

PM Psalm 102:12-22

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Date: 03 July 2022

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[0 : 00] This evening is from Psalms, from Psalm 102, and we'll read the full Psalm, and that's page 602 of the Church Bibles.

So Psalm 102, and we'll read the whole Psalm. And we're reading from the ESV version. Hear my prayer, O Lord. Let me cry, come to you. Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress.

Incline your ear to me, and answer me speedily in the day when I call. For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. My heart is struck down like grass, and has withered. I forget to eat my bread. Because of my loud groaning, my bones cling to my flesh. I am like a desert owl in the wilderness. Like an owl of the waste places, I lie awake.

[1 : 07] I am like a lonely sparrow in the housetop. All the day my enemies taunt me. Those who deride me use my name for a curse. For I eat ashes like bread, and mingle tears with my drink.

Because of your indignation and anger. For you have taken me up and thrown me down. My days are like an evening shadow. I wither away like grass.

But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever. You are remembered throughout all generations. You will arise and have pity on Zion. It is the time to favour her.

The appointed time has come. For your servants hold her stones dear, and have pity on her dust. Nations will fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory.

For the Lord builds up Zion. He appears in his glory. He regards the prayer of the destitute, and does not despise their prayer.

[2 : 13] Let this be recorded for a generation to come. That a people yet to be created may praise the Lord. That he look down from his holy height.

From heaven the Lord looked at the earth. To hear the groans of the prisoners. To set free those who were doomed to die. That he may declare in Zion the name of the Lord.

And in Jerusalem his praise. When peoples gather together. And kingdoms to worship the Lord. He has broken my strength and course.

He has shortened my days. O my God, I say, take me not away in the midst of my days. For whose years endure through... Sorry.

You whose years endure throughout all generations. A vowl laid down the foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the work of your hands.

[3 : 13] They will perish, but you will remain. They will wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe. And they will pass away. But you are the same and your years have no end.

The children of your servants shall dwell secure. Their offspring shall be established before you.

Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word. And his name be the glory and praise forever.

Amen. Let's sing again to God's praise. We'll singly bow our heads in prayer. Father, we thank you that we can freely read and study your word.

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of our hearts be acceptable in your sights. These things we ask through Christ our Lord, our Saviour. Amen.

Amen. Tonight we will continue our look at Psalm 102. And we'll look at the middle section, verses 12 to 22.

[4 : 20] And that's why I briefly paused and was about to say the ending part at verse 22. Last week, sorry not last week, but last time I was down in verses 1 to 2.

The psalmist calls to God and we see how the events of the psalm are so personal to the psalmist.

The psalmist begins with a plea as a man in trouble, a man in desperate straits.

In prayer he cries out to the Lord that the Lord hears him and that the Lord responds to him. In verses 3 to 11 we see the psalmist's condition.

They give us an insight to the feelings of the psalmist as if he feels separated from God. Briefly we hear in verses 3 and 5 for example, For my days pass away like smoke, my bones burn like a furnace, my heart is struck down like grass and is withered.

I forget to eat my bread because of my loud groanings, my bones cling to my flesh. So we see here a man in pain, a man in suffering because of his distress.

[5 : 33] And yet in verse 9 we start to see an image of hope. An image of one who is penitent. Someone who is showing sorrow and regret for his wrongdoing.

Verse 9 reads, For I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink. Sackcloths and ashes were used as a public sign of repentance and humility before God.

Our psalmist is looking to turn from his old ways and return to a proper relationship with God. And we are in a similar state to the psalmist.

We have sinned against God and we cannot come into his presence by our own actions. Or the actions of our fellow man. By a priest offering sacrifices or attempting to intercede for us.

We have all sinned. We are all far from the standard required to meet God's laws and to come before him in person. Now the focus and mood of the psalm changes.

[6 : 42] The psalmist focuses on God's greatness. His standing before the nations and his enduring presence throughout the generations. A stark contrast between the view of the future in verse 11 and his description of the Lord.

