

Let the Nations Rejoice

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[0 : 00] Now, as I mentioned, the psalm we just sang will be our passage this morning.

And as we get going, I'm curious as to how many of us may be fans of English literature. Certainly all of us would have studied English literature probably sometime in our education.

If your education was anything like mine, then English literature would have also included the study of Shakespeare. Now, to be honest, in secondary school, I wasn't a huge fan of Shakespeare.

I found it rather hard to understand at times, rather dull, when you just sit in class and you open this book and read this play and analyze dialogue and look at these prose.

And it can be quite boring to many of us. And it really wasn't until I got to university that I developed this appreciation and more of this affection for Shakespeare.

[0 : 59] And it really was because of how it was taught. You see, Shakespeare didn't write these plays for us to sit in a classroom and read them. He wrote them that they could be performed and experienced by an audience.

In the same way that a musician composes music, he doesn't want us to just look at his sheet music. He wants us to listen and enjoy the music that he's created. And so while there's value in analyzing a text like Shakespeare, really a true appreciation comes from being able to experience it being performed.

And so I think, as I mentioned before, Rachel and I actually studied abroad in the UK when we were at university and had the opportunity to see Shakespeare performed when we were studying in London. We actually got to go to the Globe Theatre to see *The Merchant of Venice* performed and other performances on the West End and since back in the States as well.

And so it's amazing when you actually watch these performances, how much more you understand the storyline, how much more you pick up that you just can't read in a book. Where you experience the emotions of the characters, right?

You pick up on humor and little things that just doesn't come through in writings of the book. And so especially when you think of, I don't know if you've ever been to the Globe Theatre, which kind of sits on the south bank of the Thames.

[2 : 17] But it's a very intimate setting. It's very close. Most of the audience is actually standing for the whole performance right at the foot of the stage. So you're very close to the actors.

You can see the expressions on their face. And in a lot of ways, the audience becomes a part of the performance. And so when we think of the Psalms, it's really not all that different when we think about how we experience them.

Certainly we're familiar with Psalms. We sing them every Sunday. They may be a part of your daily devotions as you read the Word of God. But oftentimes we may fail to engage on a deeper level.

Though we understand what they're saying and we give it our intellectual assent, we fail to engage it with our hearts in the same way that we do with our minds.

And so the thing is about the Psalms, perhaps more than anywhere else in the Bible, this is somewhere we can really insert ourselves into the text often because we are invited in by the Psalmist to share in their emotions and their experience to be able to revel in the attributes of God, to see God's love and His care for His people.

[3 : 31] And so as we look at Psalm 96 today, I want that to be our goal. I don't want us to simply consider its poetic form and appreciate it. I don't want us to just simply understand what the Psalmist is saying and agree with it.

I want us to use both our heads and our hearts to engage this text, to be able to participate with the Psalmist and the saints in experiencing the praise of our Lord as we look at our reigning King.

So I'm going to read for us again Psalm 96, which we just sang. Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth.

Sing to the Lord, praise His name, proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

[4 : 34] Splendor and majesty are before Him. Strength and glory are in His sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord all you families of nations. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering and come into His courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness. Tremble before Him all the earth.

Say among the nations, the Lord reigns. The world is firmly established. It cannot be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice.

Let the earth be glad. Let the seas resound in all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant and everything in them. Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord.

For He comes. He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness. This is the word of God.

[5 : 35] Now if you've been with us for the last month or so, you know we've been walking through different psalms. And as you're likely aware, the book of Psalms, which is in the Old Testament, composes 150 individual psalms.

And so many of these psalms fall into different categories. We have psalms of praise. There are psalms of thanksgiving. There's psalms of lament. And this psalm, Psalm 96, falls into a group of psalms from Psalm 93 to 100 that are known as the enthronement psalms.

These are psalms that focus on the kingly reign of God. That He is our sovereign ruler. That He is Lord over creation. And so as we look at this psalm, much like many psalms, they are actually written as poetry.

And we can break it down into stanzas if we wanted to. And so we see a lot of repetition in the psalm. And we could actually break it down into four parts if we wanted to. Where it gives us a command.

And then the reason for that command. And then a reiteration of the command. And then a reiteration of the reasoning. And so the command is quite obvious. Sing to the Lord. Right? We are to worship the Lord.

[6 : 40] Why are we to do that? Because He is worthy. Because our Lord reigns. So we have the what and the why. And that's what I want us to focus on today.

