

The Greatness Of God

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Preacher: Rev James MacIver

[0:00] Hello everyone, welcome to the service today. It's good to be with you again. Good to see children out as well this morning. I trust that God will bless us as we come under his word again today. The only thing I want to intimate, I've been asked to intimate, you'll find the rest on the bulletin sheet anyway, but just a reminder that a collection for the Bethesda Hospice has been taken at the services, both services today. We're going to begin our worship singing in Psalm 146, Psalm 146, and singing verses 1 to 8.

Praise God to the Lord, praise, O my soul. I'll praise God while I live, while I have being, to my God in songs I'll praise his give. Trust not in princes, nor man's son, in whom there is no stay. His breath departs, to his earth he turns, that day his thoughts decay.

O happy is that man, and blessed, whom Jacob's God doth aid, whose hope upon the Lord doth rest, and on his God is stayed, who made the earth and heavens high, who made the swelling deep, and all that is within the same, who truth doth ever keep. We'll sing on to the end of verse 8 in Psalm 146. Praise God, the Lord, praise, O my soul. Praise God, the Lord, praise, O my soul. Praise God, my soul. Praise God, my soul. Praise God, my soul.

Oh, say, who's best devalued to their future?

Oh, challenges are seeking. Oh, happy youth of my world.

[2:39] Amen. Amen.

The righteous judgment execute for those so friends that be, Who to the hungry give us food, or set the prisoners free.

The Lord doth give the blinders sight, that thou withstand thine reigns.

The Lord doth dearly love all those that walk in a bright way.

Let's now join together in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord in prayer. Amen. Almighty and blessed God, we give thanks that these words we have been singing are altogether true about you and about our own situation too.

[5 : 0 7] And we thank you, O Lord, that you have given us such songs to praise you as we find in the Psalms. And we bless you for the way that they carry so much of our human experience and of the believing experience especially of you people.

We ask today, O Lord, that your blessing will accompany us as we come together here in the name of Christ. And we thank you that as we come in his name, we are assured of your welcome and reception if we come trusting in him, if we come receiving all that you have provided for us in him and lean our own spiritual reliance and our own faith upon him.

Amen. We pray, O Lord, today that you would grant us that faith and that our faith may be exercised to believe that you are God, that you are also the rewarder of those who diligently seek you.

And we ask today, Lord, for your blessing upon your word to us especially. And we give thanks to you, O Lord, that you have remembered us in such a way as to provide for us this word of truth, this word in which we find that revelation of God, of himself and of his redemption in Christ Jesus.

And we pray today, Lord, for that hearing that would be towards eternity. Help us truly to understand that we are here, connected with the world to come, as well as with our life in this world.

[6 : 31] And enable us thereby, Lord, to listen and to speak as for eternity. And enable us, we pray, to rely upon your Holy Spirit to open our minds and our understanding and to apply our hearts to that wisdom which comes from you.

We pray for that grace, Lord, that would enable us then to speak and to hear in such a way that would connect with each other as those who wait upon the Lord. Remember us, Lord, here in this gathering of your people.

We thank you that there are so many others throughout the world today who gather us, we do. Some in very different circumstances, Lord, to ourselves. But we give thanks that you always remember your people, that your grace is promised to them.

And we pray, O Lord, that as we've been reading and singing here in your word, we pray that you would help us to gather to ourselves these many promises that you address especially to the upright of heart, to those who have come to place their trust in you.

And we pray today throughout the world for you people. Lord, we ask especially that you bless those in these difficult circumstances in deprivation of poverty, of persecution, of war.

[7 : 50] Lord, we know that you look after your people at all times. and that you promise that they will be received by you however long or short their time or difficult their time in this world will be.

We do pray today, O Lord, for these troubled parts of the world. We pray in such dangerous times that you'd continue to provide for your people. We pray especially that you'd bless those who are in leadership over the nations, whose decisions reach far beyond their own shores.

Lord, we ask that today you would grant them wisdom. We find a world, O Lord, that we know is full of human wisdom, a world that lives by its own intentions and by its own understanding of what is right and wrong.

Yet we pray, O Lord, today that you would send forth your light and your truth so that the leaders of the world may come to be brought under the provisions of your own truth.

And we ask, gracious one, today that you would bless where there is war that you would bring peace and where there is trouble that you would bring about a pacifying of people's minds and hearts.

