

Looking Back & Looking Forward

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Date: 10 August 2025

Preacher: Mr Scott Macleod

[0 : 00] I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our evening service. Those that are visiting us well, we express a warm welcome to you all. We pray that we know God's blessing as we turn to God's word and sing praises to him.

We should all have availability of an intimation sheet. Please familiarise yourself with the items on it. These are all God willing.

We begin our time of worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 122. Psalm 122. We'll sing the whole of this psalm.

Psalm 122.

Psalm 122.

[1 : 42] Psalm 122. Psalm 122. Psalm 122. Psalm 122. Psalm 122. Psalm 122.

Psalm 122. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137.

Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. Psalm 137. golden golden miracle miracle
Where we shall find thee free.

Churches and mountains of cities. All my people together.

And in that place the tides go up.

[2 : 51] The tides of God doeth desire. To herself testimony there.

To God's name thanks be to thee. For thrones of judgment.

In the throne. Now give it house their stay.

With our Jerusalem. We have peace and felicity.

Let them and love thee. And thy peace. Have still prosperity.

[4 : 06] Therefore I wish that peace may still.

With it in thy walls remain. And heaven may thy promises.

From heaven we retain. Now for thy strength and mercy.

Peace be in thee I'll stay. And for the house of God our Lord.

I'll see thy good always. Amen. Jesus and look unto him and that we can set ourselves aside from distractions of this world and that we can set a day to remember our Lord Jesus Christ as a resurrected living saviour to whom we come to daily without petitions, our desires and our needs in much weakness of the flesh and Lord we just pray that you would be over us protecting us and keeping us, that you would be our good shepherd that we continually look towards that you would be a shepherd that continues to provide for us you are the shepherd that will come out after us and find us when we wander you are the shepherd that will bind up our brokenness and carry us when we need carried to take us into your fold, to be in your pastures and to enjoy your still waters and your tending hand over us and Lord as we gather we know that we are few and our desire and longing is that many would come that the gospel would go out convicting and converting with great power from your spirit to do a great work as if it were a dream to us in the ways that you draw people to yourselves in ways that we never thought with words that we never thought you would use

[7 : 17] Lord we pray that you would use your word with great might use your servants in great ways that we would be vessels and instruments for your glory that we would give of ourselves and find out purpose in glorifying your name in all that we do even in the smallest of aspects of our lives and how we care and love for one another how we look out for one another how we visit one another how we respond to one another how we forgive one another give us what is often needed hearts of forgiveness hearts of brotherly love that we would be knit together in love as your people that we would be united as your people as brothers that dwell in unity it is there that the blessing that God commands that will come down the blessing of life forevermore and so bless us we pray with the power of your spirit make your words alive to us as we pick out the details of it as we overview it make it real and living to us and make Jesus a living saviour that we can come to and trust him with the greatest and utmost of confidence in all the fears and difficulties of our lives we pray again for your word as it is preached throughout our islands throughout our nation throughout our world and we pray for your faithful preachers we thank you for them we pray that you would encourage them we pray that you would be with them and guide them by your spirit to bring forth words to people suitable for their time their day and their situation where people gather from varied backgrounds and varied problems and varied situations and circumstances let your word speak as you know us more than you know ourselves you are a loving heavenly father that knows us what is best for us in our time of need and so we ask that you would give to us what we need and when we need it we pray for this congregation again in the vacancy we pray for others that find themselves in similar situations we pray for those that help to cover these roles and we also mindful of those who are training in ministry we pray for more men to be called we pray for labourers for the fields of white for hands we think of

