

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.24.2024
- PALM SUNDAY

PSALM 118 - BLESSED IS HE
WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF
THE LORD

1 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

2 Let Israel say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

3 Let the house of Aaron say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

4 Let those who fear the Lord say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

5 Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
the Lord answered me and set me free.

6 The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?

7 The Lord is on my side as my helper;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in man.

9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.

10 All nations surrounded me;
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

11 They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;

in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

12 They surrounded me like bees;

they went out like a fire among thorns;

in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

13 I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,

but the Lord helped me.

14 The Lord is my strength and my song;

he has become my salvation.

15 Glad songs of salvation

are in the tents of the righteous:

“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,

16 the right hand of the Lord exalts,

the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”

17 I shall not die, but I shall live,

and recount the deeds of the Lord.

18 The Lord has disciplined me severely,

but he has not given me over to death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness,

that I may enter through them

and give thanks to the Lord.

20 This is the gate of the Lord;

the righteous shall enter through it.

21 I thank you that you have answered me

and have become my salvation.

22 The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone.

23 This is the Lord's doing;

it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save us, we pray, O Lord!

O Lord, we pray, give us success!

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

27 The Lord is God,

and he has made his light to shine upon us.

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,

up to the horns of the altar!

28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;

you are my God; I will extol you.

29 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures forever!

I. HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

- This is the last of a group of psalms called the Egyptian Hallel psalms, “Hallel” means “praise.” Psalms 113-118
- Psalm 118 is the most quoted Psalm in the NT.
- Psalm 118 contains a lot of repetition.
- There are five repeated phrases that form the movement through the first part of this song.
- This is a thanksgiving psalm, a psalm of praise.

1. PRAISE FOR GOD’S ENDURING LOVE (1-4)

- 1 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!
- The psalm opens with a call for God’s people to give thanks to God for immutable aspects of his character—that he is good and to praise him for his enduring lovingkindness.
- The opening verse is repeated at the end, forming what is called an inclusio. This refrain is the bracket around the song.
- What is sandwiched between those two brackets further explains the refrain that bookends the content.
- In this case it is God’s goodness and enduring lovingkindness.
- The word translated from the Hebrew as “steadfast love”, is the Hebrew word “hesed”. It means God’s loving kindness, his covenant love, his loyal love for his people.
- This refrain is also repeated in Ps 107:1; Psalm 106:1 and especially Psalm 136.
- It is found in the thanksgiving expressed during the laying of the foundation of the rebuilt temple (Ezra 3:11)
- The repetition is meant to impress upon our hearts the goodness of God.
- Because of it’s repetition in the opening stanza, the person reciting or singing the psalm, is to proclaim and remember his enduring lovingkindness.
- Three groups of people are addressed and called to thanksgiving— Israel, the priests (House of Aaron), and all God-fearing people.
- The same groups are addressed in Psalm 115:9-11 where they are called to trust in the Lord.

- These are the redeemed of the Lord who are called on to speak and proclaim God's lovingkindness.
- As we move through this psalm, that is to be what is on our heart and lips, thanksgiving for his goodness, love, mercy, and faithfulness.
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- This psalm expresses a hope that had not yet been realized at the time of its writing.
- There are promises in this Psalm that had not yet come to pass, but the psalmist praises God as though God has already fulfilled his promises.
- The praises are being offered by faith.
- This psalm anticipates a new type of exodus for the people of God.
- We are also invited to join in the chorus of the redeemed to offer praise to God for his enduring love, goodness, faithfulness, and the salvation of his people.
- Our salvation is an outworking of God's goodness and lovingkindness.
- But we also praise in faith because we have not yet fully experienced all of the blessing of our deliverance and salvation in Christ.
- Yet we praise him not only in anticipation of the future fulfillment of what has been promised us, but in faith that they are already ours because God is faithful.

2. TRUST IN GOD'S TIMELY HELP (5-11)

- 5 Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.
- We don't know the context of the historical event that frames the content of this song. We don't know the author of this psalm, though most scholars would attribute this psalm to David.
- We can see parallels in the psalm with the life and reign of David.
- But what we see here is that the person speaking is rehearsing the way in which the Lord answered him when he called to the Lord in a time of distress.
- This is a repeated theme in the psalter, a time of distress, a calling on the Lord, and the Lord answering and delivering.
- We are reminded that this is the pattern of our life also.

