

PM Psalm 96 Is our hope in the Lord?

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[0 : 00] Our reading this evening is taken from Psalm 96, verse 1 to verse 13.

So Psalm 96, starting at verse 1 to the end of the chapter. O sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all the earth, sing to the Lord bless his name, tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols. But the Lord made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come into his courts.

[1 : 27] Worship the Lord in the splendour of holiness. Tremble before him all the earth. Say among the nations, the Lord reigns.

Yes, the Lord is established. It shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice.

Let the sea roar and all that fills it. Let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Before the Lord, for he comes. For he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness. And the people in his faithfulness.

Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word. And to his name be the glory and praise. Amen. Let us pray.

[2 : 35] Father, would you come this evening to study your word. May the thoughts of our hearts and the words of my mouth be acceptable in your sight.

We ask through Christ your Son and our Redeemer. Amen. So, where is your hope for the coming days?

Is your hope in the Lord? Lord, we all need something to hope for. For continuing sunshine. For the steady rain that moistens the ground.

For our sports team to win. Or for a candidate to win the MasterChef. We all need something to hope for. When we abandon hope.

We abandon life. There is nothing else to cling to. And this is a sad situation for many who live today outside their faith in Christ.

[3 : 44] But we have a hope. Which guarantees eternal life. In all its fullness. It's a hope built in proven promises.

And a hope that is open to all. In Psalm 96 we have read a psalm that calls us to praise God's name.

And which promotes hope beyond anything that earth or man could hope to deliver a promise to us. So tonight let's take a little time to look at this psalm.

It's often seen as being written by David for the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant to its new resting place in Jerusalem. As depicted in 1 Chronicles.

It's certainly a psalm of rejoicing and praise. And you can see it being sung as the Ark makes its slow and deliberate path towards Jerusalem.

[4 : 47] Previously we have looked at Psalm 95. Where worship is directed to God. Mainly from the people of Israel.

But here we have a psalm that focuses and prays from all nations. For the blessing that they have received. It is a call to us to give thanks for the blessings that we have received in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The one who frees us from our sin. And gives us the opportunity to once more enter God's presence. Tonight we'll look, as we look at the psalm, we'll look at four commands which Warren Wiersbe suggests this psalm gives to God's people.

The first is we have to sing because of our good news. In verses 1-3. And then we have to give praise because our God is great.

Because of the greatness of our God. And we have to worship God because he is worthy. And finally the psalm finishes that we are to rejoice because our King is coming.

[6 : 08] And he will return in glory. Verse 1-3 declares, Oh sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth.

Sing to the Lord bless his name. Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations. His marvellous works among all the peoples.

In the first three verses we are three times called to sing to God. To sing a new song. To sing of his salvation for his people.

And to sing of his marvellous works. In verse 1 we are called to sing a new song. Yes it's good to have tradition. It's good to bring God's word into our praise.

But as we travel with God in our lives. There are always new reasons for singing praises to God. We have new experiences of God's blessing towards us each day.

[7 : 11] We find new truths of God as we study his word. And read his Bible. We have new beginnings in our lives.

We see the changes that occur. When we come to experience Christ as our saviour. All our experiences of God's grace and mercy in our lives.

Give us reason to sing a new song. And to praise God's name. Verse 2 commands us to bless his name and tell of his salvation.

Think about it.

Think about it. We know personally the power of the gospel to turn lives around. We have experienced it. We have experienced it giving purpose to our lives.

[8 : 26] To bring them back. And to bring our lives back into union with God. Through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. And if we have experienced it and we know it in person.

What better witness for proclaiming it to the world. Our worship is to turn from praise to witness. Proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

Our witness is to be day to day. It is continual. It is ongoing. It is unending. We need to follow the example that we read in scripture.

For example of Peter and John. When dragged before the council. For preaching about Jesus and the resurrection. Acts 4 verses 19 and 20.

Tell us that they declared to the council. Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you.

Rather than to God. You must judge. For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

[9 : 36] Peter and John would not be silenced. Even with further threats of violence and persecution. From the secular authorities. And how similar today is that.

In the situation that many of us may find ourselves. Verse 3 gives us reason for confidence. To stand against the desires of a fallen and corrupt society.

We are to declare his glory. Because he done great things throughout the nations. Just as the psalm commands the Israelites. To declare his glory to the nations.

We should continue to take Christ's message to the people. His great works in our lives are not to be hid away.

We are not to be shy about declaring them. In Matthew 28 verses 18 to 20. Jesus gives one of his last instructions to us. And it is to go out and proclaim his words.

