

Restore and Revive Us, O God of Our Salvation

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[0:00] This morning we're going to be in Psalm 85. Psalm 85. Psalm page 626 of the Bible in your pew. Am I right about that? No, the pew Bible.

! Or you can turn to page 380 of the Psalter. And follow along there as well. If you remember last week we went through, we preached through Psalm 71.

And I said this then, I want to repeat it. The Psalms are a divine human encounter. It's a conversation between God and his people.

And it's not just any kind of conversation. In the Psalms we see a direct, intense, intimate, and above all, honest conversation between God's people and God.

And this is how Trepulungman wrote a commentary on the Psalms put it. He says the Psalms are a literary, not literal, literary sanctuary in the Scripture.

[1:30] What he's saying actually is that if you look at the Bible, the Psalms are smack that in the middle. And he's describing the fact that the placement of the Psalms in our Bible and the fact that it has been used by God's covenant people throughout history.

It's a literary sanctuary. It is a place where God's people come to commune with their God. And I want you to see that as well.

Every time you open your Bible, I'm going to repeat it again. All of God's Word from Genesis to Revelation is God-breathed.

It's instructive for teaching and rebuking and for growing in righteousness. All of that is true. The Psalms, especially, this allows us to have this encounter with our God.

And it is an honest and intimate encounter. And we should see it as that, as a place where we can come and commune with God. It's like a sanctuary, a place where God meets His people in a special way.

[2:41] And our Psalm today, Psalm 85, is one of those. It's especially if you're going to categorize the Psalm. They all have different categories.

This would be a Psalm of lament. It's a corporate lament. Of God's people. You guys know what lament is.

Lament is to come in sorrow, in anguish, to call upon God. Out of the depth of your sorrow and lack, to look to God and to call upon God.

That's what lament is. Sometimes it's a response to a tragedy. Sometimes it's a response to feeling despair or helpless. And this Psalm is that.

It's an invocation. It's a plea to God for help. It is also, in ways, a complaint to God. The Psalm is motivated by the trouble he's in, and he's complaining to God.

[3:45] It's also a confession. Lament of an hour. A confession to God. And sometimes in the lament, you can see the Psalm is cry out to God, but also reiterate his confidence in God, in God's response to him.

We're going to see all of those aspects in this Psalm. So, and the situation of the Psalm, it's likely this is one of the Psalms that were in after the exile, after the captivity in Babylon.

This is a post-exilic Psalm that was written. If you see there in the beginning of the Psalm, it says it is to the choir master, a Psalm of the sons of Korah.

The sons of Korah were like caretakers of the temple. There were Levites, and their main job was to take care of the temple.

And they wrote a lot of Psalms. And a lot of their Psalms are some of the post-exilic Psalms. This one is likely, now it's very likely that it's after the captivity of Babylon.

[4:53] Israel, the people of Israel have come back into Jerusalem, and they are trying to live, to restart, to build a temple, to build the walls, and they are being besieged on every side by the

enemy of God's people.

And they're crying out to God. They were facing lack. They were facing turmoil. They were facing deprivation. And in the midst of that, they cry out to God.

And it starts off by looking back. The psalmist begins by recounting God's past restoration of Israel after he has punished the unfaithfulness.

Remember that Israel, for a huge portion of its history under the kings, a lot of our kings were unfaithful to God.

Not just the kings. The people themselves were unfaithful. They were turning to other gods, turning to idols. And God sent prophets upon prophets upon prophets to call them back to himself. They refused.

[6:00] And God punished them by sending Assyria to the ten northern tribes and then sending Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to Judah.

And they were taken into exile. They were taken into exile from the promised land. And now they've returned.

And the psalmist is thinking back to their rescue, to God's faithfulness. He says, Lord, you were favorable to your land. You restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of your people. You covered all their sin. You withdrew all your wrath. You turned away from your hot anger.

Notice there in verse 2, that word *selah* at the end of verse 2. It's actually meant for us to pause and meditate on that statement. You forgive the iniquity of your people.

[7:03] You covered all their sin. Pause. Think about that, what God has done. To rebellious Israel, in saving them and bringing them back.

It requires forgiveness. He was favorable to them. He forgave them. He covered their sin. He withdrew his wrath. His just wrath.

He turned away from his anger. Can you identify with that? Do you have a history of God? Do you have a history of God forgiving your iniquity?

Your sins? Has he covered all your sins up? As he withdrew his wrath, his righteous, just wrath from you? Has he turned away from his hard anger over you?

If you're in Christ, this is the state that you can identify with Israel here. You can identify with the psalmist, the sons of Korah, as they write this and as they pray this.