But I actually want to switch it as we, the order as we go through it today. I want us to consider the why first. The why being that our God reigns. And then go back to consider the what, which is our response.

Response. So we're going to look at our reign in God. And then our response as we move through the text this morning. And so as we consider the reign of God.

I think it's important to see where this psalm was used by the people of Israel. Where in the world did they sing this song? What was the occasion for it? And it actually was in the text that we read earlier in the service.

From 1 Chronicles 15 through 17. This is when David is ruling. And he decides he wants to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

[7 : 40] The newly established capital of Israel. And so we see there's occasion for great rejoicing when this happens. If you're not familiar with the Ark of the Covenant. This was something that was when Moses had brought the people of Israel out of Egypt.

God instructed Moses to build this box. This gold plated chest. That was going to serve as a place to place the tablets of the law.

These ten commandments that God had given Moses. And it was also going to serve as a seat for the presence of God. And so we see that this Ark of the Covenant.

It was to be kept in the tabernacle. Which was a tent that was set up when the Israelites were not on the move. But when they were on the move moving through the wilderness. This would have been the Ark of the Covenant would have been covered in a veil.

And it would have been led by the priests ahead of the nation of Israel. As they went through the promised land. And so we see when the people of Israel finally after 40 years of the wilderness.

[8 : 41] Move into the promised land. They cross the Jordan River. How do they do so? It's the Ark of the Covenant that's led by the priests. As they step into the Jordan the waters part. And Israel walks through on dry ground.

It was also this Ark that led the people of Israel around the walls of Jericho. Before they collapsed and they took the city. And so the Ark of the Covenant after some of these battles was eventually kept in the city of Shiloh.

And there is cared for by the priests until the reign of King Saul. And so Saul comes in. He's going to battle against the Philistines. And he decides he wants to take the Ark with him into battle against God's will.

And as a result of his disobedience Israel fails. They fall to the Philistines. The Ark of the Covenant is captured by the Philistines. But really the Ark is only kept by the Philistines for a matter of months.

Because of the plagues that they began to suffer for having this Ark. So they return it to Israel. And at that point it's only placed in a rather obscure village of Kuriath-Jerim.

[9 : 42] And there it remained for 20 years until King David finally comes to power. So that's the background of the Ark of the Covenant and this bringing it to Jerusalem. And so King David, he'd been on his throne for seven years after the death of Saul.

And he decides finally it's time to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. And so this is the occasion for this rejoicing. We've read part of this psalm from 1 Chronicles 16.

Psalm 96 would have been included in portion of that singing that would have happened. There was great rejoicing among the people of Israel. All of Israel coming together to see this procession of the Ark coming into Jerusalem.

And so when we see, when we consider this reign of God as it mentions in Psalm 96. It's important, there's really three characteristics that are pointed out in this psalm that I want us to focus on.

And it's one being that God's reign is incomparable. God's reign is eternal. And God's reign is universal. So I want to consider those one at a time briefly.

[10 : 46] God's reign is incomparable. God's reign is eternal. And God's reign is universal. So look with me. Psalm 96, verse 4. It says this. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols. But the Lord made the heavens. Now, probably many of us have family traditions.

One family tradition that we have is every Saturday morning we make biscuits together for breakfast. Now, probably not the biscuits you're thinking of. Not like a Scottish biscuit, which is more like a cookie.

But a real American biscuit, which is like a southern buttermilk biscuit. Which would be more like a scone. Something that's light and fluffy. It's savory and buttery. You eat it hot out of the oven with either honey or jam.

And so this is something we enjoy as a family every Saturday. And so a couple weeks ago, I was making these biscuits before anyone else was up in the house yet. And I realized that something wasn't right about making this dough.

[11 : 47] I've done it enough that you can tell just by the feel of it if something's not right. And I knew I'd use the right ingredients. I knew I'd use the right proportions. But just something wasn't turning out. So I still made them.

I put them in the oven. They came out after 20 minutes. And they were bricks. I mean, I could have played baseball with them. They were hard. They were gritty. They didn't taste good at all. And I had no idea what went wrong.

And so I was trying to figure this out. Rachel finally asked me, well, what flour did you use? I said, the flour that's in the canister I always use. And then realized that I was the one who last refilled the canister and I filled it with gluten-free flour without knowing about it.

So I don't know what's in gluten-free flour. But it certainly doesn't compare to wheat flour. And it should never be used as a substitute, obviously, for making my buttermilk biscuits.

And so as we think of this psalm here, there is nothing and no one that compares to our God. This word that's used to describe these idols in the psalm actually means something that is worthless and powerless.