[9 : 01] And we ask for our own nation. Please, Lord, we pray to bless us and to bless those who rule over us here in our nation as well. We pray that you would hear the prayers of your people as we seek, Lord, that you would come to manifest yourself to those who have influence in our nation, to those who are in government, to those who have places of influence elsewhere.

And we do pray, O Lord, that your light and your truth may be provided for them too. And we pray today that they will come to realize that even on this, your holy day, it is the privilege to come to seek the Lord while he is to be found and to call upon his name while he is near.

And we pray your blessing today for those who are in need in our own communities as well. Bless those in this congregation itself, Lord, who are laid aside at this time of illness, those who are facing serious illness, those receiving treatment.

And, Lord, we pray that you would bless them and bless them in their homes or wherever they happen to be today. We give thanks for the many agencies that help us in our time of need by your own provision and kindness you have provided these for us.

And we pray today that you would bless our hospitals and our clinics. We ask that you would bless the ministry they carry through, Lord, for our benefit mentally and physically for our health.

[10 : 25] And we pray for Bethesda as we take a collection today, Lord. We remember them. We remember the hospice day. We remember those who reside in the home. And we pray that you bless that in all our care homes as well.

And we pray that you would continue to provide for us, Lord, in that way. We ask your blessing now to remain with us the rest of the service. We commend to you our young people and ask that you would bless them.

And we pray that you would grant them as they receive teaching from your word. Lord, that they may be established in your own ways. That you would give them to love you with all their heart and to not follow the ways of the world, but to be brought into the ways of following Jesus and to know his strength and to know his blessing all the days of their life.

Bless their parents and grandparents. Bless us in our homes and families, in our family life, in our places of work. In all our situations in life, we need you, oh Lord.

We need your guidance. We need your blessing. We need that you should draw us after yourself. We need that your word should live in our hearts and minds. that it may be shown forth in our manner of life.

[11 : 37] And so we pray as we confess our sins, Lord, we pray for your forgiveness, for your cleansing. We pray that you would establish us in righteousness and holiness.

And we ask that when we do as we do daily sin against you, we pray that we may constantly turn toward you and seek you and find that forgiveness and pardon that is abundant for us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

and so now we ask your blessing to continue with us. Hear us in our prayer and pardon us our many sins for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, we're to the children at this point before you go through.

I understand you're done with school today. So, just a little word to you before you go through. We have a little dog at home. His name is Roscoe.

He's a small Jack Russell Terrier and he's provided me with quite a number of children's stories over the years. He's now 15, which means he's an old man.

[12 : 39] I don't know what that equivalent is in human years. Some people tell us it's about the equivalent of nine human years to every dog year or something like that. So, if you go like that he's probably in human terms he's about 130, which means he's a very old man indeed and he's getting slow but he still loved.

And, when we were in Stornoway, when I was a minister in Stornoway, he had a small electronic chip put under his skin just in his neck.

You can't see it. It's under the skin. A small thing like a small tablet and the vet put it under his skin. The reason for that was that he actually got out a few times when we were in Stornoway and of course there was a lot of traffic in Stornoway so we were afraid that he would get knocked down even if he didn't get lost.

So, the little chip under his skin actually has some information on it. So, if he gets lost with a wee scanner the vet or police as well I think they have one they can actually scan his neck where the chip is and get a reading from that chip which tells them the name of the dog and tells the address that he belongs to.

So, it's very handy if he gets lost or if he gets picked up somewhere that that will show who he belongs to as long as you've got the scanner the vet can read it or the police can read it.

[14 : 01] Now, why is that significant? Spiritually for us what does it teach us? Well, the Bible tells us that the identity of God's people is very special to God.

He tells us that he knows everything about us anyway but his people especially those who trust in him are especially precious to him. He reads their lives every day.

He knows the details of all that they need and he provides for them. And just like that little chip in Roscoe's neck under his skin gives information that tells who he is so we're told in the Bible that God actually brings us when we come to trust in Jesus to belong to his own family to belong to the family of God so that God says about all those who trust in the Lord these are my people these are my family this person belongs to me he carries my name he's a Christian she's a Christian she goes by the name of Jesus so therefore they're precious to him.

