we speak it, every thought before we think it, every move we are going to make before it happens. Nor are our motives and intentions hidden from Him.

In Psalm 139 David doesn't focus on the world around or on the great beyond, he turns his thoughts to the Creator's intimate involvement in your life and mine and in the life of every person born into this world. In this scenario David expounds on great attributes such as our Lord's omniscience—His infinite knowledge of all things, His omnipotence—His power that knows no limits, His omnipresence—His ability to be everywhere at the same time, His foreknowledge—not only does He know everything that is happening, He knows everything that is going to happen into infinity. Such is our God. Listen and be blessed.

Psalm 139:1-18 (Fourth Quoter)

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me.
 You know when I sit and when I rise;
 You perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
 You are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O lord.

You hem me in — behind and before;
 You have laid your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
 if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
 if I settle on the far side of the sea,
 even there your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"
 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day,
 for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
 your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.

When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained from me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.
When I awake, I am still with you.

Narrator: Yes, our Lord speaks to us through the world around us. Yes, He shouts His message from the skies. Yes, He has given us a meticulous book that reveals profound truths. Yes, He is intimately involved in every life born into this world. These all speak of His greatness and even of His love, but they cannot bridge the great abyss that separates sinful man from the holy God of Creation.

Only the personal intervention of the Creator Himself could accomplish this. Jesus, the Living Word is the great story of God's love and grace. All of God's truth was lived in Him.

John tells us:

In the beginning was the Word (Jesus, the Word). He was with God, and He was God. . . He created everything there is. Nothing exists that He didn't make. Life itself was in Him . . . So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. . . (John 1:1-4a, 14 NIV, NLT)

Yes, in the ultimate gesture of love to His creatures God the Son, the Great Creator, the King of glory stepped down from His throne. He laid aside His royal robes and abandoned all the glories of heaven, all the praise and dignity that were rightfully His. Then He descended into a world of sin and corruption knowing well the scorn and ridicule He would endure. He lived life to perfection even though He was tempted in every way, just like we are. But He died as a common criminal on a humiliating cross, rejected, tortured and tormented as no other man. All the filth of man's sin and degradation was imposed on His purity and innocence. *He, (the Creator Himself) who knew no sin was made sin for us (His creatures) that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* He could have called 10,000 angels to His rescue, but He knew He must make the ultimate sacrifice in order to bridge the inevitable gap separating Him from His beloved creatures.

Yes, He lived as a man and died as a man, but death could not hold the King of Glory. On the third day He rose from the grave, triumphant over death and is now seated at the right Hand of God. Anyone who comes to Jesus acknowledging his sin and need for saving grace can know complete and total forgiveness. He can experience a new beginning in his life here on this earth, and know the assurance of eternal life in the one hereafter.

A thousand years before Jesus was even born, David inscribed in Psalm 22, the exact words He would utter in His last tortured moments. Yes, a thousand years before it happened, David was prompted by God's Holy Spirit to record words that would be spoken verbatim by Jesus, and also some that would be shouted by the angry, jeering mob that swarmed around Him. David also graphically describes the mental anguish and physical agony the pure, holy Son of God would suffer, as He poured out His life, agonizing on that sin blood drenched cross.

Psalm 1 - 21, 31 (Fifth Quoter)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel

In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.
They cried to you and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads:
"He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him.
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in him."

Yet you brought me out of the womb;

you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.

From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax; it melted away within me.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
You lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me,

they have pierced my hands and my feet.

I can count all my bones;
people stare and gloat over me.

They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

But you O Lord, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me.

Deliver my life from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.

Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Narrator: Yes, the God of creation came down to earth, suffering unspeakable humiliation and agony in order to deliver us from the consuming web of sin and degradation that ensnared us. Because of His great sacrifice on our behalf, any and every person in this world can know forgiveness no matter how black their record. In fact, no one is condemned for their sin, they are condemned only if they reject the great sacrifice that God's Son made on their behalf. Old Testament saints looked forward to the cross as we look back. They trusted in a Messiah who would one day come to be their Redeemer. This is what David anticipates in Psalm 51 as he pours out his heart before the Lord in his own confession and prayer for forgiveness. He is standing guilty before God, ashamed and condemned. You know the story, he committed adultery with a married woman and when he learned of her pregnancy, he had her soldier husband killed in battle trying to cover his shame.

Psalm 51:1-17 (Sixth Quoter)

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.
Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.
Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Narrator: Having received forgiveness for his great wrongdoing, David, in our next psalm describes his experience. He talks about the burden of guilt and shame that weighed on his conscience, day and night until he brought the shameful mess to the Savior's feet. David then expresses the joy and relief of having his sin erased from the record as it is washed away in God's mercy and grace. This is a joy we can all relate to as we bring our sins and shortcomings to the cross for divine pardon. The Lord responds to David's prayer, promising to guide and instruct Him in future, but He cautions him about presumptuous sins. And concludes with a warning and promise: *Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him.*

Psalm 32:1-11 (Seventh Quoter)

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him
in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" -
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found;
surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you and watch over you.
Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.
Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him.

Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Narrator: Now, all those whose sins are forgiven can, with David, embrace Psalm 23, the world's best known and most loved Psalm. David may have written it when as a young man he was tending his father's sheep. It may even have been conceived in the very fields where the angel would appear to shepherds a thousand years in the future when the great God of the Universe would humble Himself to be born as a helpless, little baby human.

When David lived, about 3000 years ago, the life of a shepherd was very prominent and well understood. It's hard for those of us who struggle with the bustling life of our 21st century to comprehend that serene, pastoral existence. Even so, it's interesting to discover how our Lord can use the life of an eastern shepherd of bygone days to illustrate His involvement in our lives in this age of computers, cell phones, rapid transit and nuclear bombs.

Psalm 23 is rich with spiritual allegories. It is like a diamond that yields ever increasing beauty with each new angle of reflected light. We have selected just a few examples that suggest some of the profound application inherent in its text.

Sheep are the only domestic animal that cannot live without man. Horses, cats, dogs and even cattle, if left to themselves in the wild, can survive from generation to generation, but sheep will die if they have no one to care for them.

Sheep won't drink from noisy, turbulent water. It's easy for them to lose their footing in fast moving streams because their oily wool buoys them up and they risk being swept down stream. This is why they must have "quiet" waters to drink from and panic even at the sound of rushing streams.

For His name's sake has interesting connotations. When a sheep was lost, its shepherd *always* went out to look for it. His *good name* depended on it. If a shepherd ever left a wayward lamb to perish without going after it, it was a terrible blight on his reputation. As shepherds gathered around camp fires in the evening to talk over happenings at the close of the day, this disgrace would be a terrible reproach on his name. His folly would be discussed for days, months or even years afterwards.

Shepherds kept their good names by carefully watching over their sheep and seeking out every lost, wayward animal.

He leadeth me in paths of righteousness . . . for His name's sake.

Let's all stand and quote this psalm together. Because the King James translation is probably still the best known, we'll use that one and make allowances for those who enjoy a more modern translation.

(Note: You may want to include a copy of this in your program. Then the translation would not be a problem.)

Psalm 23:1-6 (King James) Audience participation

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul.
He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.
Thou anointest my head with oil,
my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Narrator: Psalm 91 is another much loved Psalm that assures us of God's tender watchcare over us. There are many stories about God's blessing and deliverance for those who have claimed the protection of its promises in difficult situations. One such instance involved the young son of an ardent S.O.S.er. He was constantly plagued with terrifying nightmares until his mother had him memorize Psalm 91. When he started quoting it every night before going to bed, the nightmares ceased and to my knowledge never returned.

Psalm 91:1-16 (Eighth Quoter)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.

Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge;
His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness
nor for the plague that destroys at midday.
a thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—
then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.
For He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;
They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

You will tread upon the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

"Because he loves, me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
He will call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Narrator: Yes, we can rely on the Lord's unfailing love and trust in His care when we submit to His will. Although this does not mean that we will be exempt from problems and difficult situations in this world. But no matter what happens, God has promised never to leave us and to give grace and guidance in every situation. Many psalms are written during difficult trials as in apparent desperation the psalmist cries out to God for wisdom, guidance and grace. David wrote several such psalms especially during the years he spent hiding in caves while fleeing for his life with king Saul and his army in hot pursuit. In Psalm 6 David pleads with God for deliverance, but concludes with a bold assertion of faith in His God who is mighty to deliver.

Psalm 6:1-10 (Ninth Quoter)

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.
Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint;
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in agony.
My soul is in anguish.
How long O Lord, how long?

Turn, O Lord, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.
No one remembers you when he is dead.
Who praises you from the grave?

I am worn out from groaning;
all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears
My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.

Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the Lord has heard my weeping
The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;
the Lord accepts my prayer.
All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed;
they will turn back in sudden disgrace.

Narrator: Psalm 24 seems to summarize our meditations in the Psalms. It begins by acknowledging God's sovereignty in creation then follows through with man's reunion with his Creator concluding with Jesus our Lord proclaimed and welcomed as King of all kings and Lord of all Lords. Jesus, King of Glory! Haley says, "Maybe *we* will sing (this psalm) when the King of Glory comes again."

Psalm 24:1-10 (Tenth Quoter)

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
for He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.
He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God His Savior.
Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O you gates, be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is the King of glory?
the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is the King of glory?
THE LORD ALMIGHTY - He is the King of glory.

Narrator: So, what has been your heart's response to the Lord as we have considered some of His revelations in the psalms? Perhaps you will find Psalm 136 to be your own expression of praise. You will find the words to this psalm on the back of your program. I will read the first part of each verse and you can respond with the phrase repeated throughout, "*His love endures forever.*"

Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26 Audience Participation

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.
His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.
His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:
His love endures forever.

to Him who alone does great wonders,
His love endures forever.

who by His understanding made the heavens,
His love endures forever.

who spread out the earth upon the waters,
His love endures forever.

who made the great lights —
His love endures forever.

the sun to govern the day,
His love endures forever.

the moon and stars to govern the night;
His love endures forever.

to the One who remembered us in our low estate
His love endures forever.

and freed us from our enemies,
His love endures forever.

and who gives food to every creature.
His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven
His love endures forever.

Narrator: It is appropriate that our last psalm should be one of David's. Let's all bow our heads and worship the Lord in the words of Psalm 103 and excerpts from two of his other psalms.

Psalm 103:1-22 (Best in King James or New King James. This is NKJ) (Eleventh Quoter)

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
Who satisfies your mouth with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.
He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and bountiful in mercy.
He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.
He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him:
As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.
As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him
For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
And its place remembers it no more.
But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's children
To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

The Lord has established His throne in heaven.
And His kingdom rules over all.

Bless the Lord, you His angels,
Who excel in strength, who do His Word,
Heeding the voice of His Word
Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.
Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

(Have the quoter from Psalms 19 come to the microphone toward the end of 103 and the quoter from Psalm 139. As soon as the one quoting 103 leaves the mike they will then be ready so there will be no interruption in the sequence.)

Psalm 19:14 (Second Quoter)

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. ("Strength" is KJV)

Psalm 139:23-24 (Fourth Quoter)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen

Narrator: Amen!

In conclusion, have someone (other than the narrator) present a short, pithy challenge emphasizing the joy and blessing of memorizing Scripture. Be sure to counter the "Oh, I could never do that!" syndrome, by stressing that the participants are not just a gifted few, but only people like them who committed to memorizing God's holy Word for themselves.