[12 : 54] Something that is entirely useless. That's made by the hands of man. In comparison, we have a God who made the heavens and the earth.

If we look at the preceding psalm, Psalm 95, it says this. In his hands are the depths of the earth. The heights of the mountains are also his. The sea is his for he made it and his hands formed the dry ground.

There is truly nothing and no one that compares to our God. And because of this, God is not going to tolerate any sort of fake substitute.

We see this command given in the Ten Commandments and repeated over and over again to the nation of Israel. You should have no other God before me. Oftentimes, this is ignored or forgotten by the people of Israel.

So this was part of the reason that King David wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem. That it may be the center of worship for his people. That it may not be on the periphery like it was during the time of King Saul.

[13 : 55] But it can be used for the worship and enjoyment of God's people. That God's presence may be among his people. And so secondly, we see that God's reign is also eternal.

In verse 10. I don't know if you watch a lot of YouTube videos.

There's these videos I've seen over time. And one YouTuber in particular, he goes around the world and he videotapes himself recording within these abandoned buildings.

And it's really, I don't know how he gets in these places. Probably you shouldn't ask. But he, just the videos that he comes out with are just incredible. And most entertaining to me is when he goes into these abandoned mansions.

These massive homes that would have cost millions, tens of millions of pounds to build that are now abandoned. And you see these marble columns and this intricate woodwork.

[14 : 57] These grand staircases and great ballrooms that lay empty. That are falling into disrepair. And so it serves to me as an example of just how temporary the things of this world really are.

When we think about, regardless of how much power or influence or wealth people have, their little kingdoms that we create inevitably fall apart. And so that's just on a micro level.

I mean, consider the macro level, the whole scope of human history. How many nations have fallen? How many countries have been destroyed?

How many rulers have been deposed? But yet our God, since the beginning of time, has been on his throne and continues to reign. And so the neat thing about the reign of God is he has invited us in to share in this reign with him.

We know that God, back in Genesis, came to a man named Abram. And he said to Abram that he chose him to bless him. In Genesis 17 it says this, This was to be a covenant that did not end.

[16 : 25] And so when we look at the rule of King David during the time of the Psalms, Yes, he is a king and he comes from the line of Abraham, But that's not the king that's referred to by God here.

Because David, just like every ruler before or since, perished. His kingdom, earthly kingdom, did not last. But it's pointing to someone who would come from the line of David, the Messiah Jesus.

And this is what Gabriel the angel said to his mother Mary, Announcing the coming of the Messiah. He said, You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

And he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, And he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever.

His kingdom will never end. And so this is the Messiah. This is Jesus who lived a perfect life, Who suffered a horrible death, Who conquered the cross, Defeating sin that we may have life.

[17 : 32] And now Jesus sits at the right hand of God the Father. And so you may think though that if Jesus serves as king, And this is now his kingdom, Well, we look around us and we still see suffering and sin and brokenness all around us.

And so you may be tempted to think, Well, he can't be that great of a king because his kingdom is not that great. But we got to recognize here what the psalmist is looking at. The psalmist isn't looking at the first coming of Jesus.

The psalmist is looking further into the future when Christ will come again. And so we need to understand this time that we live right now is really a time of in-between.

We're living in the time of the already and the not yet. We now have the full blessings of God for those who are in Christ. But we have not yet been able to experience that to its fullest.

Christ has defeated sin through his blood, But he has not vanquished sin eternally yet. We know that Christ has won the victory, But God's full plan of redemption is still being carried out.

[18 : 45] And so with the psalmist then we can have hope, Not looking to the current, But looking to the future, To know that God, That Jesus will come again and set up his everlasting kingdom.

This is what is prophesied in Revelation. This is what the psalmist is looking forward to, That the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ.

And he shall reign forever and ever. And so we've seen the reign of God is incomparable, It's eternal, But it's also universal.

Look at verse 13. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, For he comes, He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, And his peoples in faithfulness.

So who does the Lord come to judge? Everyone. The whole earth. Everything is subject to the reign and judgment of God. And so Jesus said this himself to his disciples.

[19 : 43] He said, God has given me the authority to serve as judge. And therefore whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, But whoever rejects the Son has not seen life, And the wrath of God remains on him.

And so this is wonderful news for those of us who are in Christ, To know that we have averted the wrath of God, Through the blood of Jesus. But those who don't believe, It's an entirely different story.

There's no security in the salvation that comes from God. And this is where we as Christians can oftentimes get hesitant, Because nowadays it's very troubling to talk about judgment.