In verse 11 he sees himself withering away like dead parts grass. In verse 12 the psalmist reminds us of our unchanging God proclaiming, But you O Lord are enthroned forever.

You are remembered throughout all generations. God is our Lord and our Creator. A fact that never changes. No matter how great man thinks his achievements are.

No matter our knowledge. God is our Creator and He is our Saviour. He created us. He redeemed us. And He did it without our aid.

He is the same caring God in the day of creation. In the day of man's fall from grace. And today. He is a God of love. And the God of our salvation.

[7 : 56] He promised man salvation. And He provided it through Jesus Christ, His Son. So just as in verse 1 when we cry to the Lord, He remains our refuge.

And He hears our pleas. In verses 13 and 14 we read, You will arise enough pity on Zion. It is time to favour her.

You will arise enough pity on Zion. Sorry. For your servants hold her stones dear. And have pity on her dust. It is now time for God to respond to the cries of His people.

There has been some debate about the time of the writing of this psalm. Some see it reflecting possible events in the life of David and his eventual repentance.

Others see it as having been written perhaps during the time of the Babylonian exile. We cannot be certain. We cannot be certain. But what we do know is that in both of these occasions would be appropriate for God's mercy.

[9 : 03] We do know that when His people repent of their sins against Him and cry out humbly before Him, He hears them and He responds to their need.

We see it in His people. We see it in His leading of His people out of bondage in Egypt. And we see it in His rescue of His people from their captivity in Babylon. In Jeremiah we learn that the Jews could not accept removal from Jerusalem.

And false prophets led the people to expect a sudden return to Jerusalem. False prophets were leading the people to believe that they would soon be on their way back out of exile.

But through Jeremiah God speaks to them and He tells them that settle yourselves down because for the next 70 years you are going to be here.

Because of their sin and disregard for the covenant that He had made with them. This was not God's plan. In Jeremiah 29, 11-15 we read For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord.

[10 : 12] Plans for welfare and not for evil. To give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you.

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord. And I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord.

And I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. So God has plans to protect our welfare that we may have hope.

But there are conditions. It's not a one-sided agreement. The start is a right heart of praise and service. The Jews had been led into exile in Babylon by God because of their continued sin against Him.

At times worshipping false idols, breaking God's commandments and not giving Him the central place in their lives.

[11 : 21] The people of Judah had made a pact with the Babylonians previously to protect them. Rather than trusting in the power of God and His promises to them.

Does that sound familiar? Do we make pacts with others and forget the place of God in our lives? Do we relegate God's position in life because it suits our desires and what we see as important? And if we do, do we then grumble when our plea for assistance is not answered as promptly as we expect? Or do we treat God like a monopoly?

Get out of jail free card. Something to be kept up our sleeves for a time of need. Something to forget about until that day when we need it.

Well the experience of the Israelites was clear. That once they repented of their ways and sought God and sought Him with all their heart.

[12 : 25] They would find Him and He would answer their cries. When that change of heart is visibly evident, then renewal for the nation of Israel would come.

And that is no different for us today. When we show those visible signs of seeking God, then the renewal shall come across the country.

When that change of heart came, God brought the remnant of His people out of exile back to Jerusalem. And provided the leadership to restore the city and rebuild His temple.

Do we feel abandoned and ignored by God? If we do, what is the starting point? It's not God's fault. Well the starting point is returning to a proper relationship with our Father in Heaven. It's a heart focused soul in His service through faith in Christ as our Saviour.

[13 : 32] Do we pray with a believing heart? With an expectation that God will deliver our requests? Or do we pray in desperation because all we have tried has failed and we have run out of alternatives?

All else has failed so we might as well try praying. An example would be we prayed this morning and this evening for renewal in the church.

And for the spread of the gospel amongst His young people. That it would see a growth across the world and especially here in Scotland. But do we expect it to happen?

Do we genuinely expect God to bring renewal to this nation and to His church when we pray it? Do we pray?

Do we pray?

[15 : 22] Do we pray in a renewal in your church? Do we really wish to see a revival across the land? The starting place must be within our own hearts.

