

Even to Old Age I will Carry You

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[0 : 00] Let us join together in the worship of God. We shall sing Psalm 8 to God's praise. The whole of the 8th Psalm.

Psalm 8. How excellent in all the earth, Lord, O Lord, is thy name, who hast thy glory far advanced above the starry frame. From infants and from suckling's mouth thou didst strength ordain for thy foes cause, that so thou mightst the avenging forestry.

When I look up into the heavens, which thine own fingers framed unto the moon and to the stars, which were by thee ordained, then say I, what is man, that he remembered is by thee, of what the Son of Man that thou so kind to him shouldst be.

For thou a little o'erhast him, and the angels made, with glory and with dignity thou crowned hast his head. Of thy hands works thou madest him, Lord, all under his feet didst lay, all sheep and oxen, yea, and beasts that in the field do stray.

The whole of the earth, how excellent in all the earth, Lord, O Lord, is thy name.

[1 : 28] The whole of the 8th Psalm. How excellent in all the earth, Lord, O Lord, is thy name. O excellent in all the earth, Lord, O Lord, is thy name.

Who has the glory far advanced above the starry frame.

From them, O Lord, is thy name.

O Lord, is thy name.

O Lord, is thy name. O Lord, is thy name.

[3 : 31] With glory and with dignity, that crowning has been shed.

Of thy hands work the nation, Lord, on a nurse be slain.

On sheep and oxen the alien beach, that is the field to stray.

House on the airway of the sea, all the paths to the sea.

The excellent in all the air, Lord, our Lord is thy name.

[4 : 37] Amen. Let us come before God in prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we give thanks that we can have these words upon our lips.

That reminds us of what we are and who you are. That you are our creator.

That this world in which we live is your handiwork. The soil upon which our feet find themselves.

And when we look heavenwards, when we see the sun, the moon, the stars. When we are directed to look beyond what the naked eye can see.

Made known to us the planets and even beyond our solar system. That is but one creator, God. And we acknowledge you to be that God.

[5 : 51] Help us to come before you. And raise our voices in your praise. Help us to see you as you are.

As our God. A God who is invisible to the naked eye. Because your spirit cannot be seen. And yet as we spoke of you as creator.

The work of your hands can be seen. We acknowledge that in the heavens above there is a place where the God of heaven resides.

In the trinity of Persians. And we acknowledge that you are God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

One God. Three distinct Persians. And yet the unity of purpose is there for all to see.

[7 : 00] We pray that you would remind us of your greatness. The vastness of who you are. You have no beginning and you have no end. We pray that you would encourage us to contemplate the wonders of your passion as your word reveals that to us.

We cannot do anything better than delve into your word. For it is in your word that you have made yourself known to us in particular. And through your word as it embodies your son.

He is the one in whom you are disclosed in full. So help us to honour your name today by worshipping you and praising your name.

We come as sinners confessing your sin. We come as sinners confessing your sin. Acknowledging that without your mercy we deserve your just displeasure.

For our sin deserves the wrath and the curse of God. And our first parents exposed themselves to that displeasure when they sinned against you.

[8 : 15] And not only did they suffer the consequence of that disobedience that marked them out as covenant breakers. They brought your displeasure upon the human race descended from them.

We confess that we need greater understanding of that and appreciation of it. Because we know that there is sin at our door not only by your own doing.

But by virtue of the condemnation that we are under as that part of the fallen race of Adam. We give thanks for the way in which your word discloses to us the provision that was made even before the fall.

In the great eternity we bless you and thank you that there was discussion within the triune God that led to an election of grace.

And we bless you and thank you that it was in time that this came to full disclosure. We pray that you would remind us afresh through the gospel of the way sinners are invited to come and put their trust in that Christ.

[9 : 43] The alone saviour of sinners we pray your blessing upon your word today as it goes out whoever the preacher is. As you have called them to proclaim your word may they be endowed with grace.

That they may proclaim that Christ without fear or favour. And may he be set before the mind of men and women young and old.

So that they may choose this day whom they will serve. That they may understand the need for urgency. For there is not one of us who can promise themselves a moment's grace to do other than believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the saving of our souls.

Failure to do so might expose us to the displeasure of a holy God. And we confess how we need your favour to keep us from falling and to direct us in the path of obedience even today.

So bless us together we pray around your word. Whoever we may be we give thanks that if it has taken us to this place and that we are there by virtue of the desire that we have to meet before a throne of grace.

[11 : 02] That your word would be blessed to us collectively. That your word would be blessed to us collectively. That your word would be blessed to us in the sick world.

And that all who are under the word today would hear sufficient to draw them to put their trust in Christ. Remember young and old.

Remember homes and families. Remember the solitary, the individual. Some who are living by themselves with a little comfort derived from others.

Pray that you would bless them and pity them and shine upon them with your face. Pray that this would be true of any who would hear your word today. That there is someone to whom they can go even when they are house bound or hospitalised.