And today children for you to trust in Jesus means that you belong in a special way to God's family your identity your name is more than just the name that your parents gave you God reads your name and says that person is mine he carries she carries my name so you see how important it is to belong to God's family because when you belong to God's family a lot of special things then come into possession God's acceptance God's forgiveness God's guidance God's protection lots of things like that that the Bible tells us about God's protection so because it's such especially important thing to belong to God's family and it's especially important to believe in Jesus so that we then come to belong to God's family today you'll be learning things in your Sunday school about Jesus about God about his salvation and especially how important and how precious it is to have an identity read by God that says that person is especially mine and I hope that too that you too will come more and more to know

Jesus as your saviour and that your identity will be therefore as you belong to Jesus let me just pray for you before you go to the Sunday school Lord we ask your blessing today to be with the children as they come to learn more things from the gospel and we pray today that Jesus may be more precious to them than ever before and we pray that they themselves will know how important how precious a thing it is to belong to him and to be named after him bless them we pray and bless those who teach them and pardon all our sin now for Christ's sake Amen we're going to sing some more verses singing in Psalm 142 this time Psalm 142 and again we sing the whole of the psalm I with my voice cried to the Lord with it made my request poured out to him my plaint to him my trouble

[17 : 35] I expressed when in me was overwhelmed my spirit then well thou knewest my way where I did walk a snare for me they privily did lay a psalm that tells us how precious again as we've been saying to the children God's people are to him and how he especially looks after them in their times of trouble as the psalmist here expresses so we'll sing the whole psalm I with my voice cried to the Lord I with my voice cried to the Lord with this name my request poured out to him my quick to him my love I express when in me was so well my strength and well love used my ways when

I did walk I said for he they play where he did play I looked on my life and view but none to know me well all repute tell me no man did!

I to thee! I cried to thee I said thou are my refuge Lord alone and in land of those that let thou mark my portion!

Because I am brought very low attendant!

to my cry me from my persecutor's faith whose hunger thine thine from press and range my soul at night thine may glorify!

[20 : 51] the just shall come us to be when thou with me gild thou just free!

Let's turn now to read God's word from the Old Testament. And we're reading today from the book of Psalms, the book of Psalms, and Psalm 147. The book of Psalms, Psalm 147.

We can read from the beginning to the end of the psalm. Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.

The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel, he healeth the broken and hardened, and the heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars, he calls them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite. The Lord lifts up the meat, he casteth the wicked down to the ground. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving. Sing praise upon the harp unto our God, who covereth the heaven with clouds, and the earth, and the earth, and the earth, and the earth, and the earth, and the earth, and the earth.

He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast its food, and to the young ravens which cry. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse. He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

[22 : 33] The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and those that hope in his mercy. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thy God, O Zion!

For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates, he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth. His word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool. He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.

He casteth forth his ice like morsels. Who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them. He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

He shoth his word to Jacob, his statutes, and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation. And as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.

[23 : 35] Amen, and may God follow this blessing of reading that part of his word. We're going to sing some verses more in Psalm 34 this time. Psalm 34. And we'll sing from verse 17. 17 to the end of the psalm.

Psalm 34.

Psalm 34.

Psalm 34.

Psalm 34.

[25 : 56] Psalm 34. Psalm 33.

The righteous winged wing shall be to make love The glory is ever shown The fred is shown to die Now please turn with me to the book of Psalms, Psalm 147, a psalm we read just a wee minute ago.

And we can look today at the first few verses, verses 1 to 6 especially, where we find evidence here of the Lord's dealings with his people.

The Lord doth build up Jerusalem. He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars.

He calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord and of great power his understanding is infinite. The Lord lifteth up the meek. He casteth the wicked to the ground.

[28 : 10] Some of the scientific or astronomical data we read about the universe really is amazing.

It gives us really cause to wonder and to think very deeply about the creation that we ourselves belong to. For example, think of the following. The Earth revolves around the Sun, which is 1.3 million times the volume of the Earth.

Other stars are much bigger than our own Sun. Some, in fact, are a million times brighter than our Sun. We're told that there are around 100 billion stars in our galaxy in the Milky Way.

100 billion stars. And the galaxy itself is 100,000 light years across. Now, a light year equals 6 trillion miles.

So, 6 trillion miles times 100,000 is the width, we're told, of our galaxy. And then, we're told there are millions of other galaxies in the creation, in the universe.

[29 : 32] Now, these are obviously impressive statistics. Impressive data for the likes of ourselves. We can hardly get our head around these figures, these measurements.