Gordon MacLeod starting his time in Carly and we pray for him that he would be blessed there and we pray for Thomas as well that is intermodelated over this congregation thank you for all that he does for this congregation and pray in a time of vacancy it would be a blessing to hear from different and various preachers from across the nation and across the world but Lord we pray through it you would do a mighty work for the young and for the old help us to be mindful of them in their young years give us wisdom how best to teach them and what to teach them we pray for the summer camps that will now be coming to a close and we pray that seeds would have been sown in these young lives that will sprout and grow great fruit for the harvest of God's glory that you would raise up young people to be bold and unashamed of the gospel and that together young and old as they form the congregation here that they would speak with one another and share with the burdens of their different times and encourage one another with their different experiences sharing in the wonderful works that God has done in the lives of those who have many years behind them to encourage those who are beginning to follow the path to follow the narrow way who are learning to walk that way we pray that we would give good guidance and counsel to them that they may be grounded and rooted in your word to give them clear guidance to be boys and girls that are prayerful and that call upon you and we know that prayer is often something that is hard prayer is something that is difficult prayer is something that can be expressed by the youngest of nines and the most wisest and eldest of people and yet you hear them all and we thank you that you are a heavenly father that hear her prayers and delight to hear her cries even when we don't have the words to come out of our mouth and it is just groanings of our hearts and our souls that we can happen we pray that you would draw near to us we pray that you would guide us in all aspects of our lives we pray that you would be with families as they grow we pray that you would protect marriages for your glory and that you would lead your people in confidence in this world as we are praying in the morning to be lights in darkness so we ask that you would be with us here keep us from the distractions of the devil keep us from the temptations that fit us and protect us from the prowling lion and will seek in his time to watch us and attack us when we walk off in our own confidence the evil one is waking that we might fall

and so give us wisdom to know his ways and to protect us from what can be such an easy fall for us keep us wrap your arms around us guard us in your pasture we ask in Jesus name Amen We continue in our praise by singing in Psalm 20 Psalm 20 from the beginning of that psalm Psalm speaks of the joy of the salvation of God and his continued trust in the Lord from verse 1 down to verse 7 Jehovah hear thee in the day when trouble he doth send and let the name of Jacob's

God be from all ill defend O let him help send from above out of his sanctuary from Zion his own holy hill let him give strength to thee let him remember all thy gifts accept thy sacrifice grant thee thy heart's wish and fulfill thy thoughts and counsel wise in thy salvation we will join in our God's name we will display our banners and the Lord thy prayers shall fulfill now know I God his king doth say he from his holy heaven will hear him with the saving strength by his own right hand given and chariot some confidence some horses trust upon but we remember will the name of our Lord God alone we sing these words to God's place

Jehovah He in the day when trouble he doth send Jehovah He there in the day when trouble he doth send and let the name of he of God he from all hell he spent O let them help send from of us let of his sanctity!

[17 : 15] from side on this own holy hill let him give strength to thee let Remember all I did, I set thy sacrifice.

Trust me, thine heart, wish and fulfill thy thoughts and counsel wise.

In thy salvation we will join, in thy holy name we will.

This way, earth and earth, and the Lord, thy prayer shall contend.

Now though I brought his kingdom, he brought his holy hand.

[19 : 06] We'll hear him with the saints, by his own right and good.

The child's sacred confidence, some fortress trust upon.

But we remain, and will the name of the Lord, our God alone.

We'll turn now to a reading from scripture. We'll read in the book of Ezra, chapter 1.

Ezra follows after 2nd Chronicles. We'll read in Ezra, chapter 1. And then after reading that chapter, we'll turn to Psalm 126.

[20 : 32] Ezra, chapter 1. This is the return of the children of Israel from Babylon by Cyrus' decree.

Let us hear God's word. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and hast charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him. And let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.

He is the God which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of the first place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering of the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

Then rose up the chief of the fast of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all of them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem.

[22 : 28] And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels from the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods.

Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithridath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Shesh-bazah the prince of Judah.

And this is the number of them, thirty charges of gold, a thousand charges of silver, nine and twenty knives, thirty basins of gold, silver basins of a second sort, four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.

All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Shesh-bazah bring up with them of the captivity that they were brought up from Babylon into Jerusalem.

[23 : 52] Now also turn with me to the book of Psalms, and Psalm 126. Psalm 126.

When the Lord turned again, the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done great things for them.

The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again out captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.

