

Psalms 95

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: 27 June 2019

Preacher: Paul Levy

[0 : 00] Psalm 95. Slightly different Bibles today. I forgot to print out the sheets. So Psalm 95. Let me read it to you.

! Come, let's sing for joy to the Lord. Let's shout praises to the Rock who saves us. Let's come to Him with thanksgiving. Let's sing songs to Him. The Lord is the great God. He is the great King over all gods. The deepest places on earth are His and the highest mountains belong to Him. The sea is His because He made it. He created the land with His own hands. Come, let's bow down and worship Him. Let's kneel before the Lord who made us. He is our God and we are the people He takes care of and the sheep that He tends.

Today, listen to what He says. Do not be stubborn. That should be do not harden your heart. As your ancestors did at Meribah. As they were that day of Massa in the desert.

They're your ancestors tested me. They put me to the test. Even though they saw what I did. I was angry with that generation for 40 years and I said they are not loyal to me.

[1 : 29] They've not understood my ways. I was angry and made a promise. They will never enter my land of rest. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Let's pray.

Father, we ask that as you are our teacher. And as you send your Holy Spirit into our hearts to instruct us in your truth. And we do want to pray that He who is the author of your written word may also make it to us the living word of God.

In our midst. And in our lives this afternoon. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. So as we're in Christ the Saviour Hall. Anybody want to tell me what Psalm 95 is called?

In the prayer book. Anybody know? It begins in the V. Anglicans Amidstus. Yes, I am. What do you call Psalm 95?

The D-0. Say that again. The D-0. That's it. Full points to our liturgical scroll in a million weeks. The V-night.

[2 : 44] The V-night. It's a really familiar part of the Anglican prayer book. It's simply Psalm 95. And what it means is O-come.

O-come. That's the first word, isn't it, of Psalm 95. It's a summons to God's people. It's a summons to God's people. Well, the psalmist wants to speak to fellow believers.

And he says to them, will you come and sing for joy with me to the Lord? Here's somebody. I'm going up and down the streets of the city. I'm calling into the homes of God's people.

And urging them to leave everything that's of lesser significance and come together. Let's come before him with thanksgiving. Let's extol him.

Let's praise him. With music and song. Or imagine somebody standing at the temple gates. And they're calling upon everyone who passes by. Come. Come.

[3 : 43] Let's sing for joy to the Lord. Or he may be just addressing his fellow worshippers within the temple. Calling to them. Encouraging them. Come. Come.

Into God's presence. Together. Let's exalt his name. And rejoice with thanksgiving. Now. You'll know. That there's no question.

That. That is a part. Indeed. Of worship. And we'll know that in worship. As a psalmist. He often addresses God. He addresses himself.

Doesn't he? And he speaks to others. And we see that again and again. That threefold thing. And you and I. I don't know about you. But I need that encouragement.

We are aware. Aren't we? And if you are a Christian. Of your sluggishness. You'll be aware. That during the week. You leak. We're like sives.

[4 : 42] And we are conscious. Aren't we? That we're so easily preoccupied. With other things. And not the glories of the living God. And God doesn't take up our attention. Like he should.

And our hearts. Are not often enlarged. With thanksgiving. As they ought to be. And so we need. This encouragement. For ourselves. Don't we? For ourselves. So the psalmist will say. Bless the Lord. O my soul. And we say to one another. Come. Let us joyfully sing to the Lord. And so this psalm. Really tells us.

How and why we should come before God. Three emphasis. Okay. Three main responses. That tell us what he is. Who he is.

And what he's done. The first is in. Verses 1 and 2. And the first response. That God calls for. Is jubilant thanksgiving. Come. Let's sing for joy.

[5 : 38] To the Lord. Let's shout. Praises. To the rock. Let's come to him. With thanksgiving. Let's sing songs. To him. But we're not only.

To come with jubilant thanksgiving. We're to come also. With humble worship. Look at verse 6. Come. Let's bow down. And worship him. Let's kneel before the Lord.

Who made us. He is our God. And we are the people he takes care of. And the sheep. Of his pasture. Humble worship. And the third note.

Is their trustful obedience. Look at the end of verse 7. It really is a very weak translation. In whatever translation this is. Today. Listen to what he says. It should be.

Today. If you hear his voice. Pardon. Not. Your heart. Trustful obedience. And on each of these emphases. I think we're given a reason. So we're told.