But God is not impressed. Why is God not impressed? Because he created them. We're told here in Psalm 147, verse 4, He telleth the number of the stars.

In other words, he counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names. They are where God placed them. They are as God created them.

He knows each and every one of these billions and billions of stars that he created. And that's the epicentre of the psalm, you might see, in these verses at the beginning here, where God, in his greatness, is brought before us.

God the creator, God the sustainer of our universe. And because that's the epicentre of the psalm, the kernel, if you like, of the psalm, and everything else then is built around that, what you really have in the psalm is this great fact that God's greatness doesn't exist out there, separate from our lives daily in this small planet that we belong to compared to the universe.

[31 : 00] What he's telling us is that God's greatness is actually directed to the helping of the weak, the helping of the deprived, the helping of the sinful, the helping of the human beings like you and I, mere tiny specks in relation to the universe, and especially in relation to the great God, the infinite God, who created it all by the word of his power.

And that's what we're going to follow out for a short time this morning. The greatness of God, as is brought out in these opening verses of Psalm 147, and the greatness of God relating to things which are true about ourselves as human beings.

Firstly, this is a greatness which gathers the homeless. All of these terms refer to things spiritually especially.

It's a spiritual emphasis that God gathers the homeless. So it's a greatness which gathers the homeless. You find that in verse 2. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem.

He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. Secondly, it's a greatness which heals the wounded or the broken. Verse 3.

[32 : 25] He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds. Thirdly, it's a greatness which lifts up the fallen. Look at verse 6.

He lifts up the meek, but casts the wicked to the ground. So it's a greatness of God gathers the homeless, heals the wounded, lifts up the fallen.

Let's look at these just in turn, briefly as we go through them. A greatness which gathers the homeless. The psalm is possibly a psalm that was put together after the return from Babylon.

Remember the 70-year exile in Babylon as the prophets had foretold. When they came back, certain of these psalms reflect upon the situation when they came back.

Psalm 126, for example, and others as well. But this psalm probably is in that context. So you can link the psalm with the likes of Isaiah and Isaiah chapter 14, which again deals with the greatness of God all the way through that great chapter in Isaiah.

[33 : 35] But think of verses 26 and 28. And then when you go forward to verse 28.

But then you come round to similar emphasis to Psalm 147.

The greatness of God.

of the creator of the universe. And yet there it is in Isaiah 40, directed specifically to the help of those who are in need, to those who are weak, to those who need to be built up, to those who need his strength to come to their help.

That's what you find in verse 11 of that same chapter of Isaiah. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom.

[35 : 13] And shall gently lead those that are with you. There is the greatness of God set out for us in different picture forms. But it's especially a greatness that's emphasized as for the help of the needy.

The help of all different kinds of need as you find that in human life. And that's why verse 5 of the psalm is saying, as great as our Lord, His understanding is infinite.

It's His power. It's His understanding. And it's His understanding and His power that provides for us. You know, when you see refugees who have been, for various reasons, pushed out of their land or of their homes, and you'll see that commonly nowadays, not so much talking about asylum seekers, but those who genuinely are refugees.

I'm not saying some of the asylum seekers aren't as well, but those who are genuinely refugees in the world, for war, for reasons of famine or whatever, had to leave their homes and gone somewhere else.

And very often you find them set up in temporary, temporary tents, dwelling places, tented cities sometimes, the number of refugees involved.

[36 : 28] Well, as you look at these refugees, and having left, having had to leave their old homes for whatever reason, that's really a picture of our spiritual condition for us. If we're looking at that and say, here are people who are no longer able to go home, they've had to leave their homes, their homes are behind them, that's where we are spiritually.

We've left home. We were set in the Garden of Eden, when God created us in the beginning. And after we fell by our own sin against God, human sin, we were driven out of Egypt.

We are homeless, until we come to know the Lord. And as we'll see later on, that's really the greatness of God coming to pity us, and coming to provide for us in our refugee state.

It takes the greatness of God to deal with this problem that is your problem and my problem. The problem of not having a spiritual home which we were ourselves guilty for leaving or for being driven out of.

In our spiritual state, we don't have a permanent residence that we can call home. But when we come to the Lord, we realise that this is what God does. That this is actually what salvation itself is about.

[37 : 46] It's not just about forgiving sin, great though that is, wonderful though that is, amazing though that is. It is about gathering people together and uniting what is broken.