Confined to home for the elderly. Pray that you would encourage them to look unto Jesus the brother who was born for adversity. We pray that your blessing would be upon this world that lies in the grip of the pandemic that is still ongoing.

[12 : 15] We give thanks for the positivity that we are hearing from various experts that suggest to us that things are getting better. And that there is an element of control over the virus.

This we wait to see but we give thanks that we can see your hand in these things. We pray your blessing upon those who have succumbed to the virus and who are currently being treated for it.

We pray for those who are grieving over the loss of well-loved ones. And remember all engaged in the care of others in their community. In hospitals, care homes and various places appointed to that end.

Remember our communities and those who labour amongst us for our wellbeing. We pray that you would keep us safe and that you would, in mercy, speak into our need at this time, pouring out your spirit upon us and upon your word as it comes to us.

Remember those who govern us and we pray that you would bless the royal family at this time as well. Thank you, thank you, thank you for the Duke of Edinburgh and thankful for the long years that he has enjoyed.

[13 : 37] And in those years that there was exposure to your word. We pray that even in this ninth and in this eleventh hour that he would come to know the Lord, despite living well into his nineties, nearly one hundred years, is still the possibility for any who are of that ripe old age to come to faith.

It's not something for the young, but it is for the young. It's not just something for the old, it is for the old. It's for any and all.

Because we have never dying souls and we must answer to you at the last. So, hear our petitions. Bless us as a family, as a congregation, as an island and as a nation.

Remembering all the nations of the earth and those who govern us and may peace reign amongst us. We pray now that you would guide us in the truth and that your word to us would be blessed, cleansing from sin in Jesus name. Amen.

I'm going to read from the Old Testament Scriptures the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 46. Isaiah chapter 46. We'll read the whole chapter.

[15 : 10] 1. 2. 2. 3. 4. 5. 5. 5. 5. 6.

7. 5. 6. 6. 7. 7. 7. 7. 9. 8. 9.

9. 10. 9. 10. 10. themselves are gone into captivity. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.

And even to your old age I am he, and even your two hoard hares will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you. To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it our God. They fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place. And he standeth from his place, shall he not remove?

Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and show yourselves, men, bring it again to mind.

[16 : 52] O ye transgressors, remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

I am God, and I will be here, calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executed my counsel from a far country. Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it, I will also do it.

Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness. It shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.

And I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory. Amen, and may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word, and to his name be the praise.

We can read again from this chapter, verse 4. And even to your old age I am he, and even to your hares will I carry you.

[18 : 21] I have made, and I will bear. Even I will carry, and will deliver you. In the previous chapter, the prophet Isaiah has made known something of what awaits God's people.

God was to use Cyrus as his agent, a medium by whose hand Israel was to be restored.

That itself is a great story. God going outside of his people to bring about their salvation. Then in the chapter before us, a different picture we have presented to us.

This is what will befall Israel's enemies. I want us to think today, as we look at these words, what God is our God.

What kind of God he is. A reminder to us of the truth concerning him. A truth that does not change. The first reminder we are given is by way of a contrast.

[19 : 42] And we are reminded of the difference that there is between the idols of this world, which are inanimate and dead, and only living and true God.

It is known that Babylon had a pantheon of gods. Like the Greeks and the Romans, they had many idols.

Those of us who are interested in ancient civilizations, like the Greek and the Roman civilizations, you'll know that there are many, many gods listed among their gods.

And we know Zeus and Mercury and Poseidon. Names that are familiar to many.

Apollo and Jupiter. Some of the planets are named after the Mars, and so on.

[20 : 57] But in Babylon, Bel and Nabal were the most prominent. However, the prophet describes them as being carried on the back of the beast of burden.

Babylon. What is suggested by that could have many possibilities. But either they have been carried as part of the spoil by the armies that have overcome Babylon, or they are being carried away with the people as they make their escape.

The way these words are written underline, first of all, that this will happen. It's a promise. It's something that God will see to that it will come to pass.

And secondly, that the fall of Israel's enemies is a certainty. It is guaranteed. As one of the commentators reminds us, it was believed in the ancient world that the fortunes of a nation were bound up with its gods.

When the gods were destroyed, the people perished. And if the people fell, the gods fell with them. Remember the story of the rapture of the ark of the Lord.

[22 : 30] The Philistines delighted thinking that Israel's God was captive. And the story reminds us of the wrongness of their conclusions.

The Philistines and more than likely Israel thought, God has come into the camp.

It's amazing how readily and how rapidly men and women can fall prey to superstition.

Even those who have been raised within a religious environment, or even a Christian religious environment. Their religion has no more power than the superstition of those who believe in idols.

But then we have this contrast in verses 3 and 4. These gods are carried.

[24 : 07] They are being carried on the back of beasts of burden. Just like in the experience of one of the saints who carried with her the idols that she had failed to make a disconnect with.

But here we are told that God is a God that carries. God states that he has always carried them. From the beginning.