Just a couple weeks ago in church we sang Psalm 145. And one of the stanzas ends with this line. It says, God slays those who practice wickedness.

And to be perfectly honest, It made me a little uncomfortable to sing that. Not because I didn't believe it, But it's just awkward to talk about the judgment of God, Much less to sing about it.

[20 : 48] I mean, if you think about the world around us, Judgment is one of maybe the greatest sins in our society, right?

We can't tell people how to act or what to choose. Everyone can have their own truth. Everyone's entitled to their own feelings and opinions. And so when we recognize that that hesitancy, That temptation has crept into the church, We really need to push away on it.

Because the psalmist is saying, No, the judgment of God is not something that should trouble us. The judgment of God is not something that we should be embarrassed by, But something that can be celebrated.

Because we need to recognize that God cannot be king If he does not exercise judgment. Any more than a nation can remain sovereign If it allows the invasion of enemies.

If you're up on World War II, Consider the Battle of Britain. Nazi forces have quickly moved through France. They are now sitting alongside the English channel.

[21 : 53] They want to assert their authority in the sea and in the air. And so what do they decide to do? They decide that the Nazi air force, The Luftwaffe, Is going to come and they bomb Britain.

They target ports, And ships, And infrastructure, And even civilian locations. All because Hitler had the plan. There was this Operation Sea Line, It was called, Where he wanted this amphibious invasion of Britain.

And so what would have happened if British forces did nothing? Certainly, Things would be different today, right? Who knows how long Britain could have stood If they didn't put up a defense.

And so likewise, The sovereignty of God goes hand in hand With his judgment and his justice. Any stable kingdom requires the execution of justice. Evil, it must be put in check.

And so in order for Jesus to establish his eternal kingdom, Satan must be defeated. Sin must be destroyed. A holy king cannot set aside his judgment for sin.

[23 : 07] And so this is what the psalmist celebrates here. The true triumph of our divine king. Where he has destroyed sin forever. Where he will establish an everlasting kingdom.

And so then that leads us to our response. If God reigns, How should we respond? The nations should worship. Look back in verse 1. Sing to the Lord a new song.

Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord. Praise his name. Proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations. His marvelous deeds among all peoples.

You may be familiar enough with that passage that it doesn't really sound strange. But the more I thought about this, these few stanzas, the more I questioned this command.

Because we just finished talking about the judgment of God. How God will wipe out the wicked. How nations will fall. And this is a theme that we see throughout the book of Psalms.

[24 : 08] And so why then should these nations that are set to be destroyed rejoice in the Lord? If we turn back to think about Shakespeare again.

I don't know if you're familiar with the play *The Merchant of Venice*. But it's a play that the main character, his name is Bassanio. He has this woman that he's trying to woo, Portia. And so he needs to borrow some money in order to woo this wealthy heiress. And so he turns to a moneylender, Shylock. And he borrows money from Shylock. And it's actually Bassanio's friend, Antonio, who serves as the guarantor of this loan. And so as the contract goes, Antonio has to repay this loan within a certain amount of time. And if he doesn't, then Shylock gets a pound of Antonio's flesh. And so as the story develops, we know that Antonio, even though he's a wealthy merchant, his ships are lost at sea. He can't repay this loan. And so Shylock hauls him into court demanding his pound of flesh.

[25 : 10] And so we see then that Portia, this beautiful heiress, what does she do? She disguises herself as a man, pretends to be a lawyer, and enters the courtroom and makes this passionate plea for mercy on behalf of Antonio.

And this is what she says. She says, mercy tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes the throned monarch better than his crown. She's basically saying that mercy is better than power. And she goes on to say that mercy is actually an attribute of God himself. That earthly power is most like God's power when mercy seasons justice. And so we see that even Shakespeare, he recognizes that God's justice does not come apart from his mercy. And so the great thing is this mercy isn't just available to the people of Israel, these people that are bringing the ark to Jerusalem. It's available to all people. This is what God had promised Abraham, that the nations would be blessed. God says in the prophet Isaiah about his son Jesus, the coming Messiah. He says, it's too small a thing for you to be a servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept.

[26 : 22] I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth. And so this truth really isn't fully realized until the New Testament church, where Christ has been crucified, risen, and has ascended into heaven.

And now Peter is leading the church and sharing the gospel with primarily Jewish people. But in Acts 10, we see that Peter is confronted by this Roman soldier, Cornelius, who had had this vision from God.