We need as individuals to repent of our sins, our self-confidence and pride. Humbling ourselves to accept that it is by God's grace that we have been saved.

And it will be by God's grace, by His mercy and the moving of the Holy Spirit that His church will be renewed. We may be the workmen. We may be the workmen. But first we need to be attentive to God.

If we think of a tradesman. The tradesman does not create a great building by his individual desires or needs or ideas. He starts by ensuring that he is qualified for the job at hand.

Consulting the plans and the building instructions. He talks with the designer accepting that he is the person who will give him the direction to complete the great work.

[16 : 32] As it is the designer's creation and the designer's vision. So also it is with God and His plans for His church and its renewal.

We need to ensure we are qualified to do the task. We need to ensure our heart is right with God. That we have repented of our sins.

Accepted Christ as our Saviour. And are committed to His service. That we study His plan for man's redemption. By the study of His word and growing in our knowledge of the scriptures.

And that we are in communication with God through prayer. And by being open to the moving and directing of the Holy Spirit. As we prepare ourselves fully and open to God's involvement in our lives.

So God will hear us. He will hear our cry out to Him. And He will bring His renewal. This blessing of renewal was not just for God's people.

[17 : 39] It will bring blessings to all. We read in verse 15 to 17. Nations will fear the name of the Lord. And the kings of the earth will fear your glory.

For the Lord builds upon Zion. He appears in His glory. For He regards the prayer of the destitute. And does not despise their prayer. Fear in the first line of verse 15 means to have reverence. So it could be read as. Nations will have reverence for the name of the Lord. And all the kings of the earth will have reverence for your glory. The God of Abraham is once more fulfilling His promises. That through Israel, Abraham's descendants. The nations of the world will be blessed. They will see the power of God moving to restore and revive His people. And they give praise to His name and to God's glory. So too, if we have renewal in our spiritual life. It will flow out from us.

[18 : 46] To bring blessings to those around us. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit. And they're being renewed each day. To become ever more Christ-like in our walk with God.

It is not some invisible act. It is not something that won't be seen by others. It's not something hid from world view. It will bring renewed opportunities to witness for God. And to spread the gospel message. The rewriting of scripture to endorse man's sinful desires will be ended.

Jesus is the way and the truth and the life will be preached. And His commands shall be demonstrated in our living. Not reinterpret God's word to fit our lifestyles. We will be witnesses for Him. People will respond to the preaching of the gospel. And set Christ as their Saviour. Because the Holy Spirit goes before us to move folks' hearts.

[19 : 49] And to see the love of God in our lives. To see us demonstrating what we're preaching. And we cannot separate those two things. Verse 17 should bring joy to all our hearts.

The personal relationship with God is not just for the mighty and powerful. It's not just for kings and rulers. But it is for all. God hears the prayers of the destitute.

Those who have nothing. And He does not reject our prayers. If we think of the Jew in Babylon. He has nothing but what His captors permit Him.

He is homeless. And He is far from His homeland. And yet, God still hears His cry. So today, God hears whether we are the wealthy business tycoon, the landed gentry, or the poor struggling to make ends meet in these ever more challenging circumstances we face.

These events are to be celebrated and recorded so that people in the future will come to know of God's glory and His mercy to His people.

[21 : 04] In verses 18 to 20 we read, Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord, that He looked down from His holy height, from heaven the Lord looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die.

So God's glorious acts will be remembered. It will remind people that God is the same yesterday, today, and for eternity.

His loving nature, His desire for justice, and His power to bring it about, will never cease. It is unchanging, unlike the dithering of man who chops and changes his mind, uncertain where life is leading him, or how we should respond.

Should I do this? Should I do that? Who knows? No, God's way is certain and is sure. Remember. People remember how God looked down on His people, heard their plight, and to set free those who were sentenced to die.

Think back to the Babylonian exile. He had freed His people, brought them home to the promised land, that no more may die in captivity, in a foreign land.

[22 : 31] He had redeemed His people. He had brought them home. We see here also a likeness of His actions in the New Testament, in redeeming man who is doomed to death because of his sin, and is far from his rightful place with God.