[6 : 34] Why should we come. With jubilant thanksgiving. And why should we come to God. With trustful obedience. And why should we come. In humble worship. Number one. Jubilant thanksgiving. And so that's a characteristic.

Of true. Biblical. Worship. That we will be jubilant. And joyful. That we'll be full of the expression. Of that joy. From the lips of God's people. So come. Let us sing. For joy. To the Lord. Let's shout aloud. To the rock of our salvations.

In other words. It will engage. Every faculty of our being. And that's what. Ought to happen. When we come into the presence of God.

We ought to have that effect. On each other. As we sing together. We are encouraging. One another. To employ. Every faculty of our being. And every ounce of our strength.

[7 : 32] To magnify. The Lord. And it's for this reason. That we ought to be putting. Our everything. Our everything. Our everything. And so. I don't know.

How you sing. And we will sing. In different ways. Won't we. Some will be very. Very exuberant. Some like me. Will have their hands.

Locked to their sides. But I do want to encourage you. As you come together. As God's people. To call on God's name. You put everything into it. And that's what the psalm is saying.

That's what Psalm 103 is saying. Where it says. Bless the Lord. O my soul. And all. That is within me. Bless. Within me. Bless his holy name. It's an amazing thing. Isn't it?

We employ all our beings. In all sorts of activities. But in the most important activity of life. The corporate worship of God. We can be very lethargic.

[8 : 26] And laid back. And detached. And distant. From the engagement of our being. In the worship of God. And we need to cry.

Don't we? As we come to worship. Sunday by Sunday. On the Lord's Day. Lord deliver me. From this sleepy. Soporific method. Of praising you. Shout aloud to the Lord.

Sing praises. Now do you notice. That this worship. Is encouraged by what we say. To one another. And what we say. To ourselves. But it's not directed. To ourselves. And it's not directed. To one another.

So can you just see. Verse 1. Let's sing for joy. To the Lord. Let's. Shout praises. To the rock. Let's come. To him. With thanksgiving.

Let's sing praises. To him. And so just notice. That God is at the centre. He is the rock. Of our salvation. Some people have difficulty. Don't they.

[9 : 24] With this idea. That. God delights. In our praise. And glory. And honour. Being kept upon him. C.S. Lewis. In very perceptive.

Comment. Says this. He tells us how. He had difficulty with this. At the beginning. Of his Christian life. He writes. For example. When I first began. To draw near. To belief in God. And even for some time.

After it. I found a stumbling block. In the demand. So clamorously made. By all religious people. That we should praise God. Still more. I was puzzled. By the idea. That God himself. Delighted in it. I thought of it. In terms of compliments. And approval. Or the giving of honour. I never noticed. That all enjoyment. Spontaneously. Overflows.

Into praise. It's a very important point. All enjoyment. Spontaneously. Overflows. Into praise. I had not noticed.

[10:17] How the humblest. And at the same time. Most balanced. And capacious minds. Praise most. While the cranks. Misfits. And malcontents. Praise least. The healthy. And unaffected man.

Even if luxuriously. Brought up. And widely. Experienced. In good cookery. Could praise. A very modest meal. The dysbaptic. And the snob.

Found fault with all. And here it is. Praise. Almost always. Seems. To be. Inner health. Made audible. Praise.

Almost. Always. Seems to be. Inner health. Made audible. I had not noticed. Either that. Just as men. Spontaneously. Praise. Whatever they value.

So they spontaneously. Urge others. To join in praising it. We do that. Don't we? Isn't she. Level eight? Wasn't it glorious?

[11:15] Don't you think that view is just magnificent? Do you see what he's fastened upon? It's so true isn't it? What we value. What has come to grip us.

That overflows into praise. And that's what the psalmist is going on to tell us. Why we are to be filled with this jubilant thanksgiving. And what is the source of it? And people think don't they.

This source of jubilant thanksgiving. Is something that you kind of mechanically work it up. Or it depends on the kind of atmosphere of the meeting. Or it can be worked up in some other kind of way.

The Bible is absolutely consistent. But jubilant praise. And genuine worship. Only comes from one source. And that one source is an understanding.

And a knowledge of the glory. Of the God whom it's directed to. It is the enjoyment of who God is. And what he has done. That overflows into praise.

[12:17] Notice what the psalmist is meditating on. Look at verse 1. He's pondering on what God is like. And what he's done. Come let's sing for joy to the Lord. Let's shout praises to the rock.

Who saves us? And when he speaks about the rock. He's speaking about God. We understand that. We know that a rock is. In the midst of all change.

