

# This Is The Day

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Preacher: Christopher Baker

[0:00] We are again this morning in Psalms. And I know you may be thinking, well, this is Easter. Why are we in Psalms? We should be in the New Testament and we'll get there. But we have been in Psalms the last few weeks and we've been talking about the fact that even though Psalms is the Old Testament, it's all about praise.

David wrote many a Psalms and several other authors wrote Psalms, but it all is about praising God and really it all points to Christ. It points to the New Testament, to the hope that we can have.

So this morning we are in Psalms 118. So I'd encourage you to find that and follow along. Psalms 118, beginning in the first verse. And this is what it shares this morning.

And I'm going to ask if you'd stand, if you're able, while we share God's Word. All right. Psalms 118, beginning in the first verse.

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endures forever. Let Israel now say that His mercy endures forever. Let the house of Aaron now say that His mercy endures forever.

[1:06] Let them now that fear the Lord say that His mercy endures forever. I called upon the Lord in distress. The Lord answered me and set me in a large place.

The Lord is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do to me? Let's pray. Lord God, thank You again for this morning. Thank You that we can be here in Your house.

Thank You for Your Word. And thank You that we have a reason to celebrate. And now, Lord, as we look at Your Word, I pray that You would just teach us, just open our eyes to the message that You have for us this morning. And it's in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray.

Amen. You can be seated this morning. All right. So, as we get into this psalm, there's some things that we should definitely be doing this morning. The first two words of this psalm, two very simple words.

What are the first two words? Oh, it's not right up here. There it is. Well, take out the O. So, take out the O. Let's forget the O. After that, what are the next two words?

[2:05] Give thanks. You know, that, for a believer, is something that should come naturally to us. It's something that should just come out of us, that we should have a natural tendency and desire to do in our lives, to give thanks.

And especially on Easter, do we have something to be thankful for this Easter? Everybody say yes. Yes, we have something to be thankful for.

We know that Jesus Christ died and that He rose again for us. And even here in the Old Testament, it says give thanks to the Lord because He's good. We serve a good God that gives us good gifts, is what the Bible says.

And at Easter, we celebrate the greatest gift that He could possibly give us, the gift of His Son and His death on the cross. But Easter is really all about the end of this verse.

Because His mercy endures forever. God's mercy endures forever. And as you think about Easter, do you know what Easter is really all about?

[3:08] God's mercy. God's mercy. What is mercy? Not getting what you deserve.

What do we deserve? Actually, it's worse than nothing. What do we deserve? Death. Death. Why? Because we sin. All of us have sinned, right?

Look at the person next to you. Tell them, you've sinned. Tell them. It's not mean, it's honest. I mean, don't say it with a hateful spirit.

But it's the truth. We can think of our lives and we look at our lives and the reality is, folks, we're all in the same boat. We have all sinned. Everyone who has walked upon the face of this earth, except for Jesus Christ, has sinned.

That's why the Bible says we all fall short. We have all sinned. And the Bible says the wages of sin or the results of sin should be death. That is what we deserve.

[4:12] Mercy, though, is not getting what you deserve. God loves us enough that He showed us His mercy in sending His Son, Jesus Christ. That's God showing His mercy.

And it says here in the next few verses, Let Israel, God's chosen people, now say that His mercy endures forever. Let the house of Aaron now say that His mercy endures forever.

Verse 4 includes us. I hope you understand that. Let them now that fear the Lord say that His mercy endures forever. What does it mean here to fear the Lord? To respect Him.

It doesn't mean to be afraid of God. It means to believe in Him and have a respect for Him. And it says, Those that respect the Lord, let them now say what? That His mercy endures forever.

That was why God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, because of His mercy. And it says we should be saying that. What does it mean to say something? It means the words actually come out of your mouth, right?

[5:13] So we're going to say that together this morning. His mercy endures forever. Are you ready? His mercy endures forever. By enduring means it's still going on.

It never ends. This was written a long time before Jesus Christ came. But God continued to show His mercy. And He showed His mercy in the greatest way when Jesus Christ died.

His Son died on the cross for our sins. That is God's mercy enduring forever. And it's interesting that the word fear is here in this verse.

Because the word fear here doesn't really mean to be a scare to something. It means to respect something. But really, Easter is all about fear. It's all about the fact that we don't have to have fear in our lives.

Look at the last verse that we read, verse 6. The Lord is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do to me?