They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth weepeth, and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again, with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

[25 : 08] Amen. May the reading of God's word be a blessing to all who have heard it read. Before coming to consider that psalm together, we'll sing once more in Psalm 137.

From the beginning of that psalm, down to verse 9, 7. Psalm 137. A psalm of captivity, and the longing in their hearts to be restored to Jerusalem.

So from verse 1 to verse 7. By Babel's streams we sat and wept, when Zion we thought on. In midst thereof we hanged at half the willow trees upon.

For there a song required they, who did us captive bring. Their spoilers called for mirth, and said, a song of Zion sing.

O how the Lord's song shall we sing within a foreign land. If thee, Jerusalem, I forget, skill, part from my right hand.

[26 : 21] My tongue to my mouth's rooflet cleave. If I do thee forget, Jerusalem and thee above, my chief joy do not set.

Remember Eden's children, Lord, who in Jerusalem's day, even unto its foundation, raised, raised it quiet, did see.

We'll sing these words to God's praise. By Babel's streams we sat and wept, when Zion we thought on. By Babel's streams we sat and wept, when Zion we thought on.

In midst thereof we hanged at half, several trees upon.

For there a song required they, who did us captive bring.

[27 : 42] There's spoilers called for mirth and say, at song close I own sing.

O how the Lord's song shall we sing, within a foreign land.

If thee, Jerusalem, I forget, skill, part from my right hand.

My tongue do my God so perfectly, if I do thee forget.

miracle, put in a miracle, There is love and money above, might be joy to not spare.

[29 : 05] We met the beat of our children, Lord, who in Jerusalem stay.

In the new age of creation, praise, praise, praise, praise, praise.

We'll turn back to that psalm we read together, Psalm 126. We'll consider the whole psalm. But we'll read verse 3.

The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

This psalm, Psalm 126, is a psalm of ascent. Now that would mean that it's a song that the people of Israel would sing when they would come into Jerusalem.

[30 : 22] When Jerusalem would have their times of festival, different times in the year, all the people surrounding Jerusalem, all the Israelites, would gather at the temple in Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

And they would come from all different places. And they would sing the songs as they would ascend up into Jerusalem. Up the mountains that surrounded Jerusalem.

Because Jerusalem was elevated from the ground around it. And these songs of ascent are the songs that they would sing as they would come into Jerusalem.

You can imagine all the different people coming together, increasing in number. And the voice of their song increasing as they ascend up this hill together.

With hopeful expectation of being together in the Lord's house. The joy of being there as we sung in Psalm 122. Now, to compare this today, I suppose the best image we could use is that of a stadium or a football match or whatever sort of game would be going on.

[31 : 33] You can imagine if you had a stadium on top of a hill and you had a big game going on. And you would have all these hordes of people coming in bus rows from all over the country to watch this game.

To be in this one place together. And as they would be walking up into this stadium, they would more than likely be hopefully singing the anthems of their teams.

And singing their songs. And fortunately, this is the image that is probably more common to us when people come into church or come into the temple of God.

People seem to enjoy going to places of entertainment on Sunday rather than to worship God in his house.

And these people show remarkable faithfulness to their team even. And yet will not go dark in the house of God. This is the image of the Psalms of Ascent.

[32 : 38] They would sing them ascending to the temple of God. It is the anthems of the church that they sing. It is songs that they would sing together as they journey and travel.

It is songs that are full of plural pronouns as we, ever, they, them and us as we have here. It is a psalm and it is a psalm we have.

It is psalms collectively for the people of God. And as people who have grown up in the church and are familiar with the psalms, Psalm 126 is probably one that is well known to us, familiar to us and probably much loved by us.

But as I was saying to the kids in the morning, it's good time and again to stop on these things that are familiar to us and just look at the details of it.

So that we understand and we discover what the psalmist is really meaning. When he's writing about the house of God, when he's writing these psalms of ascent and when he's using different images in these psalms as they were so often full of, what do they mean and how do we best understand them today?

