

All Creation Sings

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Preacher: Leroy Coote

[0 : 00] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 17th of September 2000. The preacher is Leroy Coote.

His sermon is entitled All Creation Sings and is based on Psalm 98. Please be seated.

And if you could open your Bibles to Psalm 98, which is found on page 480 of your pew Bibles.

And before we start to look at it, let me pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and the impact it's had on our lives. We ask that you would speak to us today, speak to our listening hearts, speak through me clearly.

And we ask as a result of today, Lord, that our lives will be challenged and our lives will be changed by your word. And we pray this in your son's great name. Amen. Well, how do we respond to someone who's done something good for us?

[1 : 14] Do we just say thanks and keep living our normal lives? As if that good thing never actually happened. Do we just expect good things to happen just like that?

Do we even say thanks for the good things that happen? If someone saves our life, how thankful are we? Do we praise them for who they are?

Let alone for what they've done for us. In fact, do we forget about them? Many Australians say they believe in God.

But do they respond to him in a way that is fitting to what he has done? Do they also respond in a way that acknowledges who he really is?

Most Australians sadly think God is a swear word. And in fact, that's their opinion of him. In terms of how we should respond to God, Psalm 98 gives us an example.

[2 : 24] Not only that, it gives us an example of what God has done. And what God has done actually starts this psalm.

The psalm starts in verse 1 with the words, O sing to the Lord a new song. That start was the same as what was on last week, in last week's passage, in Psalm 96.

But why is a new song being sung here by the psalmist? For he has done marvellous things. God has done marvellous things for the people the psalmist is writing to.

But what are those things? The first one is victory. In the second part of verse 1 we see his right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.

When a new song is sung in ancient Israel, that is to proclaim victory. In this case, the victory that has been achieved has been achieved by the right hand and the holy arm of the Lord.

[3 : 43] Right throughout the Bible, any association with right hand usually refers to the work of God or God's work by the people of God.

There are numerous instances of this right hand image throughout the Bible. One example that comes to mind is in the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25.

In this parable, God's people are on his right hand and those who aren't God's people are on his left. Those on his right hand will inherit the kingdom of God.

That's the great victory that God is alluding to here in this passage. The victory of God's people. So what? God has got this victory.

What happens now? When you get a victory, or let's say your football team gets a victory, you don't keep it quiet, do you?

[4 : 47] During the year when your football team beats your friend's football team, you generally make it known very clearly that his football team lost.

Victories are not meant to be quiet. Even though, might I add, living pretty close to the Essendon area, we have not heard very much about their grand final victory after the first week.

Must be very important then. But God makes known his victory. He makes known his victory in verse 2. But victory also implies that someone is defeated.

We also find out in verse 2 who's been defeated. In the line, he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. The nations were the defeated ones.

The nations were enemies of God. The reason they were enemies of God was because they worshipped idols and not him. They also tried to take control of God's people and lure him, them, I mean, God's people away from him.

[6 : 03] His victory also involved revealing something. In that case, that something is his vindication. vindication. But what is this vindication that God is revealing?

His vindication has effects for two people, for God's people and his enemies. He's first of all revealed it to his enemies.

The nations and their idols have not conquered God. They have not met God's standard. They are not in a right relationship with God.

That's what vindication is. Vindication is being restored to a right relationship with God. And the result of God's vindication for the nations is that they will be punished.

But on the other side, who gets the good things of God's vindication? Another way of putting it, who gets the spoils of God's victory?

[7 : 11] Verse 3 tells us that God has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. This is another of his marvellous works that are alluded to in the first part of verse 1.

His marvellous work here is his vindication of his people. God has brought his people back to him. This means that God has cleared his people from the punishment of their sins. The people of God have been vindicated by God's standards and the idolatrous nations haven't. And he's done that out of his love and faithfulness to his people.

He's devoted to his people. They need to be punished for their sinfulness. But when the punishment was sufficient, he brought them back to him.

He rescued them. He rescued them from the idolatrous nations. in essence, the fact that God remembers his people is a reason for a new victory song to be sung by the people of Israel.

[8 : 32] God has been faithful to the covenant promises he has made to his people, especially the covenant promise of I will be their God and they will be my people. Punished when disobeyed, rescued when the punishment was sufficient, in remembering them and rescuing them, God has vindicated his people.

He's done this out of love. The marvellous works in the first three verses can be summed up in the phrase, God's victory for his people.

It's been seen by all the ends of the earth as seen in the last part of verse three. It's through God's mercy, through his generosity that his people have vindicated.

He punishes in a way that fits the crime. In the case of the nations, his punishment was by victory over them because of their idolatrousness.

people. But in terms of his people, he allows them back into his house. This vindication of being made right with God in God's eyes is available for us today and is summarised for us in the words of Romans 3.

[9 : 57] For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and have vindicated freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. That's the victory that God wants us to give him praise about.

So how are we to praise the one who has done these marvellous things? Look at verse 4. It starts off by saying make a joyful noise to the Lord.

And who's to do that? All the earth. Not just God's people but the nations as well. But the type of noise is to be a joyous one.