[6:16] That's a question mark at the end. Do you notice that? See the question mark at the end? That means it's a question. What can man do to me? So what's the answer to that? What can man do? If you're a believer, what can man do to you?

In the long run, what can man do to you? Nothing. Can they lie to you? Yeah. But will that make a difference in your eternity?

Can they mock you? Can they make fun of you? Can they beat you or throw you in prison? But again, in the scope of all eternity, what can man do to you? Nothing.

Nothing. It says, therefore, I will not fear. Easter is all about the fact that we don't have to fear anymore. And face it, in our lives, we fear a lot of things, don't we?

Be honest, don't we? And I'm not talking about fear like being afraid of snakes or spiders. I mean, that's a whole different kind of category. But I'm talking about the fears that we face in life just going through life.

[7:16] Where does worry come from? How many of you worry sometimes? Raise your hand. Get it up there. Don't be afraid. Okay. Where does worry come from?

Where does worry come from? It comes from fear, doesn't it? When you're worrying about something, you're worried because you are afraid of what might happen. You are afraid of what might happen physically if it's some kind of physical issue you're dealing with.

You might be afraid of what might happen financially if it's a financial problem you're dealing with. You might be afraid of what might happen in your family if it's some kind of a family issue that's going on.

You might face fear because someone that you love is sick. All of these we can worry about, but it's all based in that fear, isn't it? Isn't that what it's all based in? But again, it's saying when we understand God's mercy and put our trust in Him, we can say, I will not fear.

Because God's got it in control. God's got a plan. I told you we were going to get to the New Testament. I want you to turn to Matthew 28.

[8:28] Matthew 28. You know we had to read some about the resurrection, right? Matthew 28, first nine verses.

And I want you to think as we talk about fear, the place of fear in these verses. I want you to think about that just a little bit. Matthew 28. I hear pages turning.

That is fantastic. Matthew 28. In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

And behold, there was a great earthquake. For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow.

And for fear of him did the keeper shake and became as dead men. All right. We see a little fear in this story right here, don't we? I mean, imagine this event unfolding. Actually, there is kind of fear and worry in a lot of different aspects as we read this.

[9:31] It says Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, they came to the sepulcher. They came to the grave where Jesus was laid. As they were coming to the grave, what do you think was in their heart?

Sadness. What else? Anything else you think was in their heart? Fear. Worry. What's going to happen now? The one that we had been following, the one that we believed in was crucified. We were following him. Are they going to come after us? We were following him and listening to him. Now what do we do? There had to be a great amount of worry there and fear as to what was going to happen in the future.

And then we see these other events unfold. It says a great earthquake. All right. If there was a great earthquake, would you have a little bit of fear? I know we don't have many earthquakes, but I'm guessing we would all have a little fear. And the angel of the Lord descended.

The stone was rolled back. His countenance was like lightning, as raiment, white as snow. Can you imagine seeing that? And the ones that were watching over the tomb or watching over the grave of Jesus, what does it say happened to them, the keepers in verse 4?

[10:38] Okay. Okay. Two things. First of all, what was the first thing that happened to them? They shook. What do you think that means, they shook? Yeah.

They were so full of fear that they were literally shaking. That's how much fear was there. And then what happened? They became as dead men. As dead men.

And that doesn't mean they died, but you have enough fear and you may just pass out. And that's what happened here. So again, we have a couple different kinds of fear going on in this story.

Verse 5, And the angel answered and said to the women, Mentions fear again, doesn't he?

Fear not. You, for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said.

Come and see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead. And behold, He goes before you into Galilee. There shall you see Him.

[11:40] Lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy and did run to bring the disciples' word. And as they went to tell the disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.

And they came and held Him by His feet, and they worshiped Him. Picture in your mind this story unfolding. These women going to the grave, expecting the same thing that any of us would expect when we go to a graveside.

We expect to see the graveside intact like it was when we saw it last. They show up at this graveside where the stone was rolled in front of the tomb that Jesus was in, and what do they find? You know the story. What do they find? The stone rolled away. What do you think their first reaction was to that? I think kind of bewilderment, don't you?

Because what's the first thing the angel says to the women in verse 5? Fear not. Why would He have to tell them, fear not? There was fear there. That's why He had to tell them that.

[12:46] Fear not. Fear not. And then He gave them the greatest news that could ever be given. He gave them news that changed the course of all

humanity, that changes our lives today.