[34 : 04] Because when we understand what we're singing, it makes it all the more meaningful for us. We understand them in a greater sense and it can make a huge difference to how we sing the psalm.

I'm a great believer of understanding what we're singing. Not only that we sing it audibly from our hearts, but that our hearts too will sing with praise.

Understanding what the psalm is trying to express in his words. So that not only we sing with our mouths, but we rejoice in our hearts too.

This psalm, Psalm 126, is a psalm of two parts that looks back and looks forward. The psalm recalls the work of God in times past.

Amazing and unbelievable works that God had done. But it's a psalm that looks forward prayerfully from their own situation.

[35 : 20] Longing to know again these works of God in their time and in their day. Two points for us in this psalm.

Simply looking back, which is verses 1 to 3. And looking forward, which is verses 4 to 6. So what can we say about looking back?

What do the psalms think about when he looked back? Well, when we read there in verse 1. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us.

Whereof? We are glad. The Lord turned again the captivity of Zion. This is what is largely understood to be that the Lord setting the people free from Babylonian captivity.

[36 : 34] Although I don't think it is entirely clear that is what is meant. A lot of commentators will understand that the writing of this psalm points the people back to when the Lord released them from captivity and returned them to Zion.

Releasing them from Babylon, as we read, as Cyrus allowed the people to do. And the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion.

This is then being set free to return to Jerusalem. To return to Zion. Deuteronomy 30, it warns about the blessings and curses of following God and disobeying God.

And it says in that passage in chapter 30 verse 3 that God would restore the fortunes of the people. That is exactly the same as the turning again here.

It's the captivity. Same language I believe is being used there. So the Lord is turning again. The people from this Babylonian captivity allowing them back into Jerusalem to return to Zion.

[37 : 50] To return to that mountain where the temple of God is. But Zion also represents the people of God. The people form part of the place.

We have the place and we have the people together included in Zion. It's a great kingdom as it were. A kingdom is a place with a king.

A kingdom is a place physically. And a kingdom most importantly must have people in it. Zion, this great kingdom, is restored by God.

Restore our fortunes as other translations have it. Restore the people to the place, to the God. The dwelling place, the temple, where they belong.

And this restoration is described as it were a dream to them. What we read in Esther is of the people being allowed to return.

[38 : 52] Not just of themselves. But they return with gold. They return with silver. They return with beasts. The people are glad to help them go.

Cyrus himself allows them to bring with them the temple treasures that Nebuchadnezzar have taken away. They're not just allowed to return, but they return with great treasures.

Unbelievable to them. But they're allowed to return. But they're allowed to return. With all these material blessings. Gold, silver, animals.

The temple treasures. They can't believe it. How does this happen? We've been captive in Babylon for 70 years. And now we're just allowed to go?

And allowed to go with these treasures? And these riches? It seems too good to be true. And it is, as if it were, a dream to return to Jerusalem.

[39 : 55] And the psalmist records then two responses to this work of God. Two responses to the people being allowed in verse 2.

It speaks about the church, Israel, that their mouths were filled with laughter and their tongue with sinning.

The people were laughing and singing. Probably at the disbelief of what God had done for them. Clearly expressing their joy of being released from captivity.

Allowed to return to where God would dwell in Jerusalem. To God's city. Unbelievable joy in their hearts.

You can always imagine people of war being told the war is over. And the joy and laughter that they would have with one another. Ready to go home.

[41 : 01] We're going home. That's what it is. We're going home. They can't believe it. But God has done a great work. And they're singing and laughing.

Praising God. All the way there. It would seem. But the second response that is recorded is from the world. It says that The heathen.

At the end of verse 2 said The Lord has done great things for them. It was undeniable, even to the world, what the Lord had done for the people.

Other nations looked on and saw that the Lord had done a great work for them. Not only allowing them to go, but allowing them to go with all these two.

And they are just saying The Lord has done great things for them. But it's as if they're keeping themselves separate.