Uniting and creating a family for himself, as I said to the children, providing a home for us. It's not a tented city he provides for us. It's a place that has foundations, as Hebrews 11, in Abraham's faith, when it's mentioned there, he looked forward, he was going about in various places in this world, in the land of Canaan, but he was looking for a city.

He dwelt there in tents, going from place to place. Why was that? Because he was looking for a city that has foundations. A permanent place of residence, a homeland, of which God is the builder and maker.

The greatness of God gathering the homelands. As we're all refugees spiritually, this is what Christ came into the world to do.

This is why God the Father sent his Son into the world. So that in the blessing that comes our way in Christ, through faith in Christ, we are incorporated, we are actually adopted, there's a theological word, we're adopted into the family of God.

[39 : 10] We become partakers of all the benefits that God promises to his people, to his family. And as we're given a home by God, so we see that really in Jesus himself.

The best place, not that the word of God in its written form, of course, is any different, but in Jesus Christ, you see God revealed as nowhere else. And you remember in Mark chapter 6, for example, and the other gospels recorded as well, the feeding of the 5,000.

And we're told that Jesus looked out over that great crowd. And we're told about how he was in himself, how he felt, how he thought in himself. As he looked out over that great crowd, he had compassion on them.

That's a strong word, a word which means his inner being was stirred as he looked at them. And then it adds, for they were as sheep without a shepherd.

Do you know what sheep without a shepherd look like? Not cared for, bedraggled, dirty, often diseased, neglected.

[40 : 26] Well, that's you and I without Christ. That's you and I open to the elements of the spiritual world, the darkness of the world.

God is in the business of gathering people together, gathering those who were lost so that they come into his family, bringing them in the greatness, by the greatness that is his, to gather them as homeless and to bring them home at last to be with himself.

Where do you call home? What is it you call home today? Is your home merely in this world?

We all have a home in this world. We all belong to some home or other in this world, wherever it is we live, where our dwelling place is, but spiritually, that's not going to last forever.

And when our home in this world comes to an end, when we have to, at death, vacate our home in this world, are we going to go home? Are we going to have a permanent home in heaven?

[41 : 39] Will that be our final abode? For you today, what is it you call home? This is the home that God provides for those outcasts that he gathers together into his family.

The home that's God's own residence in heaven that actually belongs to his people through his grace. So it's a greatness which gathers the homeless.

But secondly, it's a greatness which heals the wounded. You see, verse 3, he heals the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds. Now this also is frequently mentioned in the Bible, that God cares for us and cares for his people so that in the brokenness of life, we find that God intervenes to put together what we ourselves have caused to be broken through our sin or whatever else it is.

And these are not just words. God has proved this for us in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He became one of us in that sense that he became human.

He entered into this broken world. He experienced the brokenness of human life for himself. He himself said to the disciples, I'm not here like the other kings of the world who sit on their thrones and people bring them things to serve them.

[43 : 00] I, he said, am among you as the one who serves. Jesus knew the effects of the brokenness of this world.

And that's why we need our lives to be mended, put back together in the right way. There's a Japanese technique which mends broken crockery, ceramics mostly.

And if you get a nice, beautiful vase that for one reason or another comes broken, there's a technique by which the Japanese repair it using a paste that contains gold dust.

It's kintsukuroi, they call it. It's repaired so that the gold dust is mixed with the paint and when it's put together, the vase has all of these broken edges still showing but now they're actually just veins of gold.

And there's a philosophy behind that because the Japanese emphasize that when this is repaired by this method of kintsukuroi, what you end up with is actually more beautiful than what you began with.

[44 : 16] And that's what it is for human life with Christ. He takes what is broken. He takes out broken lives. Not just individually but in a relationship with each other.

He takes and he mends it with his own gold of grace. And what you end up with is far more beautiful certainly to God than it was to begin with.

He mends. He heals the broken in heart. He binds up their wounds. In other words, the picture you have there is really of the careful skilled surgeon qualified to deal with people whose lives are broken, whose limbs are broken, perhaps those whose minds are broken.

that's the way that they need to be dealt with. And that's why Jesus said it's not those who are healthy who need a physician or a doctor but those who are sick.

And he was referring to himself. It's to us as sick sinners, lost sinners, sick sinners, sinners that need his healing power, that need to have our brokenness mended.