He gave them news that gives us hope, not just hope for the women there in the story, but hope for you and I today. He said, He is not here. He is risen as He said. He reminded them, He told you this was going to happen.

He had told His disciples at least three different times very clearly that I'm going to be crucified and I'm going to rise again. They didn't understand it at the time. But now after the fact, they're being reminded of it.

He is risen as He said. And in verse 8, look what it says. And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy and did run to bring the disciples' word.

Well, fear and joy don't seem to go together, do they? How did they have fear and joy all at the same time? Any thoughts? Oh, everybody's really quiet on that one.

[13:51] Getting over their past fear. And what it led to in the end was what? Joy. They were overjoyed at what they knew was happening, at the possibilities that they were now seeing.

That Jesus didn't stay in the grave, that He actually rose. This would have been... I mean, we've celebrated it our whole lives and we know what Easter is all about. But in that moment, can you imagine their undescrivable joy?

Is this real? This really just happened? Jesus is actually raised from the grave. He's out of the tomb and He is alive. And it says that they...

Look again in verse 8. They departed quickly from the sepulcher. And at the end it says, And they did run to bring His disciples' word. Two words there.

Quickly and ran. Why do you think those things were in the account here, the story? They were excited. They couldn't wait to tell the other people what they had seen and what they had heard.

[14:52] They realized the significance at that point of what was happening that day. And here's the question. Do we realize the significance of Easter?

Do we realize what it is really all about? What it means in our lives? At first, I'm sure they had some question, Is this really happening? But it started to sink in as the angel talked with them and as they saw the open tomb and the puzzles, pieces begin to fit together in their mind.

This is making sense. We see what's happening. Jesus actually rose. And they understood the importance of it. The question for you and I today is do we understand the importance of what we celebrate today?

Do we understand what it means in our lives that Jesus rose from the grave? This morning in our sunrise, our early service, you know what we talked about? What if?

What if Jesus hadn't died on the cross? What if Jesus hadn't risen from the grave? How different would this morning be for you and I?

[15:56] It would mean that we wouldn't be offered this forgiveness that all we have to do is invite Christ in our heart and ask Him to forgive us and He will do that. And we should have a desire to live for Him. That is all because of Jesus' death on the cross.

If He hadn't died on the cross, that offer wouldn't be there. We'd be back to the Old Testament where they had to sacrifice bulls and goats and all different kinds of animals for their sin to be forgiven.

We don't have to do that. For us, it's a matter of making a choice to accept Jesus Christ into our lives because He was that final sacrifice for you and me.

You know, on Friday, Good Friday, we talk about and remember His suffering and His death on the cross, but it's today that we celebrate Him rising from the grave and what that means to us.

But I hope we truly understand what that does mean to us. It means we don't have to live in fear anymore. We don't have to have fear in our hearts or in our lives.

[16:58] And it doesn't matter what situation you may face in your life, you don't have to have fear because you can trust that God has a plan. If all the way back when Psalms was written, God had this plan, He knew it was going to be put into place hundreds of years later.

If God could plan all that out, do you think He can plan your few short years of your life? Do you think God can plan your life? And there may be times when your life things don't seem good, but

guess what?

God also knows what's going to come next and you don't. For the disciples, for Mary, for others, when they saw Jesus nailed up on that cross, what do you think they thought?

This is the end. How does this plan of God, what in the world is this? This isn't right. Do you think they thought that? I'm sure the disciples thought, this isn't right.

Our Master is not supposed to be hanging on a cross. But folks, God had a plan beyond that. And we need to be thankful God had a plan beyond that because that plan included Christ's death but also His resurrection.

[18:03] You may go through a dark time in life where you don't understand the things that are happening, but trust that God knows the next step. God knows what's coming after that. And if you're serving the Lord, guess what?

God's plans are good. Do you know how we know that God's plans are good? What did we read in Psalms 118, the first verse? Let me flip back there.

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. If we serve a good God, do you think His plans are good for us as well? Yes. And I want to read, look back in Psalms again.

There's a few more verses in this chapter that I want to read because this points us directly to Easter. Psalms 118 beginning in verse 14. The Lord is my strength and song and has become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted.

[19:06] The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord. Do you realize verse 17 is for all of us? I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord.

Do you know if you're a believer, if you have Christ in your heart, you understand you're not really going to die? I mean, dying is an end. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, when you draw your last breath, it's not an end, is it?

