

PM Psalm 102 Certainty with God

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[0 : 00] Psalm 102 and in the sermon tonight we'll look at the last part of it but again we'll just read the whole psalm so that we've got the the whole picture before us. So Psalm 102 Hear my prayer O Lord, let my cry come to you. Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress. Incline your ear to me, answer me speedily in the day which 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 of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places. I lie awake, I am like a lonely sparrow on 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 and 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.

[1 : 56] He regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer. Let this be recorded for a generation to come. So that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.

That he'll 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 they may declare in Zion the name of the Lord. And in Jerusalem his praise. When people gather together in kingdoms to worship the Lord. He has broken my strength in midcourse. He has shortened my days. O my God I say. Take me not away in the midst of my days. You whose years endure throughout all generations. Of old you laid the foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the work of your hands. 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.

[3 : 01] 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.

This is the part of Psalm 102. So we're going to look at the third part of it. In the first part we looked at the Psalmist's cry to his God.

That he would hear his prayers. And the Psalm begins with a plea from a man in trouble. A man in desperate straits. And in verses 3 to 11 we see the Psalmist's condition.

They give us an insight to the feelings of the Psalmist. As he feels separated from God. In verses 6 to 8 we see the exclusion and loneliness that the Psalmist felt.

And the ridicule he faced by his enemies. I am like a desert owl of the wilderness. Like an owl of the waste places. I lie awake. I am like a lonely sparrow of the housetop.

[4 : 03] All the day my enemies taunt me. And those who deride me use my name for a curse. So we see the loneliness and the derision from his enemies.

But we also see the image of him seeing himself as being outside of society. Because the owl in Leviticus is listed as an unclean bird.

So he is outside of society. In the second portion of the Psalm we see the glory of God as the Psalmist sings his praises.

And God brings renewal. And looked at this in relation to the returning of his people from exile. In verses 12 and 13. But you O Lord are enthroned forever.

You are remembered throughout all generations. You will arise and have pity on Zion. It is time to favour her. The appointed time has come. So in reviving the fortunes of his people Israel.

[5 : 01] He brings about the restoration that the nation so desired. And that restoration required repentance of not just the society.

But of individuals within their own hearts. And we looked at the need to cleanse our own hearts of sin. And be accepting of the grace of God. If we wish to see renewal in our church.

Both at our local level and across the nations. That we are the starting blocks to renewal and revival.

Is central. God is eternal and unchanging. He is the keeper of his promises. But we must humble ourselves before him. And accept him as our saviour.

As God brought his people out of bondage in Egypt and in Babylon. So he gave his son to free us of the bondage of sin. And the consequences of death through our sin.

[5 : 59] In verses 19 and 20. Last week we read. 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.

Tonight we hear the voice of the psalmist once more. And in this part of the psalm. He appears to be doing a resume of the psalm to date.

His prayer links back to the psalm's beginning. And then the psalmist recounts God's glory. And unchanging nature. Closing with the security of future generations.

Who are in the service of God. One point to note though. Is that at several stages. The words which the psalmist uses. Are used elsewhere. Later in scripture.

Verse 23 and 24. Begin the section. He has broken my strength in mid course. He has shortened my days. Oh my God I say.

[6 : 59] Take me not away in the midst of my days. You whose years endure throughout all generations. In verse 13.

He restates his condition. Sorry. So in verses 3 to 11. He restates his condition.

About knowing God's wrath. He was broken or afflicted. He was humbled. And his strength was taken away in mid course.

His days were shortened. God has reduced his life expectancy. He fears that the end is nigh. And pleads with God for extension to his life.

This ultimately was central to his prayers. And cry to God. In verses 1 to 3 of the psalm. Hear my prayer oh Lord. Let my cry come to you.

[7 : 57] Do not hide your face from me. In the day of my distress. Incline your ear to me. Answer me speedily. In the day when I call. For my days pass away like smoke. So the psalmist sees his days disappearing before him.

Present one moment and then gone. Like smoke in the breeze. We see similar wording in Isaiah 38. In verse 10. Here. Hezekiah the king of Judah.

Is sick. And Isaiah has told him. From God that he would not recover. But Isaiah is unaware of how Hezekiah will react.

Hezekiah repents. And pleads with God for forgiveness. And a continuation of life. God in his mercy. Agreed to extend his life by 15 years.

Because of the sincerity of his repentance. For his sin. And to deliver the nation. Which was at risk of falling into Syrian hands. To deliver the nation of Israel.

[9 : 05] From Syria. To make sure they were not a conquered nation. And once Hezekiah had recovered. He wrote. In verse 10. I said in the middle of my days.

I must depart. I am consigned to the gates of Shoal. For the rest of my years. So he repeats the words of the psalmist. Highlighting how insignificant.