[10 : 41] The verses say. And Jesus came and said to them. All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

Baptising them in the name of the Father. And of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always to the end of the age.

Christ's salvation for humanity. Referred to in verse 2. Is not for the few. It is not just for the Jews. Or for those prepared to become proselytes.

Those who are prepared to take up Judaism. And follow all the Old Testament rituals and laws. As the Pharisees and other religious leaders would demand.

It is for all. And the only restriction. Being the acceptance of Christ as their saviour. And the repenting of their sin. Of admitting our mistakes.

[11 : 45] And actions against God. And accepting we are saved by faith. In Christ alone. It is for all. And it is only through Christ.

We are not to remain inside our four secure walls. And offer to God our praise. Yes we have to praise God. And it is good to meet together. But we have to go out to all groups.

The rich, the poor. The deserving, the undeserving. We are to go out and declare God's glory. Announce to our society. Who Christ is.

And what he has done. We have experienced it. Now let's share it. God has given a root for man. Back to union with him.

He has affected and changed each of our lives. We should now declare his grace to all we meet. The good news of Jesus Christ gives us something to sing about.

[12 : 50] As we look at this morning. He is the only saviour. And will save all who trust in him. Our second command is to give praise.

As our God is great. Verses 4-6 reads. For great is the Lord. And greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the people. Are worthless idols. But the Lord made the heavens. Splendour and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

These other gods were no gods at all. They were man's creation. Verses 4-6 give reason for us to praise God.

And this mirrors what we looked at in Psalm 95. Where in verse 3 it states. For the Lord is a great God. And a great King above all gods.

[13 : 50] The other gods are but a transfer. Of the glory of man and his lack of power. Onto something else.

The idols that folk worship are stone. Inanimate objects. Or possessions of our desires. Our God is the opposite of all that we see in false gods.

We didn't create God. God created us. In his image. And we represent an imperfect image of God. God created the universe.

The heaven and the earth. And all that dwells beneath it. God is great. He is great in his salvation. He is great in who he is.

He is entitled. And demands our songs of praise. The third command is to worship the Lord as he is worthy. In verse 79 we read.

[14 : 56] Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples. Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.

Bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Tremble before him all the earth. Now if you remember in verses 1 to 3.

It called the nations to praise God. And so verses 79 mirror this call to worship. Instead of singing a song of praise.

We are now to bow down before him. And proclaim God's glory and strength. We are called to bring an offering. In Old Testament people would bring different offerings or sacrifices.

For different occasions. And dependent on their wealth. So some may bring a lamb. Some may only be able to afford a few doves.

[16 : 01] Today we don't need to come before God with lambs and doves and living sacrifices. Today we bring ourselves as offerings to God.

And this actually is as much in keeping with the desire of God. Even in the Old Testament. As the bringing of sacrifices. In 1 Samuel 15 and 22.

Samuel said. As the Lord has great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices. As in obeying the voice of the Lord. Behold to obey is better than sacrifice.

And to listen than the fat of rams. And in Micah 6. We read. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams. With ten thousands of rivers of oil.

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression. The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul. He has told you oh man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you.

[17 : 13] But to do justice. And to love kindness. And to walk humbly with your God. We seem to focus on this Old Testament God.

Who demands physical items of sacrifice. Yet. When we look at his word. More closely. We see that this is what. God really demands.

But it's often easier for us to think about. Bringing some physical sacrifice. Some physical offering. Than to bring ourselves. Does God need our physical sacrifices?

Is he dependent on them? No. Rather we are dependent on him. He wishes us to give him honour. And to obey his commands.

This comes above sacrifices. He wishes us to be still. And listen to his word. His instruction. For it is better than the sacrifice of lambs.

[18:15] He would rather that we did. What he required of us. We promote justice for all. Promote loving kindness in the world.

And to walk humbly. In his presence. This is not about. Promoting a social gospel. Where his message of salvation is forgotten.

For the promotion of everyone's physical welfare. It is our carrying God's message. Of loving care for humanity. To all. Of society.

To the rich. To the poor. Demonstrating it in practice. And using the opportunities. That that creates. About using the relationships we develop.

To witness. And proclaim God. In word and actions. We often say that actions speak louder than words. But this is.

[19:17] Often when our words and actions differ. Words can be practiced. Thought out. And spoke in a controlled way.

Our actions. Tend to be much more spontaneous. We take time over our speech. But it's said that we act an instinct. So our actions are natural.

And show our nature. And our intent. The actions show our heart. So seen as being true. To a person's nature.