[42 : 05] It's as if they know that God is real. God is true. And God is faithful to his people by allowing them to return to their city. And yet it's as if they're saying Well that's okay for them.

It's as if he's saying It's okay for them. And I will keep living my life as I am. You may have come across this speaking to people who will say to you that Oh well you'll be okay.

God's looking out over for you. God's looking out looking after you. God's looking out over you. when God is with people.

When they recognise the joy that has been put into people's hearts. To recognise here in the Psalms the joy that they have in praising their God.

People recognise in us the joy that we have in our hearts when the Lord has great things for us.

[43 : 55] And I wonder does that describe anyone here tonight? That they are on the outskirts as it were. And they are looking at other people as Christians and saying, well the Lord has done great things for you. But I am quite happy with where I am.

You look at the Christian and you think it's alright for them. And maybe the world actually notices the hand of God before we do ourselves.

They notice how good God has been to us. And I am not talking about material changes in lives. I am not talking about people being blessed with houses and cars and great jobs.

I am talking about changes that have happened in their lives. Change that you witness in someone's life. Change that you witness in their heart.

And you can say undeniable God has done great things for them. It is plain to see that man is not like he was that boy, girl, whatever it is not the person they were.

[45 : 21] It sort of points us back to the way we were in the morning speaking with the disciples who were radically changed by meeting with the living, resurrected Lord Jesus. The world can look in at the change in you.

Undeniably say the Lord has done our work there. And it's as if they would say in their heart they are set free from all the burdens and cares that I have in this world.

It's as if they are not worried about the things that weigh me down. And in many ways that's right. People of God are set free from the weights of this world.

They are set free from the weights of sin. The burden of sin has weighed so heavily upon us all. They are set free from it.

The Christian he is no longer captive to sin. He is set free through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. You may remember the story of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

[46 : 33] Christian comes to the cross he has his burden on his back and when he falls there and bows the knee the weight falls from.

He is set free from the burden of his sin. and his mouth then can only but rejoice and laugh as if he were set free from being captive as if he is released from jail as if the war is over God puts a new song in their heart to sing they are set free from the cares that weigh so heavily of this world not entirely but ultimately they know that they can lean upon God for their strength they can trust in him in every situation to be their good shepherd to lead them and guide them the Lord has done good things great things for them but the gospel calls you if you have witnessed this to come and join the people to have that Lord to be your Lord to set you free from the captivity of sin that weighs so heavy on your back so that you would come and sing as they sing in verse 3 that you would sing not only has the

Lord done great things for them but the Lord has done great things for us it is a phrase that is repeated here emphasising the greatness of the work of God no greater work has been done for the people and to set us free from the weight and burden of sin in our lives to give you a new song to sing rejoicing what has been done for you and everyone else will rejoice in your coming too and they sing the same song together are we singing the same song together tonight is it our song or are you still looking in from a distance are you still separating yourself from this

God that can set you free from the power of sin you know when we first know this wonderful work of God in our lives we can't help but sing we can't help almost laugh that such amazing work has been done for us that it seemed like a dream that Jesus Christ would die for you and set you free from the burden of sin and go and prepare a place for you and even though you die you shall live it is a personal expression of the heart to sing that God has seen that God has done great things for us for me and we must look back and remember the great things that God has done for us in our experiences to be mindful of the way he has led us in our lives and provided for us and saved us not to forget the captivity of sin that he has set us free from and it is personal also it is personal but it is in a way a collective thing too for the people of God to sing this song together and maybe that is exactly what you see when you look back maybe you look back as the psalmist does here and you say to yourself the Lord has done great things for us as you look back and the years come by you look back at the way God has worked you look back at the people that

God brought into this building that you never thought you would see here people calling of captivity people joining with you to sing the same song did it not fill your heart with joy to see this building through praising God for what he had done and that maybe when you look back you think well it does only seem like a dream and a distant memory and yet you recall these days with gladness in your heart whereof we are glad it says to be able to recall these great times of great blessing where God worked in remarkable ways drawing people to himself and setting them free from captivity the psalmist here looks back and he recalls what God has done saving them free from