His plans were before God. He had seen a longer time for himself. As king. But God had decided otherwise. This temporary darkening of the whole scene.

After the exultant praises of verse 12 to 22. Allows the final four and a half verses of the psalm. To stand out in all their magnificence.

The psalmist also compares his finite and limited days. With God's endless existence. You whose years endured throughout all generations.

[10 : 05] So. We have the psalmist. Worried about impending death. And God cutting short his days. But he realises. That God is forever.

And will endure through all generations. And this goes back to verse 12. Of the second portion of the psalm. We see it reflecting verse 12. Where it said. But you O Lord are enthroned forever. You are remembered throughout all generations. And as we have sung this evening. In Psalm 100. Of the Scottish Psalter. We know that the Lord is God indeed. Without our aid he did his work. God is our creator and our saviour. He created us without our aid. And to redeem us 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 a God of salvation. And this theme continues.

[11:05] Through verses 25 to 27. Where we read. Of old you laid the foundation of the earth. And heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish but you will remain.

They will all 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. So the eternity of God is emphasised.

First in that he laid the foundations of the earth. The heavens are the work of your hands. God existed before the dawn of creation. Before the measure of time.

He cannot be dated. These creative things will pass away. But God will remain. His years have no end. Heaven and earth are compared to a garment.

That will wear out. We have a new shirt. Or a new clothes. We wear them to church on the Sunday. And we look good in them. They become tired after a time. And they become work clothes.

[12:07] And eventually they are discarded. They are no use. But not our God. He doesn't fade with time. He is endless. And will be for eternity.

There is no end to God's existence. It is for eternity. It is the same for the beginning of time. As today, tomorrow and in the future.

The passage is also quoted in Hebrews 1 to 10. Sorry, Hebrews 1, 10 to 12. And it is applied directly to Jesus Christ. The writer to Hebrews writes.

We read. Your Lord laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning. And the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment.

Like a robe you will roll them up. Like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same. And your years will have no end. So here we, the psalmist reminds us of the eternal link between God the Father and God the Son.

[13:17] They have always been and always will be. They coexist. Jesus is the Son of God. Is God. And he is the same from generation to generation. As you have seen this week's leaders come and leaders go.

Political and military powers rise and fall. The Lord is the same throughout time. And he never abdicates. He is no earthly king.

He has a plan for humanity. Which he is bringing to completion. And which he will complete in his time. Not in ours. Do you have faith in this plan for eternity?

Or do you still hold faith in the ability of man to build a better future? That man in his own plans will make things better? To date, a man's record is not too good.

To quote a man of writings. Burns writes and a man's a man for all that. That man to man the world or shall brothers be for all that.

[14:24] Given an idea that brothers will come together. And humanity will live in peace. Unfortunately, some 225 years later.

We still commit atrocity after atrocity against their fellow man. For personal and national profit. Or because we fear the difference between us.

Because we fear the stranger. These verses and their use in relation to Christ in Hebrews 1-10. Remind us that it is through Christ that God's promises will be fulfilled.

In the Old Testament, God keeps his covenant with his people. He permits them to be persecuted and harassed by foreign forces. Such as the Philistines when the people of Israel ignore his teachings.

And pursue their own goals in their own ways. He permits them to be subjects of bondage. When they would rather depend on political pacts. With powerful neighbours than rely on the power of God.

[15:32] But when they repent with a true and heavy heart. He hears them and he restores them. In Christ, we see not a shadow of God's salvation for his people.

Or the blessings of nations. Those of those around us. We see the full power of God's grace. And his ability to bring man to salvation.

Through faith in Christ alone. In the reading of Hebrews, it is God speaking. The Heavenly Father replying to his Son. Through whom all things were made.

The final verse brings us to the fore. Brings to the fore. The future of those who are in union with God. Through faith in Christ. And we touched on that this morning.

About Jesus being divine. And if we abide in Jesus. Then Jesus will abide in us. But here the psalmist writes.

[16 : 33] The children of your servants shall dwell secure. Their offspring shall be established before you. God will be the Lord of generations.

Yet to come. And reflects in the earlier psalms. If we are in Christ. And abide in him. Our future is secure. God will tend us.

And the Holy Spirit will guide us. To bear spiritual fruits. If we are not in Christ. We will be like the unfruitful branches. We will be cut out.

Thrown away. And destroyed. God will be for generations yet to come. And that's reflected.

In verse 18. Let this be a record for a generation to come. So that people yet to be created. May praise the Lord. In this praise this evening.

[17 : 34] We have tried to make that central. That we should be praising the Lord. That by praising the Lord. We give him glory.

And that is one of the spiritual fruits. That we should serve him. And bring glory to his name. Let us pray.