[45 : 27] that's who he is. That's why he came into the world. The personal attention of a surgeon is quite remarkable. You find nowadays many programs dealing with this and the minute care with which the surgeon goes about the business, he or she, dealing with whatever it is maybe needs to be taken out and excised from the body anything that's diseased as far as possible and then sews it up with the sutures afterwards carefully.

But then that's not where the surgeons, where the consultant's relationship with that person ends because before they leave the hospital they'll do a ward round.

They'll go round those who have been in theatre and once they've come round from the anaesthetic the consultant will appear at the bedside and check out how they're doing. We assure them that everything's going well hopefully and then there's follow-ups usually after that too if there's been a serious illness perhaps months down the line they'll have to go back and meet with the consultant again.

It keeps such a careful record and such careful attention to their needs. That's exactly what you have here in spiritual terms this God whose greatness heals the broken.

He does his rounds every day. Every single soul every single person that has come to know the power of his grace the power of his mercy the power that mends our broken lives.

[46 : 59] He visits you every day. All of you who know the Lord know that this is your privilege. He doesn't say right that's you fitted up I'll see you in eternity. He comes round every day if you think of this world as a hospital ward where we've been attended to by God the great spiritual consultant.

You can consult him any time. He comes through his word through his spirit to reach into your life to ask you to teach you to guide you to counsel you.

greatness of God. You see that's the wonder that God towards us lost human sinners who brought that dilemma upon ourselves God from his throne in heaven didn't look down and say that's that.

I gave them every opportunity I'm done with them. And the same with your life today if you're here and you don't yet know the Lord you've not come to Christ personally for yourself or maybe you're struggling in your life maybe you're struggling as a Christian as a believer as well with things in your life God doesn't abandon his people God is still the consultant who does his rounds daily who comes to check on you and all you've got to do is tell him how it is with you tell him as it is how it is with your soul and you can be sure he has the answer to your problem he himself will come and lay his hand upon you and turn you and show you his way he is the great God and the greatness which heals the wounded now we hear in the world out there today every day of life if God exists he surely can't care much about this world and about us human beings that's the way of the world that's what

Satan puts into people's hearts to think about God if God exists how can he leave the world as it is with all its problems with its wars with its agonies with its deprivations with its persecutions all that you find in it surely that's evidence that God doesn't exist or if he does exist he's not kind well you don't go by the verdicts of the world of course you go by what the Bible assures you of you go by what you know in your own heart about God and that he is the God who is great above everything we can imagine but whose greatness heals the wounded and what does he ask of us in return what does he call for in return to this help that he gives us well look at verses 10 to 11 he doesn't take delight in the strength of a horse in the legs of a man that is in our physical prowess the Lord takes pleasure in those that fear him in those that hope in his mercy what does he call for in return to his great kindness to us what is this great

[50 : 17] God who gathers the homeless and heals the broken and the wounded what does he call for he calls for our trust he calls for our praise he calls for us to fear him to respect him to give him his due to live in love with him that's what he calls for and third is the greatness which lifts up the fallen verse 6 here the Lord lifts up the meek he casteth the wicked down to the ground the word meek there you can translate the word meek with the word humble for example it's the same idea but the word essentially means someone who's afflicted but especially somebody afflicted under the weight of their circumstances in life somebody in other words burdened with the things of life somebody is weighed down and finding the going really challenging what does

God do God lifts up the humble God lifts up the meek the weak and how has he done that he comes down to our situation and he comes down to our situation and Jesus Christ he's done that in order to lift us up in order to lift up the fallen and even afterwards when we've come to know him as a Christian you've known this and shown many times that there are days in your life when you do feel that there's a weight upon your shoulders that the day is just a big struggle but where would you be without God without the God who humbles himself and has done so especially in the Lord Jesus Christ as you see it there he bends down to lift us up he comes as it were down to our level I know you could misunderstand that but he hasn't left us without becoming one of us in the person of his son and he's done that in order to lift us up he tends to our details and when you see people who are recovering especially from having lost limbs legs for example and having to get used to prosthesis and trying to walk again you'll find those who are skilled in rehabilitating such people whatever has caused their injuries and it's wonderful to see them teaching them to walk again to walk again with a very different set of circumstances but you'll find them for the start at least for quite some time as they're taught to walk again the person who is the skilled helper rehabilitator or whatever word you would give them that health practitioner they'll stand with them they'll take their weight they'll actually help to carry them along for a bit until they're more used to this new way of life this adjustment they need to make in other words they actually train them to walk by first of all supporting them by physically keeping them up by encouraging them by leading them onwards by saying yes you're doing well let's just keep it going take the next few steps that's the greatness in