And through this interaction, Peter realizes through the power of the Spirit, and he professes for the first time that God does not show favoritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

And so the nations, the nations that are to be judged, that includes you and me as Gentile people, our only hope is in Jesus. Although we were once enemies to God, we have now been reconciled through the blood of Jesus.

So this is what we celebrate here. This is the salvation that has been offered to all. This is why we can rejoice. And so the psalmist, when he talks about rejoicing and praising, he's really talking about it in two different forms.

[27 : 42] Our praise must be directed upward, but our praise is also directed outward. When we think about our praise directed upward, we're commanded three times in these first few verses to sing to the Lord.

Sing to the Lord. Sing to the Lord. And so oftentimes when we think about this, when we think about singing, we may think about it in the figurative sense, right? Like sing in our hearts, sing with our spirits.

And that's true, but he's literally saying to sing with our voices. And so the question is, how often do you sing to the Lord?

What we read in Chronicles, it said that David, when he brought the ark to Jerusalem, he was singing and dancing so hard that his wife despised him. Does that characterize our worship? Are we unhindered in our worship, or do we normally just reserve our singing for here, when we're here together on a Sunday morning? I think it's a hard question for us, especially maybe Stoic Presbyterians, right?

[28 : 46] Emotion is something that we don't always do well. But consider these words from Charles Spurgeon. This is what he said about this passage in Psalms. He says, And so if we have, the reigning God of the universe, whose kingdom is eternal, whose love is endless, then how great and how sincere and how exuberant must our worship be to him.

It talks about in the latter part of the Psalms how the heavens rejoice, how the fields and the forests are expected to sing to God. So if those inanimate objects are expected to worship God, how much more should we, who are created in the image of our Lord?

And it's not just singing about God. It says to sing to God. We communicate directly to the Lord through our song.

And we do so day after day. It's talking about a new song. God's mercies are new every morning. Let our worship to him be new every morning.

Let's think about making this a habit. I mean, it's, the thing is, if we are supposed to convince the world to sing praises to the Lord, how are, is the world supposed to do that?

[30 : 28] How should we expect the world to do that if we are reluctant to do that ourselves? Look down in verse eight and nine. It says, Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.

Bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him all the earth. So these verses show that our worship is to be intimate.

It is this closeness that we need to have with the Lord to come into the presence of our God with a gift worthy of a king. As it says in Romans 12, we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, because this is our act of worship.

And when it says trembling, this word in the Hebrew is the same trembling, the fear that comes to the people, the enemies of God, when the armies of Israel are coming against them.

And so it really shows that our worship is not to be done flippantly. We need to have this healthy fear, this sincere reverence for our God, that we can recognize his power and his majesty.

[31 : 38] And so this is how we worship God. Our worship also, like I said, is directed outward. Look at verse three. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all the peoples.

Verse 10. Say among the nation, the Lord reigns. Think about something that brings you joy. Maybe it's a sports team, maybe it's going to your favorite restaurant, or maybe finding a new little holiday spot for you or your family.

Now certainly our praise is directed to those objects to a certain extent, right? We like to celebrate when our team wins. We like to celebrate a great meal, to say thank you to a chef that might have prepared it.

But that's not all. We like to share in this praise with others, right? When our team wins, we want to celebrate with others. When we go to a good restaurant, have a good meal, we want to tell other people to go there as well.

When we find a new little beach to take your family, we want to tell other people about it too. And so this is a natural response that people have. This is naturally how we should worship the Lord.

[32 : 44] That we share this praise with the nations for how are they going to know of the goodness of God if we aren't willing to tell them. You may be familiar with the Joshua Project.

This is an organization that's involved in global missions and tracks the spread of the gospel around the world. And according to Joshua Project, there are over 17,000 people groups in the world. And of those groups, over 7,400 of them are considered unreached, which means that there's no indigenous community of believers with adequate numbers and resources in order to evangelize the group of people in which they live.

And so that amounts to 42% of the world population that's unreached with the gospel. And so the reality is that tens of millions of people die every year without hearing the name of Jesus who are now suffering the wrath of God.

And so how does that strike us? How do we respond to that? Those of us who live in Edinburgh, those of us who go to Beclu, does our praise for God compel us to the proclamation of the gospel?

[34 : 10] Is our joy overflowing in our lives that we can't help but share it with other people? Are we willing to abandon our lives and our reputations and our jobs and even our lives for the spread of the gospel?

You may think that these are kind of grandiose questions but think about it on a personal level, on a more practical level.