And fluidity. And fickleness. And uncertainty of the world. In the midst of the experience. We know that men and women. Change.

We know that we're frail. And we know that beauty is fading. But God is unchanging. People will often say about somebody in a time of difficulty. Or a time of grief.

That person was my rock. And what they mean is a stability. And strength. And a permanence. But of course. None of us are permanent. And God is unchanging.

[13:16] He is the rock of ages. And that's true. But I'm not completely certain that is what Psalm 95 is talking about. I think there's something more specific. And we have, don't we, this funny reference.

We should have inverted it to Meribah and Massah. And for those who sang this Psalm. They would think back. Ah, where have we heard the words Meribah and Massah? So let me.

When I say some names to you. If I say the word Dunblane. What do you think of? You think of the shooting, don't you? The school. The school, that's right. That's right.

Is that? If I say the words. I can't think of the name. For those of you older. If I say the word Abavan. You think of a mining accident, don't you?

And there's certain places of connotations. And so it's the same. The Americans here. Can we think of any American places to help them? Dallas.

[14:13] What do you think of when you think of Dallas? Dallas. Dallas. Dallas. Dallas. Dallas. That's right. But when we. When we see. When we see places.

That's right, Kennedy. So when we see. When we think of places. We. We automatically think of events. Now. When the original hear. They heard. Meribah and Massah. They're.

They're. Suddenly. They have a kind of cultural memory. And we go back to Exodus 17. Numbers 20. And the psalmist tells us. That when the people of God. Are in the wilderness. Moses came.

And what did he do?

Do you remember? He struck the rock. And from that rock. For the thirsty people of God. What? What gushed out? The living water came out. And it slaked their thirst.

And God is the rock of his people. It's stayed forever with his people. And so we come to 1 Corinthians 10. And the apostle Paul says.

[15:09] My brothers and sisters. He says. They all drank from. That rock. And that rock. Was. Christ. Because out of him will flow. Living water.

And so the rock of our salvation. Really is. A shadow. Of the true salvation. Of what Christ has come and accomplished for us.

Who is the rock of ages? Rock of ages. Cleft for me. Let me hide myself. In thee. The glories of God redemption. In Jesus Christ.

And so what I'm trying to say to you. Is I'm trying to say to you this. The character of our worship. Has a great deal.

To do with how much we appreciate. The glories of God's redeeming love. In Jesus Christ. And if you are a soul. That is continually being fed.

[16:05] By that truth. If your whole. Being is electrified. By the wonders. Of who the Lord Jesus is. Then you will say. And you will want to say.

Oh come. Let us worship. Come and join us. Let us bow down. Let's praise with joy.

The God of our salvation. Who is the rock of ages. And so let's come before him. With thanksgiving. This is three to five.

That's my second point. He is the sovereign Lord of all creation. This is what he does. For the psalmist. For the psalmist looks around. At the world. He goes out on a day like today.

And as he looks at creation. He doesn't say. Isn't nature marvelous. Creation deepens his understanding. Of the glory of God.

[17:00] And the Lord is the great king. Above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth. Earth. And. The psalmist is saying. You go to the lowest parts of the earth. You go down the mine.

And the Lord is the creator of it. And you go to the highest height. On the mountain peak. And that belongs to him. And the sea. And the dry land. He formed it. He is the sovereign.

Over every area. And we ought to come to him. With jubilant thanksgiving. And that jubilant thanksgiving. Belongs to the heart. And springs from the knowledge of God.

So. Secondly. Here we are. Humble worship. Look at verse 6. Come. And let's bow down. And worship him. And let's kneel. Before the Lord.

Who made us. Again. That's already. That's a poor translation. Let's kneel before the Lord. Our maker. It's personal. Now. Do you notice. That bows him before God.

[17:56] He's first of all. Exalting. God's greatness. He's understanding. The glories of God. The Lord of the universe. The rock of salvation.

And that bows him down. It humbles him. And he says. This God. Is our God. He is glorious.

In all his ways. He's the great creator God. But he's also. Verse 7. Come as our shepherd. And he comes. Seeking. His lost sheep.

And he's come to us. And made us his people. The people of his pasture. Under his care. Now the idea. That the God of Israel.

The Lord. God. Who's redeemed us. With great salvation. Such great salvation. Who's created the earth. That he should become. A shepherd. And friend.

[18:51] To his own people. As the psalmist. Thinks about that. That it passes his understanding. And all he can do. Is bow down. And kneel. In the presence of God. I don't think that means.