God's case which lifts up the fallen he comes into our personal world and he lifts us up from the dunghill of our sin or perhaps it's the situation in which we've fallen where we're disconsolate where we need encouragement where we're cast down where we're depressed God is there for his people he's there for his people as the one who's the great physio if you like who comes alongside to actually help us we have a word in another English language which describes people who are very skilled in this sort of work they're called paramedics there's a paramedic here for all I know but paramedic is a word that comes from a Greek background para in Greek means being alongside or being with someone medic of course is someone skilled in helping people in terms of their health or their physical needs or a paramedic literally is someone who comes alongside to help people medically that's exactly what God has done in Jesus the great paramedic he didn't look from a distance and say be healed he didn't say I can't come into that world that's a world that's full of darkness that's full of sin that's full of pain that's full of suffering

I'm not going to put myself through that I will heal them but I'll do it from a safe distance no that's not the God we're dealing with the God whose greatness lifts up the fallen doesn't do it from a safe distance you might say he came into this world to do it personally in the person of Jesus his son so that he shows us that he I'm the God who supports my people by becoming one of them coming into their circumstances to be with them and he assures us today that he's always with his people even if it feels to us at times if it feels like he's not there or that he's far away nevertheless his word cannot fail he will never leave or forsake those who belong to his family those people he's gathered together out of their homelessness into his family those people who are broken and wounded that he is by his grace repairing those people that need lifted up when they fall this is our

God this is why he's worthy the final point a greatness which gathers the homeless which heals the wounded which lifts up the fallen a greatness worthy of our praise you see the way the psalm begins praise ye the Lord and the way it ends with the same words praise ye the Lord well you'll find the same feature I'm sure you've noticed it anyway in these psalms 146 147 148 149 150 you have exactly the same structure beginning with praise ye the Lord ending with praise ye the Lord it's like a little envelope if you like praise the Lord is the envelope in which you find everything else that's in the psalm packed into that but it's this praise the Lord that in a sense covers everything else that's really what the whole thrust of the psalms these psalms are for and are like the

[57 : 39] God who is worthy of our praise this great hallelujah as it is that's the word in Hebrew they praise the Lord hallelujah these psalms begin with hallelujah they end with hallelujah they contain the greatness of God addressed to the needs of his people hallelujah what else could the psalmist do but sing out hallelujah and that's why it's so fitting so exciting for us really isn't it to be able to sing the hallelujahs of praise to God from the experience of knowing him from the experience of appreciating that his greatness has not kept him away from us that his greatness which we have assaulted by our sinfulness doesn't mean now that he's going to stay away and leave us to our own future now it's a greatness which gathers the homeless greatness which heals the broken a greatness which lifts up the fallen a greatness worthy of our praise may see your God as this greatness operating in your own life are you one of those who says today

I am so thankful for the greatness of God but I'm thankful especially that he's brought it into my life may God bless this word to us let's pray Lord our gracious God we cannot describe that greatness that belongs to you we find it revealed in your words such as in these words that we have been considering today we thank you that your greatness far exceeds our ability to describe it but we know Lord that we can appreciate it and we do appreciate it as we come to trust in you and we do pray today that your greatness will be for us a source of comfort and assurance as we come to trust in the living God and so continue to bless us now throughout this day and with us in the evening we pray by your will as we intend again to gather together and may all the gatherings of you people know your greatness directed to their name we pray it all in Jesus name

Amen sing in conclusion now in Psalm number 9 Psalm number 9 verses 7 to 11 God shall endure for a he doth for judgment set his throne in righteousness to judge the world justice to give each one God also will a refuge be for those that are oppressed a refuge will he be in times of trouble to distress and they that know thy name in thee their confidence will place for thou hast not forsaken them that truly seek thy face O sing ye praises to the Lord that dwells in Zion hill and all the nations among his deeds record ye still these verses God shall endure for a God shall endure for freedom

For judge and set his throne and righteousness to judge the world justice to give each one God so will a refuge give for those that are oppressed A refuge will be in lives of troubled to distress and they have told thy name in thee their confidence will quiz for thou hast sought forsaken them that will his seek like this

O sing ye praises to the Lord that blest in Zion and all the glory and all the nations and his peace we call his soul and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and ever more Amen to to