

It Is Good To Praise God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 October 2018

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Psalm 92, the superscription of the psalm, says that it's a psalm, a song for the Sabbath. It's the only psalm in the entire Psalter that has a title that associates you with the Sabbath.

Its content is not exclusively about the Sabbath. We're in Psalm 92. But meditating on it, it does help us rest in God.

And it does help us to praise Him as we rest. And it has a fairly straightforward structure. The main message of the psalm is that we should praise the Lord for His great works.

And it can be divided into three sections. Verses 1 to 5 is an exhortation to praise God. And then verses 6 to 11 is a description of those who do not praise God.

And then verses 12 to 15 is a description of those who do praise God. And let me read the psalm out loud, and then we'll talk about it briefly.

[1 : 07] It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High, to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work. At the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep. The stupid man cannot know.

The fool cannot understand this. That though the wicked sprout like grass, and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever. But you, O Lord, are on high forever.

For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish. All evildoers shall be scattered. But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox.

You have poured over me fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies. My ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

[2 : 16] They are planted in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age. They are ever full of sap and green. To declare that the Lord is upright, he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

So in verse 1, if you look at Psalm 92, it begins by telling the hearers, the audience, that it is good to give thanks to the Lord. And then it transitions to a direct address to God.

He starts talking to God, saying, To sing praises to your name, O Most High. It's almost as if the psalmist who's leading the congregation into worship, is it starts addressing the congregation, but then recognizes the very presence of God in the iron mist, and then starts talking to him, start to praise him.

And then verses 2 to 3, it shows why it is good to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute, and the harp to the melody of the lyre.

The phrases in the morning, and then by night, they constitute a merism. So it's not just saying praise God at night, and in the morning, saying it's praise God all day long, right?

[3 : 20] It's merism. There's no time in the day when God's not worthy of praise. And it's the reason we praise him, it's fitting to praise him because of his steadfast love and faithfulness, right?

Both are words that represent God's enduring commitment to his people. He shows steadfast love, not fickle love, not dissipating love, but steadfast love.

And he is faithful to us. He's steady in his commitment to us. He's true to us. And then verses 4 to 5 then explain further why it is good to give thanks to God and praise him.

It says, For, the reason, For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work. At the works of your hands I sing for joy. How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep.

The word works is repeated three times there in those few verses. And the word works is used in scripture to refer to God's work and creation, which is why this is a song that's really used to the

Sabbath, right?

[4 : 21] God created all things in six days and the rest is on the seventh day. But the works can also be used more generally to refer to God's redemptive deeds. And we see that here also.

So part of what we do on a Sabbath, basically on our day of rest, what God's people are supposed to do is recognize that God worked for six days and the rest on the seventh day.

So likewise, we, instead of working on that day, we marvel at God's work, the fact that he finished his work. And we praise God for his work. That's what a Sabbath is about. And that's what this psalm teaches us.

So that's the exhortation to praise God. And then verses 6 to 11 is a short description of those who do not praise God. And it's not flattering, right? Right after telling us that we have to praise God because of his great works and deep thoughts at the end of verse 5.

In verses 6 to 11, the psalmist tells us that people who do not praise God don't because he says, the stupid man cannot know. The fool cannot understand this, that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evil doors flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever.

[5 : 24] But you, O Lord, are on high forever. So God's thoughts are deep. So it's no wonder then that the stupid man, as he says, or a fool is not, that he can't understand it.

Biblically speaking, a stupid man or a fool is not someone who has a low IQ. It's someone who doesn't acknowledge God, right? So Psalm 14, one says, the fool says in his heart, there is no God, right?

So the biblical speaking, a fool or a stupid man is not someone who is just unintelligent, but someone who discounts the existence and power of God. So a lot of very intelligent and smart people can be fools.

And in a biblical sense, they're fools precisely because they don't praise God is what he's saying. They don't understand that the wicked only flourish for a short while, but then are doomed to destruction forever.

While the Lord is on high forever, meaning he is exalted and beyond reproach of the evildoers. And then this is written in the Middle Eastern context where you get short kind of seasonal rains and then right after the seasonal rain, grass sprout up really, really quickly.

[6 : 34] And then because it's so dry and hot, they die really fast. And so that's the picture of evildoers. They flourish for a little bit, but then they die really fast.

And often as believers who are observing a day of rest, that's often a challenge for people too. Look at all those people that are flourishing. They're working. They're busy. How can I take a day off? How can I rest? And it's the fool that doesn't understand that evil people, though they might flourish for a little while, they will not. In the end, their end is doomed because they're not acknowledging God.

They're not following God. And for those who trust in him, we can rest as well. And then verses 9 to 10, read with me, they continue. For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish.

All evildoers shall be scattered. But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox. You have poured over me fresh oil. Evildoers perish. They are scattered.

[7 : 32] But God's people, they have their horn exalted like that of a wild ox. Horn is a representation of someone's power. It's an image of power. And here, not only is the horn exalted, but it also has oil poured over it.

So it's like glistening. It's like polished. It's well established by God. Unlike the enemies of God who are scattered, the evildoers who are perishing.

And then, in fact, their destruction is so sure. Verse 11 says, My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies. My ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The doom of evildoers is so certain. He's seen it with his eyes. He's heard it with his own ears. It's definite. And then, verses 12 to 15, we move on to the description of those who praise God.

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like the cedar in Lebanon. So that's obviously a contrast with the grass that sprouted up really quickly and then withers away.

[8 : 32] This palm tree, this is a reference to the date palm, which is known for its deep tap roots that find water deep in the ground. It has large leaves and plumage like a peacock's feathers.

And it's a tree. And the cedar of Lebanon is famous for its towering size and its durable quality of the wood. And so both images really offer a contrast with the grass that just sprouts in the Middle

East really quickly after the rain and then dies.

Cannot weather the heat. And the righteous, according to verse 13, they are planted in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God.

So their dwelling is with God. That's where they derive nourishment. They rest in Him. They stay with Him. They dwell with Him. And because of that, they flourish continually with the result given in verses 14 to 15.

They still bear fruit in old age. They are ever full of sap and green. To declare that the Lord is upright, He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him. God is our rock, right?

[9 : 42] Steady, reliable, unchanging, the foundation. And He is upright and there is no unrighteousness in Him which is why it is right for us to praise Him, for the righteous to praise Him.

And that's really the main point of the psalm. We should praise the Lord because of His great works. He's created the world. He's also saved us. And as saints in the new covenant for us, because we're not in the old covenant anymore, we have even more reasons to praise God for His great works because Psalm 92 praises God for His great works in creation and redemption.

But we can praise God now for the new creation. God makes us new creation in Jesus Christ and He redeems us once and for all. And this is a song for the Sabbath but we have an even greater Sabbath to look forward to because Hebrews 4 teaches us that Joshua, who led God's people into the promised land, didn't ultimately give them rest.

But it promises us that Jesus, who is the greater Joshua, their name is exactly the same, that they mean the same thing in Hebrew. It comes from the same word. And that Jesus, the greater Joshua, is the one that leads us into the ultimate Sabbath.

It says, there still remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. And this is not just one day of rest once a week but it's eternal rest. Eternal rest because Christ finished His work.

[11 : 05] Christ said on the cross when He died for our sins it is finished and it is into that rest we enter in when we put our faith in Jesus and when we die and are raised with Him. And so that's really kind of the promise that this psalm looks forward to.

It's a song for the Sabbath but it's really a song that anticipates that eternal rest that we have in God. And so with that let's enter into a time of prayer.