[8:07] You were favorable to us, Lord. You've forgiven us our iniquity. And if you're here and you're in Christ, you were a sinner saved by grace.

That's what it means to be part of the body of Christ. All of us, we have one thing in common. We were sinners. We are sinners. And we've been saved. We've been redeemed. Christ has covered all our sins.

He's withdrew his wrath from us. Christ has turned from his righteous hard anger towards us. So what do you do in such a circumstance?

Remember that I'm saying that this psalm is a lament. But it first looks back to God's faithfulness. That is informative for us.

It looks back to God's righteous and great deliverance of his people. And this could be true for God redeeming his people from exile in Babylon.

[9:12] But it's also true at every point of Israel's history. And it's also true at every point of our history. That this is the God we serve.

This is his character. He's a deliverer. He's a savior. He forgives sins. He has forgiven our sin. Of course, as we read it, we can only read it in Christ.

We identify what Christ has really done. In the fact that he is covered. Those words are informative and really important for us as Christians. He's covered all our sins.

He's atoned. That's where we get our doctrine of atonement from. Christ Jesus has atoned for our sins. Not only that.

God has withdrew and turned from his anger towards us. Christ Jesus is the propitiation. Meaning that he has satisfied God's anger towards us.

[10:16] So God in his just anger has turned his anger from us. Because Christ is the propitiation for our sins. Christ. So we recognize this.

We can identify with this as Christians. But what do you do in such a circumstance? How do we respond though? Even though we know God has been faithful in the past. There are present

It starts first by people recognizing their need for God. Not on the count of their specialness. But on the count of who God is.

[16 : 35] And crying out. Out of the depth of their heart. Crying out for mercy. This is what the psalmist is doing here. Crying out for mercy. Crying out that God will be.

Show his love towards his people. That's the cry of revival. Crying out and confessing our sins. Surrendering ourselves to God. That's how revival happens.

And then when revival happens in the household of God. Then the world sees it. Revival happens. Our lives are changed.

Our actions are changed. The way we relate to one another is changed. We now look to one another as the people of God. We relate to one another as the people of God.

We. We. By the power of the Holy Spirit. By his reviving us. Are able to be faithful to God. Live. In covenant faithfulness with God. The world at large sees that.

[17 : 31] And they turn. It is the revival that happens in the church. That the world sees. And then they turn to God. And the revival starts in the church. And then the world sees it. But revival is not something that happens.

Outside there. So let's keep praying for revival. But let us understand that when we pray for that. We're asking God to revive us. To revive us. And when he does.

The world will see it. And the world will turn. Because we're now being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ. To the world around us. And that's what the psalmist is praying for here. Revive us again.

Restore us again. Revive us again. It is like in Psalm 126. The psalmist remembers. When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion. And we were like those who dream.

The psalmist says then. Then our mouth was filled with laughter. And our tongues with shouts of joy. This is what the psalmist is praying for. That God will restore this.

[18 : 30] So that their mouths will be filled with laughter. And their tongues with shouts of joy. So you see here. The psalmist remembers in the past. God's faithfulness. Cries out to God.

That God will restore them. On the basis of God's steadfast love. And then in verse 8 to 9. The psalmist asked to hear what God will say. In the future.

When he rescues his people. In verse 8. And in verse 9. He expresses hope. In God's loyalty. To his faithful people. It's a cry.

It says here. Let me hear what God the Lord will speak. It says in verse 8. For he will speak peace to his people. To his sins. But let them not turn back to folly.

Surely. His salvation is near to those who fear him. That glory may dwell in our land. The psalmist here. Knows the God to whom he cries out to.

[19 : 31] And he's looking forward. Anticipating. Not only does he look back. In gratitude. And hope. And that the remembrance of God's faithfulness.

Gives him hope for the future. And he's so much so that he cries out to God. But it's now. He's cried out to God. Now he's waiting. Waiting.

On God's promises. Remember again. We've talked about people who wait. And what it is to wait upon God. It's not a passive thing. When we wait on God. It's an active. Anticipatory waiting.

That's what the psalmist is doing here. In verse 8 and 9. He's longing and looking forward. To the salvation that is going to come. Because he knows his God is faithful. I hope that as we think about that.

Waiting. You're thinking of. A few Sundays ago. When we talk about. Characters in the Bible. Like Simeon. And Anna. Who waited. For the promise of God. Who were longing.

[20 : 29] Actively. For God's purposes to be fulfilled. That is what the people of God do. So as we petition God. We wait in hope. We are hopeful people.