That kneeling. Is the only posture. In fact. I want to argue. That posture. Does not matter. Much at all. Because of what the psalmist.

Goes on to say. About trustful obedience. The problem. With the people of Israel. Do you remember. They were 40 years. In the wilderness. And they had the tabernacle.

Tabernacle. And actually. The people of God. Went into the presence of God. To worship. And they literally. Bowed their knees. But when they bowed their knees. Their hearts were stubborn. And they were rebellious.

Against him. So the psalmist says. The keynote of worship. Is not only. Jubilant thanksgiving. And not only humble worship. But lastly. Trustful obedience. Alright. Because he says.

[19 : 48] Today. If you hear his voice. Do not harden your heart. And you can go back. And you can read. That story. Of Massa and Meribah. In Exodus 17. The people of God. Come to Moses. And they say. What have you done? Why have you drawn us up. Out of Egypt? We're fed up with this life. We are sick of the whole business. Of following God. It was better for us. Back in Egypt. And they began to murmur. And to grumble. And to complain. And they were in contention. With the Lord. And they said. Moses. Provide us with water. From the desert. And what they were doing. We're told. Aren't we? They tested God. They were rebellious. Against him. And there's a climax. It reaches a high point. A climax. At Massa and Meribah. And I want to say to you. This afternoon. All rebellion. Against God. Is a climax. And it's a climax. Of something. That's been going on. For a long time. [20 : 40] Let me explain this to you. Okay. I hope you know this. But growing as a Christian. Is a gradual process. You do know that.

Don't you? You like to think. It's not a gradual process. That if you go to this conference. You'll have a high point. Or if you have this experience. You'll have a high point. And you'll grow by leaps and bounds.

That isn't how Christians grow. We grow. The Bible tells us. Like flowers and plants grow. It's slow. And it's gradual. New Christians. Don't.

Sprout up. Quickly. Christian growth. Is a matter of. Process. Spirituality. Takes time. So we need patience. With each other.

Don't we? Because. And because. We are gradual. Gradually growing grace. But Christian decline.

[21 : 34] Is also. A matter of progress. Christian decline. Happens gradually. And slowly. And imperceptibly. And then. It suddenly shows itself.

And here we often think. Don't we? When somebody. Falls dramatically. When somebody. Falls into a scandal.

Very often. They will want to say to us. Well it just came upon me quickly. The temptation. Just rushed upon me. And I gave in. In my experience. That's very. Very.

Unusual. There is a hardening. That takes place. Before. And today. If you hear his voice. Do not harden your hearts.

Says the psalm. Because. You will know that. This kind of hardening. Well it happens on your skin. Isn't it? I'm doing a bit of work. In our. Back alley. Where is going to build something. At the moment. And I'm using. A.

[22 : 31] A. Shovel. And a pickaxe. And different things. And my hands. Have become calloused. You know what that's like. Isn't it? And so.

Your skin. Becomes insensitive. So. I can get a pin. At the moment. And put it. Into my. Finger. And it doesn't hurt. As long as I don't push it in too far. Because the skin.

Is becoming sensitive. And when it gets really hard. It gets impenetrable. And your soul. The same thing can happen. That you begin to become.

Insensitive. To the word of God. You refuse. To obey God's word. In a certain area. And you keep refusing. It's nothing dramatic. But you slowly become insensitive.

And then impenetrable. You refuse it. Again. And again. And again. And actually. You get into a pattern. Of resisting God's word.

[23 : 28] And gradually. What once you wouldn't hear. You can no longer hear. And today. Says the psalmist.

If you hear his voice. Don't harden your heart. Don't harden your heart. Like they did. In that generation. Because for 40 years. There was a generation. That became a warning. To God's people. Because.

They hardened their hearts. Against God. And do you notice. What God says. God says. Verse 11. They get this right. In this translation. I was angry.

And instead of bringing. Pleasure from their worship. He was angry. With their disobedience. And Jesus said. Didn't he. Do you remember. This people. They honor me. With their lips. But their hearts. Are far from me. And so the kneeling.

That matters. Is the bowing. Of our hearts. And the bowing. Of my will. To God.

[24 : 29] So that he may have. Good pleasure. In us. That's where our joy begins. Christian joy. Begins there. Would to God.

That we can be persuaded. Of it. And our lives. Would be abundantly different. Christian joy. Begins with. Hearing. And doing everything he says.
Let's pray together.