He goes back to the womb. And this is an important truth that God has to remind us of from time to time. It is repeated throughout this prophecy.

And from the time God speaks to Israel as his people. We know that God frequently had to set this truth before them.

In the book of Exodus. When the Lord was dealing with his people at Sinai. He has said to them, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians.

[25 : 28] And how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. In the book of Deuteronomy. The Lord your God who goes before you.

He will fight for you. According to all he did for you in Egypt before your eyes. And in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you.

As a man carries his son. In all the way that you went until you came to this place. Again in chapter 32 of Deuteronomy.

As an eagle stirs up its nest. Hovers over its young. Spreading out its wings. Taking them up. Carrying them on its wings.

And of course we have the familiar words of the prophet himself. Isaiah 40. He will feed his flock like a shepherd.

[26 : 26] He will gather the lambs with his arm. And carry them in his bosom. And gently lead those who are with him. God continues to do this.

It is interesting to note how he emphasises this. It is not when you are old it will stop. But it doesn't stop.

You carry a child in your womb. You can do that. You can't not do that.

The mother carries the child until birth. And even after birth. They often say that there is no infant as vulnerable as an infant child.

For a great length of time. It needs to be cared for. And before it can care for itself.

[27 : 31] And God is saying not only are you cared for before you are born. Yes and after you are born.

But the God of Israel does not at any point relinquish the care that he has for his people.

But the time will come when the child will flee the nest. As it were. When independence will sought. When they will go their own way.

But the God of Israel does not behave like that. Even to grey hair he says. I will carry you. It means all your days.

This God who cares for you. Will continue to care for you. Those who are scholars of the Hebrew tongue tell us. That the word that is used.

[28 : 31] Means the carrying of a heavy burden. Even when they are difficult to carry. Perhaps unwilling to be carried. And we all know what a dead weight is.

No help at all. We know what it is to carry a struggling unwilling burden. And sometimes that is what is true of us. When we think of such times.

That we can praise God that he bore us. Even though we despaired. How different our approach is when we grasp this truth. God has us in his arms.

God looks after us. You remember the story told. By. The minister.

Scots minister who. Was in the city. I think in Glasgow. And he met a young. Young girl. She was. Hardly.

[29 : 35] The picture of health and strength herself. But she was struggling. To carry. Her infant. Sibling. And. You can imagine.

She was barely a few years older than the infant she was carrying. But. The burden was heavy. And. He said. To the. To the child. He was doing the carrying.

My. He said. That's some burden. You're carrying there. And she said. That's not a burden. It's my brother. And.

You can get the picture. The Lord. Is. Our. Burden. Bearer. In more ways than we can. Ever. Believe.

One divine. Puts it like this. It makes all the difference. To. To us. How. He.

[30 : 30] Conceives. Or we conceive. Our religion. Whether it is something. That we have to carry. Or something that will carry us. That is.

Key. In how we see. Our relationship with God. So many. Have a relationship. That is. What's in it for me.

It's entirely of that. Rather than a relationship. That is. Dependent upon God. And.

Honour. Honouring. This God. The final thing that we are reminded of. Is this. The reason. Why. And how. All this is possible.

It can be summed up in the words. Of. Verse. Nine. Remember. The former things of old. For I am God.

[31 : 29] And there is none else. I am God. And there is none like me. Verse. Five. Or there's a challenge. Which cannot be responded to. Because.

Verse. Four. If you notice. Repeatedly. Uses. The. The words. I am he. I will carry. I have made.

I will bear. And so on. This. Is. Is the God. Who is the God. Of Israel. This is the God. Who is the God. Of his people.

This is the God. Who. Who is able. To. Uphold. And to. Withhold. Withhold. His.

Uphold his people. And withhold from them. Anything. That would be harmful. To them. How wonderful it is. For. A believer.

[32 : 26] To know that this is their God. And how wonderful. It is to be able to encourage you. If you have no God. To look to such a God.

God. That is able to. To do for you. What no other can. When these gods. Of. Ancient times.

Are thought of. They are blind. They are dumb. They are. They are unable to walk. They are unable to see. They are. They are all these things. Fit to be.

Strapped on the back. Of a beast of burden. Whereas the God of heaven. Is the God who. Not only carries. But found a way. By which.

His people would be carried. From time. Into eternity. On the. In the strength of. Of the one who bore. Their burden.

[33 : 21] Of sin. To the cross. We give thanks. For the salvation. That is brought by Christ. That ensures. That all who look to him. Are.

Carried by him. Let us pray. Most merciful God. Encourage us. To believe. That you are. God like no other. You are the God.

Who. Who is spoken of here. The one who. Who is able to. Say. I will bear. Even I will carry.

And will. Deliver you. Hear our prayers. Cleanse from sin. And now may grace. Mercy and peace. From God the Father. The Son of the Holy Spirit.

Be with you all. Now. And always. Amen.