[52 : 47] Babylon giving them the riches to return to Jerusalem and we should look back on our lives remembering what he has done for us personally remembering what he has done in this community and across this island remarkable works that would seem like a dream today and we are thankful for them that we can recall such experiences and know such stories but as they look back with thankfulness they too look forward from the situation and where they are as he writes this psalm from verse 4 onwards he looks forward he changes his direction and he says turn again out captivity O Lord as streams in the south they that sow in tears shall reap them joy he that goes forth and weep of bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him he's gone from thanking

God as he looks back to petitioning God as he looks forward calling on the same God and you see the way he repeats his language to work exactly like they have known him to work before turn again the captivity turn again out captivity O Lord he calls do that work that you have done in years gone past do that work as like the stories I know of you working in years gone by that turning again that is written here it's an imperative it's a pleading with God to do this work again as he looks forward from the situation that he is in to know his hand to know that blessing he calls out to God that we would know it as this image that is used here as streams in the south what is meant by that image we ask well the south is often referred to the negative and from what

I was reading is that this place is famous for being dry it's a barren landscape and there's passages in the bible judges 1 15 probably others that hint to that and allude to the dryness of the land in judges 1 the land has been allocated but they're complaining because it's so dry they're wanting places with wells and springs but this land I understand would experience sudden downpours of rain that would transform it because when all that rain fell it would form these streams and transform the land from being barren to being a place of life and growth the psalmist here is calling upon God that he would know this great change again in his experience pleading that the

Lord would pour down rain that great streams would fall that streams of new life would come by the power of the outpouring of the spirit to bring new harvest new growth to bring security and hope to them in their land and in their day that the Lord would make the land fruitful once again because the land is barren to him as he writes it he looks back and he knows great bliss but from where he's writing is and he's looking forward it is barren to him he is pleading with the Lord as the spirit would pour down like the rain falls here soak in the land they plead for this revival knowing fine that it can only come from

God knowing fine that it can only come from the heavens knowing fine that it is a work of God pour down your spirit upon us that the streams would flow as they do when you pour down your rain in the land in the south the psalmist is asking it because he sees little girls he sees little fruit he needs rain he needs God he needs the spirit once more to come to do our work that even as it is written in the book of Habakkuk to do our work that he would not believe if he had not been told a work that he would not believe even if he had been told where the spirit would come and take dry bones and give them life where the spirit would come and take hearts of stone and make them into hearts of flesh taking what is dead and making it living here you have standing stones but how many hearts of stone are there in this community that need the outpouring of

[59 : 03] God's spirit to soft them and make them living like people that live for God make them alive and change them from the death the imagery of rain that falls down here is then followed in verse 5 by saying they that sow in tears shall reap in joy and I don't think that's without any significance that he's picturing this image of great rain showers coming down to bless the land and now he's giving you this image of a labourer crime the laughter that they had is now brought to tears and he goes out in tears to sow to sow the seed where there is no rain to fall it's as if his tears are the only thing they are to bring forth life the sorrow of his heart as he sows his seed and he sees no light but he asks for

God to bless it as it were the dryness of the ground the spiritual life of the people as he looks around them has him in tears as he goes out of the gospel as it should have us in tears when you think of the spiritual dryness of people pleading that God would send the rain again to pour down upon us and water the land and bring life where there is death to bring fruit where it is barrow that he would wake the people up by the coming of his spirit because we know if they are not they will be lost in eternity in heaven the psalmist here has a deep concern for the people he has a weighty concern for his community do you have a concern for the people out there tonight do you pray for the people that you know in your families and your congregations that are associated with the congregation and people that are not have you shed a tear for those who are lost and do not want to hear the gospel you know the blessing of