THE LORD IS ON MY SIDE

- The king declares twice in v6-7 that "the Lord is on his side." And because the Lord is for him, he will not fear what any man or even all of the human race can do to him.
- Because God is on his side, helping him, he will triumph over his enemies.
- How can he be assured that the Lord is on his side?
- We saw this in Psalm 2, because David, the king, is the Lord's anointed.
- But this is not only true of David and the Messiah, this is also true of us.
- Hebrews 13:6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"
- We can say this as well. In our distress, "*the Lord is on my side, I will not fear, what can man do to me?*"
- David can recount from his personal history the many times God came through for him because the Lord was on his side.
- He was the anointed king. And Saul hunted him down to kill him but could not prevail because David knew that he would not be giving into Saul's hand. (1 Samuel 23:14)
- 7 The Lord is on my side as my helper;

- This doesn't just mean the Lord helps him, but rather the manner in which the Lord helps him to triumph.
- A literal translation is "The Lord is for me in the ones who help me."
- The sentiment he is expressing is that the Lord helps him through the people that are aligned with the king, like his mighty men, his army.
- Who is that for us? It is the body of Christ, it is our brothers and sisters in Christ, the local church.
- God is on my side in the form of my brothers and sisters who are with me.
- This is a reminder to us also that in the midst of fierce persecution of the Church by hostile regimes and governments, the Lord will have the last word. We triumph!

IT IS BETTER TO TAKE REFUGE IN THE LORD

- We have another repeated refrain in v8-9, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord" than to trust in man and to trust in princes.
- One thing is better than the other. Who is the better refuge?
- Princes would be considered the ones who most would naturally rely on, rulers, leaders of men.
- But only the Lord can safely be relied upon at all times, in all our distress, for deliverance.
- Who do you turn to first in your distress, when you have problems?
- The Lord or human remedies?
- The Lord or man?
- Psalm 20:6-8 Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. 7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. 8 They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.
- The only unfailing refuge and security is the Lord! He is better!

SURROUNDED BUT VICTORIOUS

- V10-14 we have the conflict described by another repetition in the triple refrain: he was surrounded by his enemies and "in the name of the Lord I cut them off!"
- The enemy opposition seemed to grow and intensify. Nations surrounded him, they had him cornered from every side, it seemed like they had the advantage, they were like swarming bees, they were impressive as they were arrayed against him on the battlefield, but they would not have the victory.
- They would be like thorns set on fire that quickly blaze and then burn out.
- "In the name of the Lord..." The battle is for the Lord's reputation.
- 1 Samuel 17:45-47 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."
- David had a personal repeated history of the Lord helping him in battle because David was concerned for the Lord's name and reputation. He knew the Lord would deliver him and give him victory—he was the Lord's anointed.

- V13 I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me.
- To the natural eye, it would have seemed like David was going to be defeated.
- Yet nothing could harm him because he was helped by the Lord.
- He knew it was not by his own might or military strength but that the battle belongs to the Lord!
- We need to be encouraged to persevere under trials and opposition.
- Now, this is not an unconditional promise that no physical harm will come to us, we know that is not the case.
- But we can be confident of the Lord's help by His Spirit, to strengthen and give us the ability to endure every attack of the enemy, because our refuge is Christ.
- We will be kept safe from spiritual harm and be brought safely into his promised kingdom.
- Christ's present reign means that all of his enemies will be subjected to him. He will cut them off!
- No nation, no government will prevail against the Lord or his people.

3. DECLARATION OF THE LORD'S STRENGTH AND SONG (14-18)

- 14 The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
- This is taken from Exodus 15, the Song of Moses.
- The Lord is the melody of their heart, the song on the lips of his people by becoming their strength and salvation.
- 15 Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous:
- Tents were the dwelling of the ancient Jews in the wilderness on their way to the promised land.
- But here it is a poetic reference for the abode of the righteous, their abode will be filled with joyous, happy songs of the Lord's salvation.
- We are on our way to the promised land, the New Jerusalem, what awaits us in glory.
- If you have been saved by the Lord, delivered from sin, this song is in your heart.
- The last set of repeated phrases is in v15-16
- "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly, the right hand of the Lord exalts, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!"
- The right hand of the Lord, this speaks of his power to save and deliver.
- Israel's deliverance was by the hand of the Lord.
- That is why the psalmist's song is the Lord's salvation.
- V17, because he did not die but lived, he will recount the deeds of the Lord.
- How about us? If we have been brought from death to life, we too must delight in recounting what the Lord has done for us.
- V18 because he was delivered, he looks back and interprets his distress and difficulties as the Lord's discipline.
- The discipline was severe, but the Lord did not give him over to death.
- The Lord chastens those whom he loves. And a lot of the distress that came upon David was sent by the Lord to discipline him, but because of the steadfast love of the Lord and his unfailing promises, he was delivered.