I've said that. This is a prayer of lament. But I hope you see that even in this prayer. It's even in the lament. It's full of hope.

Why does. Where does the hope come from. For the psalmist here. It comes from a rock solid knowledge of this God. Knowing who his God is.

Knowing what. Woman is he's praying to. So he says. Surely. You will speak peace. To your people. He will speak peace to his people.

To his saints. What is the word. The word peace here. Is what we're familiar with. The word shalom. It is not just the absence. Of conflict.

[21:27] It is. It's a wholeness. God will speak peace. And it's. And that peace comes. As the psalmist rightly says here. It comes from God.

He is the one that speaks peace. To us. The peace that comes. The shalom of God. Is not something that we can manufacture. No man can manufacture it.

He alone speaks peace. And that's why the psalmist is it. We wait. We long. Hopefully for our God. To speak peace to his people.

And then in verse 10 to 13. These verses. Talks about God's faithfulness. And it talks about how Israel now. Because God has spoken peace to his people.

Israel itself will be faithful to the Lord. And the Lord will love Israel. Look in verse 10 to 13. As he looks forward.

[22:26] This is the picture that he sees. That he longs for. This is. This is what the shalom will look like. Steadfast love. And faithfulness meet. Righteousness and peace.

Kiss each other. Faithfulness springs up from the ground. And righteousness looks. Down from the sky. Yes. The Lord will give what is good. And our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him. And make his footsteps. Footsteps away. We're more familiar with the King James version of this. And it's in the version in our Psalter.

Mercy and truth. Are met together. Remember we talked about steadfast love. Includes not just love. But it's covenant faithfulness. It's mercy.

It's grace. Kindness. Loyalty. Mercy and truth are met together. Righteousness and peace. Kiss each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth.

[23:26] Look at the language there. The imagery. Truth shall spring out from the earth. And righteousness shall look down from heaven. The Lord shall give that which is good.

And our land will increase. What does that look like? I want to tell you that what's described in verse 10 to 13 is something that we can only enjoy if we're part of God's kingdom.

Right? We can only enjoy it. We can only have access to it if we're in the kingdom of God. And truly, the full ramification, the full consummation of this will not come until Christ returns in glory.

But we don't have to wait until then. There is this notion that because we're part, we're in Christ, we're citizens of God's kingdom, we enjoy the benefits of this.

Even in the midst of this broken and falling world, we enjoy the fruits of and the benefits of this kingdom. We will enjoy it in full when our Lord and Savior returns.

[24:43] But we don't have to wait until then. Because we have the Holy Spirit and we have communion with God the Father in Christ, we get to enjoy it. And this is what the psalmist is looking at.

So steadfastness, love and faithfulness meet. Righteousness and peace. Now, as you read that, who is the embodiment of that? Jesus Christ our Lord.

Because righteousness and peace definitely does not kiss each other in us without Christ. Steadfast love and faithfulness does not meet in any country of the world or any society on this earth.

The world is looking for things like this. They're searching. In their exploit, they're trying to manufacture steadfast love and faithfulness for it to meet.

Righteousness and peace to kiss each other. But it's futile. It is futile. We know this. It's not just now. It's always been futile.

[25:45] Human effort to obtain what is described here is impossible without God. This is especially why we needed a Savior.

And that Savior came in Jesus Christ. And in Him, in Him, we have steadfast love and faithfulness meeting. We have righteousness and peace kissing each other.

Faithfulness springs up from the ground. Righteousness is looked down from the side. The Lord gives what is good in Jesus Christ to His people. Righteousness will go before Him, make His footsteps away.

In Christ, we have all of this as our possession. Outside of Christ, we cannot attain it.

This is why the cry of our heart should be like the psalmist. When we cry out in hope. Petitioning God. We're crying out.

[26:47] Again, the cry of the psalmist is the cry in the Lord's prayer. May your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. This is what we're crying for.

And may your kingdom come on earth. In your church. Among your people. Revive us, Lord. So that we will reflect your kingdom in this world.

Restore us again, Lord. This is because of your steadfast love. It is the cry of God's people. Let it be the cry of our heart.

Because we know our God. We know His faithfulness. He's the same God that says to His people in 2 Chronicles. We're familiar with this passage. If my people who are called by my name. Will humble themselves.

And pray and seek my face. And turn. And turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven. And will forgive their sin. And heal their land.

[27:49] I hope you feel that phrase of land is here in verse 85. Heal the land. You are the Lord.

It says in the beginning of verse. Lord, you are favorable to your land. And then it goes on. And it talks about later on in the psalm. Steadfast love shall meet.