You know, this church building sits mere steps from the University of Edinburgh where there's over 13,000 international students. Back in December, many of us here at Beclu, we handed out Christmas goodie bags to internationals who weren't able to go home for Christmas.

And my family and I had only been here for a matter of months and there was a lot of these little streets around church that I had never been before where there's university housing. And I was overwhelmed by the number of international students.

If you go just a block over here to Clark Street, Nicholson Street, I dare you to count how many ethnic restaurants there are. I mean, truly the fact is that God has brought the nations to Edinburgh.

[35 : 20] Many of these people have moved here and will remain the rest of their lives here at Edinburgh. But there's some students that come from various countries that are the best and brightest of their countries who will be here for a short time and then return home to be leaders in government or politics or education or finance or whatever it may be.

And so what a wonderful opportunity we have to impact the nations here in Edinburgh to be willing to develop relationships with these students that they may see the love of Christ.

Think about our refurbishment campaign. The whole purpose is for us to make this building more conducive to ministry and outreach.

That's certainly going to take a lot of money to do what we want to do. Are you willing to dedicate your finances to create more gospel opportunity? But the thing is it's not just about finances.

Much more do we need to be willing to invest our lives, to invest our time and our energy to be able to meet with strangers and develop relationships that others may see the love of Christ.

[36 : 34] Because the truth of the matter is no matter if we are able to renovate this building, if we don't commit our lives to the spread of the gospel then this building project is all for nothing because there's no sense it being a nice place that only gets used three hours a day once a week on a Sunday morning.

What about our community groups? Many of us might have been in community groups for years and years and years and have developed wonderful friendships through them. But what if these community groups are not just meant to be these insular little bubbles that we've created but we instead turn outward?

We're willing to multiply in order to create room for visitors and neighbors to share in fellowship to feel the love of the gospel. What if rather than being inward focused we turn outward and use our community groups as a platform for ministry and evangelism?

Many of you know that we're as a church supporting a church plant in Gal Shields that's going to be led by Craig Anderson and we have been praying for him and his leadership there and his planning and preparation for that.

What if we didn't only pray for him but we pray that many of us may be called to go with him to plant that church?

[37 : 58] What if rather than trying to curate this careful comfortable life we are willing to engage in international mission to be able to give up of our lives and our careers to leave family behind to leave retirement behind for the spread of the gospel to the nations?

This is what we are called to do because the thing is Psalm 96 is really a missionary hymn. If God is the reigning king then we need to dedicate our lives to serving his kingdom.

We need to have the same hope that the psalmist has here. The same excitement and the same joy that overflows both upward and outward looking forward to the future when Christ will come again and as it says in Revelation there will be another new song that is sung by the saints.

Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seal for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on earth.

May this be our song. May we worship the Lord with the psalmist to experience his joy in his salvation to recognize the goodness of our God with all the saints so that the nations may know that our God reigns.

[39 : 35] Amen. Will you pray with me? God we recognize that you are the reigning ruler of the universe and that you are deserving of all praise and honor and there's nothing that we can do to even give you enough but may we be willing to give of our lives and our time and our finances for the furtherance of your gospel.

May we desire that our lives be filled with praise that is sent upward and outward and that you may receive all glory and all honor.

God may we look forward to your return when a new kingdom a new heaven and a new earth will be created when all nations and peoples will surround your throne. May that be our new song today Lord.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. Now if you will stand with me for our last hymn which is again recorded but we will sing it together O praise the name.

I cast my mind to Calvary where Jesus bled and died for me I see his wounds his hands his feet my Savior Lord that cursed tree his body bound and drenched in tears they laid him down in Joseph's tomb the entrance sealed by heavy stone

[42 : 05] Messiah and all alone O praise the name of the Lord our God O praise his name forevermore for endless days we will sing your praise O Lord O Lord O Lord our God O Lord our God O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord He shall return in robes of light the blazing sun

O trampled death where is your sting the angels roar for Christ the King O praise the name of the Lord our God O praise his name forevermore for endless days we will sing your praise O Lord O Lord our God O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord O Lord He shall return in robes of light the blazing sun shall pierce the night and I will rise among the saints

My gaze transposed on Jesus' face O praise the name of the Lord our God O praise His name forevermore For endless days we will sing Your praise O Lord, O Lord our God O praise the name of the Lord our God O praise His name forevermore For endless days we will sing Your praise O Lord, O Lord our God

If you remain staying for the benediction, this is taken from Revelation 5, the same passage that shows all nations surrounding the throne of our Lord.

To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever. Amen.

[46 : 06] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.