It's just the beginning of what's next. That's the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Verse 18, The Lord has chastened me sore but He has not given me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will go into them and I will praise the Lord, the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise you for you have heard me and are become my salvation.

And I hope that's something each one of us can say, that He has become our salvation. That offer is made to each one of us but we have to accept it. And when we accept Jesus Christ, that is the moment He becomes our salvation.

[20:15] Verse 22, The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corners. Talking about Jesus Christ. This is the Lord's doing.

It is marvelous in our eyes. And here's another question for us. Is it marvelous to you this morning as you think about God's plan? Is it marvelous as you think about Jesus rose from the grave for you and for me?

Would you describe that as marvelous? I hope you'd say yes. That is the most marvelous thing that can ever happen. And it happened because of us and for us.

And then finally, verse 24, This is the day which the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day. And I know there's a song we sing, This is the day. But this is the day. Easter. It's about what we celebrate. It's about what Christ did for us. It's about His death.

[21:20] It's about His resurrection. It's about the life that that brings to each one of us. This is the day that the Lord has made. This is the plan that God has for our lives.

The question is always, do you accept that plan? And I want to state this as clearly as I possibly can. And if you remember nothing else about this morning, that's okay.

I hope you remember this. This question. Have you invited Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Savior? Has He become your salvation? Because first of all, if you've never done that, you don't have this life that we've been talking about.

When you draw your final breath here on this earth, you don't have heaven waiting for you. That's to those that have accepted Jesus Christ, the gift that God offered to this world.

If you've never done that, this morning, there's no greater time. This is the day to invite Jesus Christ into your heart. to ask Him to forgive your sins. Because again, we agreed earlier that we've all sinned and we agreed, the Bible says, wages of sin is death.

[22:27] And if you haven't accepted Christ, that is your future. If you've never invited Christ into your heart, invite Him into your heart this morning and ask Him to forgive your sins. If you've done that this morning, understand this is the day that God has made.

This is the way that the Lord has made for you and I. It's His plan and it is a marvelous plan. It is a plan that brings us life here on this earth and after we're done here.

That is what God has in store for us. This is the day that the Lord has made. We will do what? Rejoice. And we have a reason to rejoice, don't we?

Rejoice and be what? Glad. On Easter, we should be, the church should be, the happiest group of people you have ever seen in your entire life.

Right? Because we understand what this is. The plan that God has, what He offers to us and what we've accepted, the salvation that He has for us. We should be the happiest group of people that you have ever seen.

[23:36] And I know that that we have challenges even on Easter. I remember back in the day when our kids were young and we had to get up and get them ready for sunrise service.

You know what inevitably would happen that morning? Parents, you know. They were grouchy. They were uncooperative.

They didn't want to get up. They didn't want to get ready. They'd argue, fuss, and fight. Mom and Dad, Tammy and I would get aggravated. Get in the car. We've got to get going. We're going to be late.

We'd be on the way to church. Kids are fighting in the back seat. And we're not exactly in the front seat thinking praise the Lord for the beautiful day.

I mean, that's life, isn't it? And even as you come today, I know that you come in all different kinds of situations and circumstances. Whether it's coming from loss, whether it's coming from illness, whether it's coming from a battle that you've been facing, family issues, I don't know.

[24:38] But in the midst of those, understand that you have something to be glad about. That you can rejoice today. Because any of those problems that I've talked about, you know what?

They all have in common. They are temporary. They will not last forever. They will pass. But this thing that we have to be glad and rejoice about is for eternity.

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. And I pray that your heart is rejoicing today. I pray that you have Jesus Christ in your heart and life and you understand the life that that brings.

Now and for all eternity. Let's pray together. Lord God, thank you again for this morning that you've given us. And I pray that you'd help each one of us that's here to understand your amazing plans for us.

Your plan that included your son coming to this earth, living a perfect life, dying on the cross for us and raising again so that we could have eternal life.

[25:49] Overcoming death and sin so that we could overcome death and sin. And Lord, I pray that each person has made that decision to invite Christ into their heart and life to forgive their sins and live for Him.

Lord, if there are any here that have not, I pray that they would make that decision today. And Lord, for those that have made that decision already, I just pray that you'd help us to be glad, to rejoice, to have joy in our hearts and to understand all that we have to celebrate today.

Thank you again for your word. And it's in the name of Jesus we pray. And all God's people said, Amen.