God knew the consequences for man for his refusal to follow God's commands. Man had rebelled against God, man had sinned, and the consequences for sin is to be no longer in a proper relationship with God.

Our Heavenly Father. We, as fallen humans, are estranged from God, and ultimately face death and eternal separation from Him.

We cannot fulfil the law of God and walk in His ways. The demands of the law are too great for us to reach. The law simply shows our weaknesses and depravity, of how far we have strayed from God's ways.

But God still calls us to Him, and has given us a road to salvation, a lifeline that will bring us back to a right relationship with Him.

[23 : 43] That while once more create a union between us and our Creator, our Heavenly Father, God in His love gave us the gift of His Son, that His Son and Jesus Christ took on human form for all.

God became man, experienced life on earth, with all its trials and temptations, but remained sinless, that Jesus could pay the penalty of our sin, your sin and mine.

He came not just to teach us how to live a good life, that was not sufficient to overcome the penalty of sin. He came not just to teach a good life, He came to show us the way back to God.

He was no guru teaching the essentials of the ethical living, to give us harmony with the universe.

He came to restore us to eternal life with God, and to overcome death, the penalty of our sin.

So Jesus, the man who knew no sin, who had obeyed God, had done everything that God had asked of Him, substituted Himself for us.

[24 : 59] He took on our sin, and faced death in our place. He became sin, and was put to death on a cross, with all the humiliation and pain that entailed.

That He may fulfill His Father's will, to reunite man with God. As Jesus was sinless when He died for our sins, He paid the penalty for us.

But death could not hold Him, and on the third day, He was resurrected from the grave, and now intercedes for us before God. As He took our sin, so through being clothed and covered, in His righteousness, we are proclaimed sinless before God.

Through Christ, we can once more come before God. He's our intercessor. No need for priests or sacrifices, to please our God.

Jesus paid the price with His death, His sacrifice at Calvary. If you haven't received Christ yet, if you haven't taken Him as your Saviour, He still waits.

[26 : 15] Ask, and He will come into your life, and once more, reunite you through faith in Him, with your Heavenly Father. The final two verses of tonight's portion of the Psalm, verses 21 and 22, summarise the joy that people will bring to the Lord, when they see His glory.

And still the same for folk coming to faith, through our Lord Jesus today. It reads, that they may declare in Zion the name of the Lord, and in Jerusalem His praise, when peoples gather together, in kingdoms to worship the Lord.

Those of us who know the glory of the Lord, the wonders of His creation, the greatness of His sacrifice, in offering His Son for our redemption, and of the grace and mercies that God has shown to us in our lives, we cry out with praise, we cry out with joy and celebration, at what He has done for us.

We worship His holy name, the mercy God has shown to His people, He still shows to those who truly seek Him. Accept Christ as your Saviour, and you can share in His grace.

But it is not God who condemns us, as we learn in John 3, but us who condemn ourselves, by the rejection of Christ as our Saviour. Let's pray.

[27 : 47] Father, we thank You, that You are with us throughout the ages, from the beginning of time, since You created man, You have been with us.

You have a desire, to have a relationship with us, even when we rebel against You. We give You thanks, for the joy, and realisation that we have, in accepting Christ as our Saviour.

How it has brought us into, a relationship with You, that grows closer each day. For those who have yet to, come into a personal relationship with You Lord, we ask that You pour out Your grace upon them.

that Your Holy Spirit, will move their hearts, and they will accept Christ, as their Saviour. That they will know Him personally, and that through Him, their sins are forgiven, and they once more, can be in union with You.

These things we ask, through Christ our Lord and Saviour, Your Son. Amen. Amen. Let's close our worship this evening, with Psalm 102, and we'll sing the chapter, or the verses that cover the chapter, we're reading this evening.

[29 : 11] So we'll sing from verse 12, to verse 22. And that's from Sing Psalms, so page 133. Psalm 102, verses 12 to 22.

Amen. Amen. Amen.