4. TRIUMPHANT RETURN (19-21)

- The last part of this first section, is a picture of the king, returning to Jerusalem, having been delivered from what looked like certain defeat and

death, now entering the city in triumph.

- Psalm 24:7-8 Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!
- The gate of righteousness - only the righteous can enter.
- And he is not alone, he is leading a procession of the righteous who come with him, thanking the Lord for having answered their cry of distress and becoming their salvation.

- The fulfillment of this is Christ.
- His triumph becomes our triumph.
- Because of his righteousness, we are made righteous and can enter with him into the temple of our God.
- Thank God for delivering you from your greatest distress—sin and death!
- What we needed deliverance from most, he saved us from. All because of his goodness and loving kindness!
- This is our exodus story!

II. THE CORNERSTONE

- This is a complex psalm but what we find in this last section of the song is not something that can be fully applied to David.
- This is pointing to something else, it is anticipating a future salvation, a lasting salvation, because in v25 we have the cry, “Save us, we pray, O Lord!
- The psalm is recounting a story of salvation but there is anticipation of a lasting salvation.

- 22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
- The cornerstone or the chief stone was the foundation stone in a building.
- And the imagery is that the builders evaluated a particular stone and deemed it unworthy and rejected it, but then that stone became the most essential stone, the cornerstone for the foundation.
- Now there are several examples in Scripture of this motif of rejection and exaltation: Joseph, Moses and David.
- And like Joseph, Moses, and David, the one from David’s line, the promised Messiah, would be a stone the builders rejected that would turn out to be the chief cornerstone.

- v23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
- Only the Lord could do this and people will marvel at it. Only the Lord could bring about this exaltation.
- V24 This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- On that day, the day of the exaltation of the rejected stone, that will be a cause for great rejoicing.

- The NT presents Jesus as this cornerstone. He is the fullest and final application of the cornerstone.
- The apostolic writers give us the true interpretation of this prophetic picture.
- Jesus is the direct and fullest application of what the psalmist wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- He was rejected by his own people who had been anticipating his arrival.
- But he was raised to the highest honor, exalted above everyone else by his Father.

- In his triumphal entry into Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, we see that many of the people saw Jesus as the fulfillment of Psalm 118.
- They herald him as the “Blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- They shout “Hosanna”. Which means, “Save us!” From v25.
- They call him the Son of David—they see him as the promised King. (Matt 25:9)
- They shout, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” (Mark 11:10)
- All of their hopes and longings of the promised deliverance Messiah would bring were wrapped up in the figure of Jesus.
- Despite all of that, he was rejected by his own people. He did not come as they expected.
- Like Joseph, Moses, and David, what others had imagined in their mind of what a deliverer should be, Jesus didn’t fit the bill.
- They did not truly want to bow down before him as king and submit themselves to his rule.
- The religious rulers were indignant that people were seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of Psalm 118, and they refused to humble themselves before Jesus.

• **Matthew 21:42-43** Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

- What is Jesus saying? Fall on the stone and be broken or have the stone fall on you and be crushed.
- Jesus is saying there are two fundamental relationships you can have with him.
- You can accept his rule, submit yourself to him, humble yourself before him, be broken.
- Or you can reject his rule and be condemned in judgment, be crushed.
- Which one will you be, broken or crushed?

• 1 Peter 2:4-8 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

- Yet the promise and hope of Psalm 118, the glory of the message of the gospel is this, all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
- Jesus enables us to appropriate the words of Psalm 118 as our own.
- He will usher us into the New Jerusalem, the righteous will enter the gates of the heavenly city with him.
- He has become our salvation song. He has made his light shine upon us.

- Why? All because of his sacrifice he made on our behalf.
- What Jesus accomplished for us through his life, death, and resurrection, counts for us his people who are united to him by faith.

- So we confess with the psalmist:

- V28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.
- And we fill our mouths with praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?