

The Rest of God

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Date: 21 November 2018

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[0 : 00] It's actually a perfect psalm for today. It's like a Thanksgiving psalm. Yeah, Psalm 95. Yeah, let me read it out loud for us.

Actually, let me pray to ask for God's help first. God, we have gathered this day before Thanksgiving to pray to you.

To hear from you, from your word, and to speak to you with praise, with confessions, with thanksgiving, and with supplication. We come because we cherish our relationship with you.

We come because we know our desperate need for you. We come because we know that you are faithful to fulfill your promises, faithful to answer our prayers, and faithful to meet with us each time we are gathered in your name as your people.

And so we pray now that you lead us and speak to us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Psalm 95. O come, let us sing to the Lord.

[1 : 18] Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving. Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.

For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth.

The heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

[2 : 25] For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways. Therefore I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

Psalms roughly kind of divided into two main sections. One through most of verse seven is basically an exhortation to praise God.

And then the rest of verse seven through verse 11 is really an exhortation to obey God, trust God. And there's kind of a build up of the worship and praise of God in verses one through seven.

So there's a refrain, right? O come, let us sing to the Lord, make a joyful noise. Again, let's repeat it again. Let us come, and then make a joyful noise. And then again in verse six, O come, let us worship and bow down.

But it's, even though it's a refrain, there's kind of a progression. Because in verse one, it's just let's come, let us sing to the Lord. You're kind of gathering into his presence. And then verse two gets a little bit more intimate.

[3 : 38] It says, let us come into his presence, which literally is before the face, right, with thanksgiving. And then in verse six, it's even more intimate, right? It says, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. And so there's kind of this progression of kind of entering into the presence of God and further in and further in. And our worship also reflecting that greater sense of his presence and intimacy as we approach him.

And as we're praising God, unlike some, you know, modern praise and worship songs that tell us to praise God without giving us any reasons to, Psalms always tell us, gives us reasons to praise God when it tells us to praise him.

And so here, if it's verses one to two, it tells us to praise him. And then verse three gives us a reason, one reason. And that reason is for the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth. The heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it and his hands formed the dry land. And so verses four to five kind of use the kind of a rhetorical device of merism, kind of referring to two opposite things, two polarities, to point to the fact that God's the creator of all things, right?

[4 : 56] So he created the depths as well as the heights. He created the sea as well as the dry land. And then verse three kind of is the reason, right? The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.

He is the one who created all things. He's the one who reigns above all things. He's the great God and the great King who's above all gods. And this kind of reminds me of when a child is really proud of something that his or her parent has done.

I mean, it must happen for you, actually, quite a bit. Well, just because, I mean, you know kids really look up to teachers and also, I feel like kind of a, if you're a gym teacher, you're kind of the coolest teacher in the school, right?

It's like, so I could see like your Teddy, for example, or like your son being like, oh man, that's my dad. Like, you know, like that's my, you know, right? It's like a, I mean, I used to think, you know, that my dad riding his bike to work was like the coolest thing, you know, like, and he had to see him ride and I was like, oh, he looks amazing.

That's my dad, you know? And then here, it's like when you, when it's, it's like we're pointing to God and saying, God, the one who made the heavens and the earth, the one who made the depths and the heights, the one who formed the sea and the dry land, that's God, that's our God, right?

[6 : 13] He is the great king. He's the one above all gods. And it's, we're given another reason after another exhortation to praise in verse six. So, come, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. So it gets even more personal here. Not only is he the creator, generically of all things, he is our maker.

He's the one who made us. So that's another reason to praise him. So in verse seven, for he is our God, our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

That's just a, so intimate, it goes from that cosmic image of the creator to that intimate image of the shepherd. He's saying, not only is God the creator of all the heavens and the earth, he is our maker.

He's the one who made us, who chose us, who redeemed us, and who leads us through this pasture and gives us green grass to feed on and guides us, it goes before us.

[7 : 10] That's our God. And so that's really the exhortation to praise God and then in the rest of the psalm, we're really exhorted to obey him, to hear him.

And it says at the end of verse seven, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day at Mesa in the wilderness.

This is a, the word today is that kind of literary device is used frequently throughout the book of Deuteronomy to kind of make a connection between the past and the present.

So there's, it conveys a sense of urgency, right? It's like, you know, not just genetically, but today. Today, if you hear his voice, make sure you don't harden your hearts as you did in the past. So he makes a connection to the past because that past kind of unfaithfulness and the testing of God is still a risk and a temptation today.

So he says, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as at Meribah as on the day and Mesa in the wilderness. So this is probably, this is a reference to a couple different things. One, one occurs in Exodus, one occurs in Numbers where they basically test God and in the wilderness instead of trusting in the provision, they're saying, it'd be better for us to go back to it, to go back to Egypt.

[8 : 28] They say, we're going to die here of thirst and then Moses brings water out of the rock and in Exodus 17, verse 7, this is really summarized.

He says, and he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the people of Israel and because they tested the Lord by saying, is the Lord among us or not?

The name Meribah means quarreling, like accusing, almost like a litigation and then the word Massah means testing, requiring a proof and those two ideas are really captured here in verse 9 as well.

When your fathers put me to the test, right? That's the idea of testing at Massah and then put me to the proof, accusing, right?

Really kind of the idea of Meribah, do they see in my work? And that's kind of the, is the exact opposite of thanksgiving, right?

[9 : 35] And the praise that we're exhorted to do. It's the grumbling, it's the testing. Is God really for us or not? Is God really with us or not? Is God really providing for us or not?

Is God really good? It's the questioning of God instead of trusting. It's the grumbling at God instead of gratefully praising God and giving thanks to God.

And that was such a grievous sin that God says in verse 10 of Psalm 95, for 40 years I loathed that generation and said, there are people who go astray in their heart and they have not known my ways.

Therefore I swore in my wrath that they shall not enter my rest. And so that generation does not enter the promised land. They don't enter the rest of God.

It's their children that get to enter the promised land. But then of course we know the rest of the story, right? Because even after they enter the promised land they continue to grumble.

[10 : 36] They continue their idolatry. They don't trust God and so that they also fail in their ways to enter God's rest. Even they lose the promised land.

And that ultimately points to the redemption that we have in Jesus. And this passage is made use of the psalm is made use of in Hebrews 4.

It says chapter 4 verses the first few verses here it says therefore while the promise of entering his rest still stands let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

For good news came to us just as to them but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest as he has said as I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest.

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world for he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way and God rested on the seventh day from all his works.

[11 : 48] And again in this passage he said they shall not enter my rest since therefore it remains for some to enter it and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience.

Again he appoints a certain day today saying through David so long afterward in the words already quoted today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts and for if Joshua had given them rest God would not have spoken of another day later on so then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sword of disobedience so this is really kind of by typology it's that the Old Testament rest that God held out to his people in the promised land and the way they failed to enter that rest becomes a foreshadowing of this eternal rest that Christ won for us and makes available to us and so then even though in a real way we are already in that rest if we have put our faith in Jesus there is also a final way in which we will enter that rest in the future when our salvation is consummated and that requires perseverance in the same way the

Israelites needed to persevere and that means today if we hear his voice we must not harden our hearts so we should be giving thanks and praising him for he's a creator and he's our shepherd he's our redeemer and for the same reason we should be praising him and thanking him remembering that and walking with him with that reality in our mind instead of grumbling complaining distrusting and failing to enter that rest so let's keep that in mind and sing some songs