God in your life and do you not desire with all your heart that everyone would know it there's many people in this church that have shed many tears for people who have not yet come and maybe there's been many tears expressed for people even that are sitting here that they would know God but the sword was out here in this image tearfully but assuredly knowing that he shall reap in joy the sword is to sow faithfully to sow the seed of the gospel to sow the seed to sow the seed to sow the seed and that can seem like a hard and unthankful task at times it's not easy and it may be over many many tears as you meet with opposing weather as it were opposing voices and as it were people mocking you from over the fence in the field beside you you sow asking

God to bless it this image of the sword here goes forth weeping behaving precious seed darkness comes again with rejoicing some counties that I read on this said that the seed is so precious that the sword here is going out with his own food he's sowing what would be his own bread he's giving everything that he has and coming it to the ground that it may grow in this image all the things that would be his food and his own sustenance he's giving it to God and that is a helpful image because he is giving everything he has for the gospel for God committing it and putting it in the ground not knowing how God will use it but giving it to

God everything he has asking that rain may form it! and he's full of tears as he does so knowing that he is giving everything whether he will see the benefit the fruit of it in his time he does not know but what he is doing is he is pouring out himself to God not that he may gain great grain but it is all poured out for the people and his concern for them it is equivalent to us today to giving everything to God for his glory to commit everything that we have to God and his purposes not knowing how God could use it but the promise is that when we do that when we sow what we have for

[65 : 50] God doubtless he will come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him there is great cost involved here for the sower but if he does not sow there will be no reaping he must go out he goes out trusting in God not trusting his own wealth not trusting his own methods but God will use men as vessels and instruments to sow the seed to sow the seed to go out and use sowing the seed as an instrument in

God's hand we must sow the seed or there will be no reaping to give everything we have Lord this is yours bless it make it flourish in your time turn many from captivity once and again that we would see that great work in our lives that we would sing a new song to the Lord but you know what waiting is hard when we see no growth we long as the psalmist does for great blessings as they say in times of revival the tide has to go all the way out before it comes back the many days of tears and weeping that are lonely and hard but the blessing is promised doubtless he will come again rejoicing with sheaves so

I must be faithful in sowing the seed we must be faithful in sowing the seed and giving everything that we have for the Lord and for his glory Jesus is here in this psalm too as we conclude Jesus is the one that sets us free from captivity as we were saying Jesus the one that has caused the curtain to be torn in his sacrifice so that we are not banished anymore we are called to come into his presence!

seed for the glory of God he is the one that will come again for his harvest and restore the fortunes of Zion he is the one that will restore the heavenly kingdom he will set his people free he will gather them together in his place he will be their king whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will not perish but have everlasting life we should be filled with joy and laughter knowing that great blessing for ourselves as we look back and think of the work that he has done but we ask both to look forward prayerfully calling upon

God to do our work once more in this community that we would see a harvest in our day for his glory giving everything that we have it will be the Lord's harvest but that is a place where we will be in joy with him forever the great and heavenly Zion will be restored we will sing the Lord has done great things for us and where off we are glad I pray these thoughts to be blessed to us this evening we'll sing in that psalm in conclusion psalm 126 psalm 126 we'll sing the whole of the psalm when

[71 : 45] Zion's bondage God turned back as men that dreamed were weak and filled with laughter was our mouth our tongue with melody we'll sing the whole psalm to God's praise and afterwards I'll conclude with prayer we'll remain seated for singing when Zion's bondage God turned back when Zion's bondage God turned back to him the tree where he ate filled with after what of the power come with melody They mother he had said the Lord.

Gives him for him of cry. The Lord else won't make him cry.

Whence joy to all cry. A miracle of The Father in the Son Have one victory in God Who so in tears shall be in heaven All joy in Christ is God But bond of vain and majesty If going forth the morn He ever is waiting at His feet Rejoicing shall return

I'm going to stand to conclude with prayer Our Lord and our God We pray that you would once more Outpour with your Spirit And bless the people here That you would do our work once more That we would seem as if it were a dream That you would hear our prayer And see our tears And that you would instill within us A concern for the people Lord do our work Once more we plead with you Draw your people back to yourself That your kingdom may come We ask these things in Jesus' name Amen Amen Thank you.