And in verse 12. Yes, the Lord will give what is good. And our land will yield its increase. I want to say. What is the land there that is referred to?

For the Israelites. The land. The Canaan land. The promised land. Was wrapped up in God's promises to them. It wasn't just a physical space.

It was a spiritual space. And we see that in Deuteronomy 28 to 30. God's promise of his abiding presence with them.

[28:47] As long as they're faithful. As long as they seek him. As long as they cry out to him. That he will continue to nourish them. That the land will yield its increase.

That they will have peace in the land. That they will flourish in the land. But what happens when they disobey God? When they reject God? When they break covenant? God promises them.

The result of that is that you will have trouble in the land. The land will not yield its increase. And then God tells them. If you persist in continually breaking covenant.

Not only will they. I will actually remove you from the land. And that's what God did. To Israel. But he restored them. He restored them back to the land.

Where is the land for us as the people of God? I want to say something to you. The land. It's not the United States of America. The land is not Great Britain.

[29:49] The land is not any nation on this earth. For the people of God. We are citizens of God's kingdom. Now that does not mean that we don't pray for our country.

That doesn't mean that we don't seek the well-being of our country. That does not mean that we don't even call our country back to God. This country was founded on Christian ideals and Christian principles.

It is a good and great thing that it was so. The fact that our nation is moving away from those foundational ideals is why we are having problems.

And we see it all around us. But nevertheless, even though I've said all that, the United States is not the promised land that we Christians should look forward to.

And I think oftentimes we are, I understand when we see the world around us, when we see our nation around us, we're gripped with longing for the land, our nation.

[30:50] I'm talking about our country to turn back to God. But we might fall into the trap of placing our hope and our longing and our expectation in the wrong place when you place it in our nation, in our earthly citizenship.

What God calls us is to place our hope and our longing and our expectation in Christ Jesus and in the kingdom that is established.

And I want to say to us that if we do that, if we do that, then we are better witnesses to the land to which we're earthly citizens of.

When we look to the kingdom of God. But when we do it in reverse, when we look and we place expectations in the earthly nation, we're tempted to turn our focus away from our primary citizenship.

We're tempted to turn our focus from our primary Lord and King. And we're tempted towards the path of idolatry.

[32:09] It's not dissimilar to what Israel did. It's not so much that they turn away from the land that God has given them, but that they turn away from the God who gave them the land.

And when we do that, when we look around to other nations. In fact, this might be hard for us here. When we overemphasize earthly kingdoms over against the kingdom that God has brought us into. It is a form of idolatry. Because we're not looking to Christ Jesus, the King to which we hold obedience and allegiance first and foremost.

But if we do look to Jesus, this is my charge for us this morning. If we look to Jesus, if we look to Him and hope and have faith in a steadfast love for us, we're able to be better witnesses in the country, whatever nation that you're in, whatever area God has placed you.

If we look to God, we're able to be better witnesses of that kingdom. God revives us. And we are better witnesses of His kingdom to the world around us.

[33:20] Who's looking? They are looking as well. The cry of their heart is for that kingdom. And so, here is the cry of the psalmist. I want us to adopt this psalm, a lament.

But it's a lament of hope. It's a lament of expectation. Let us have the same cry. And then let's look to God in verse 10 to 13.

The promise of His restoration is there. That He will restore us. That He will restore us in such a way that in Christ, faithfulness, righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Faithfulness will spring from the ground and righteousness will look down from the sky. This is our hope. So that no matter what happens, no matter where this nation goes, or the nations of the earth goes, or the nations that collude in the rebellion against God and His kinship and lordship, as we remain steadfast, we can know with a rock-solid faith, no matter what the present circumstance is, this we can never lose hope.

We cannot give in to despair. Because this is our lot. As long as we're in Christ Jesus, we have the assurance that this is the kingdom that Christ has placed us in, and He will come to complete that which He has started.

[34:46] Let us pray. Lord God, we thank you for this psalm. We thank you, Lord, for the fact that you are the Lord who restores.

You are the Lord who revives. It is only in you that we can have peace. Help us, Lord, to remember rightly your faithfulness in the past so that we may have hope for our present circumstance so that we may cry out petitioning you for your presence, for your intervention in our world and in our lives and in your church.

And help us, Lord, even as we cry out to have rock-solid confidence in the fact that you are God who is a covenant-keeping God who will accomplish that which you have said in your word.

And help us to wait, longing, active waiting, looking forward to the completion of that which you have started among your people. Lord, we know that we can only do this by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Empower us, Lord, we pray. In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.