And so we must ensure as Christians. That our word. And our actions. Are in harmony. That they match. That the words we speak of our mouth.

Also. We carry forward into actions. So our final command. Comes in verses 10 to 13. To rejoice for our King is coming.

[20:21] Verses 10 to 13 read. Say among the nations. The Lord reigns. Yes. The world is established. It shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples.

With equity. Let the heavens be glad. And let the earth rejoice. Let the sea roar. And all that fills it. Let the field exult.

And everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest. Sing for joy. Before the Lord. For he comes. For he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world.

In righteousness. And the people. In his faithfulness. Weesby highlights here. The phrase. The Lord reigns.

Can also be read as. The Lord has become King. And so. As a reference to Christ. Sitting on the throne. And ruling over the nations.

[21:14] And this highlights. It's highlighted in Revelations 11.17. We give thanks to you Lord God Almighty.

Who is and who was. For you have taken your great power. And began to reign. For the Christian. It is a day that we long to see.

It will be a day of rejoicing. The day when Christ is exalted. And all the earth will bend the knee. To proclaim his greatness. But this will not be a time of universal celebration.

As for many. It will still be a day of fear and trepidation. A point that many. When speaking the good news of salvation. Wish to skip over.

But a point which cannot be put aside. A grim reality. For those not saved. Through Christ alone. Paul teaches in Romans 14.

[22:17] That all should bow before the Lord. And one shall confess to God. Verses 11 and 12. Read. As I live says the Lord.

Every knee shall bow to me. And every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us. Will give an account of himself to God. Everyone will be tried before God.

For the thoughts and actions of their lives. All will be held accountable for their sin against God. Not often popular topics that we like to speak about in the church.

Sometimes we rather speak about love. But it is a reality. To those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour. And repented of their sin.

Christ will intercede for them. He will speak on their behalf. He has already laid down his life for us. And that we may be declared righteous. Before God.

[23 : 20] Despite our sin. For those who come to that day. Having refused the offer. Of salvation through Christ. Will be cut off. For eternity.

It will be too late to change your minds. They will have had the opportunity. But had decided life's passions. Life's desires. Were too strong.

Earthly goals. Were more important to them. People may simply have felt. That they had plenty of time. There was no need to rush. To change their lives.

As we come to finish. Let's look at two stories. From God's word. The first is about a rich man. In Luke. Chapter 12. 16 to 21.

And he told. That's Jesus. And he told them a parable saying. The land of a rich man. Produced plentifully. And he thought to himself.

[24 : 20] What shall I do. For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said. I will do this. I will tear down my barns.

And build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain. And my goods. And he will say to my soul. Soul. You have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax. Eat. Drink. Be merry. But God said to him. Fool. This night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared.

Whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself. And is not rich towards God. We read of a rich man. Dependent upon himself.

And his worldly gains. He has his plans set. And he thinks he is now made for the years to come. But his plans are destroyed by God's timing.

[25 : 23] And death comes too soon for him. The second is in Matthew 24. Where Jesus warns us of his return. That two men will be walking.

Or working in the field. And one will be called to him. The other will be left. Two women will be grinding corn. And one will be taken to the Lord.

And the other will be left. Those that are left. Had not made a decision for Christ. Some made a deliberate decision against Christ.

Some decided to put the decision off. But Jesus tells us. We know not when Jesus will return. He warns us that he will come like a thief in the night.

A time not of our choosing. So we must be ready. We must make a decision for Christ. Or not. We can't sit on the fence.

[26 : 24] And we can't wait for tomorrow. Jesus says in Matthew 12 verse 30. Whoever is not with me is against me. And whoever does not gather with me scatters.

So please. Don't dilly dally. About making the decision. Make it now. And make a decision. That will bring you into eternity with God.

To Christ Jesus his son. Christ Jesus our son. His son. Is our only route to salvation. He is the only route back to God.

Let's just pray. Father you do not hold your sins against us.

If we accept your son as our saviour. And the only way back to your presence. We ask that anyone in doubt.

[27 : 29] Or questioning their future. May be drawn to you. Through the moving of your Holy Spirit. That their hearts may be softened. And they may accept Christ.

As their saviour. We give you thanks for the millions who call you saviour. We thank you for the presence in our daily lives.

And we give you thanks for the many blessings you bestow upon us. As we go forward in the new week. Give us strength. To declare your news.

Your good news. To those whom we meet. In the coming week. This we ask through Jesus Christ. Our saviour. And your son.

Amen. Amen. Amen.