It's joyous because it's a response to God's marvellous work. That is his victory. It should not be a quiet celebration. It should exude joy.

A joy for all the earth to participate in. But then it says break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

[11 : 07] In other words it's saying don't hold back. Let your joy come out. Let it be natural. For example, I'm sure many of you here were watching the 4x100 metre freestyle relay last night.

Hands up if you didn't. There are a few. What was happening was the crowd was cheering quite loudly right throughout the race.

So were lounge rooms, so were bars, places where gatherings of people were watching this. and then all of a sudden Ian Thorpe touched the touchpad that registered victory.

Almost instantly the noise in the stadium increased about 300 fold depending on how loud you had your TV.

people in lounge rooms were getting really excited. I know I was. I nearly jumped off the lounge in excitement through the roof. That's how excited I was.

[12:15] But it's that instant, that moment when that joy just increased. And it's that time of God's victory when he's made that victory very clear to us.

It's a time of victory. It's a time of celebration. God's vindication is a time of victory that should keep continuing. But how should we be doing that?

We should be giving the victory to him. We need to extol his virtues because it's his work that's done this. We need to proclaim the one that's done these marvellous works.

We need to praise the one who gives victory to his people. And they're joyful praises to the God who's done these works. We need to praise his character.

We need to praise the fact that he's vindicated us for his steadfast love and his faithfulness. Three things that come out of the first three verses. We need to praise the fact that he's been merciful to us and the fact that we've been made righteous by God.

[13:30] We should be excited about it. We should sing about it joyfully amongst the whole earth. We should sing to the Lord because of what he's done and who he is.

the song is spelled L-I-R-E not L-I-A-R. The lyre is a harp-like instrument that is held with the left hand and played with the right hand.

But what's interesting to note about that is how the harp is played with one's right hand. God's marvellous work of verses 1 to 3 was completed with his right hand and it's important to note the connection God's work done with his right hand our response should be the way he wants it to be but also with the sound of melody a tuneful sound that is made in celebration to God but one that brings praise to the Lord not only does this celebration need to bring praise to the Lord it does also need to be one of victory and victory symbolised by the use of the trumpet and horn in verse 6 back in ancient Israel they allowed instruments and they were blown to signify victory and because of their loudness they were heard right throughout all the earth an example of this occurred in 1 Samuel 13 which reads

Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba and the Philistines heard of it and Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land saying let the Hebrews hear therefore the celebration of praise that takes place must be a joyful proclamation of victory and who's the sound to acknowledge?

have a look at the end of verse 6 the Lord, the King the Lord's the one who's provided the victory why? because he's the King of the earth and because he's King he's King of the earth he's able to provide his marvellous works those marvellous works are his victory the victory God has gotten us must be celebrated by his people and how are we to celebrate this?

[16:12] by acknowledging his attributes acknowledge the characteristics that bring about his victory his love his faithfulness to his people his vindication these are the characteristics of the Lord the Lord who is the object of praise in verses 4 to 6 of this psalm by singing praise to God by acknowledging his marvellous attributes we go a long way to fulfilling the call of this passage however we need not only to praise God's attributes we need to give praise for what he's done in this case his marvellous victorious works it's not enough to say that God is good but we need to sing the fact that God is victorious over ones who have disobeyed him and do it before him because of this victory all the earth is to come before him and acknowledge him as King similarly because of what he has done through Jesus we need to come before him and acknowledge him as Lord and King our whole lives should therefore be focused on celebrating what God has done now sometimes this can be hard if you think that God's not giving you a fair go it can be awfully hard to sing praises to the Lord if you're having a hard time they can weigh you down and I acknowledge people are having hard times but what we need to sing about despite the hard times we're going through is the saving work that God has done through Jesus we wouldn't be here celebrating with each other otherwise would we it is God's saving work that's brought us here it's God's saving work that has brought many of our friends to become Christians and that's what we need to sing about and I can tell you what's worth singing about in the end what these first six verses are telling us is that we should sing about God's rescue

God's victory in a way that not only gives praise for the victory but also gives praise to the victor this celebration is not confined to human beings it's not confined to people meeting in churches it's expanded in this psalm to creation have a look at verses 7 and 8 let the sea roar and all that fills it the world and those who live in it let the floods clap their hands let the hills sing together for joy this is a fantastic scene a roaring sea a loud crashing of water onto the beach it's an even better scene when you're looking out over Port Phillip Bay and seeing some of the water crashing flowing through and the boats etc in it all the creatures of creation are getting excited in a way that God had intended all the fish under the sea all the plants under the sea are getting excited but not only that all those who live in the world that's us will get excited as well get as excited as the roaring seas but also floods getting excited clapping their hands in excitement meeting together and crashing into each other in a thunderous fashion and also at the end of verse 8 the hills singing for joy it will be a very great occasion that will cause the hills to sing for joy not necessarily someone singing on top of the hills a la Julie Andrews in the sound of music but a sound that is a lot greater than that and a lot more melodious but what's causing this great excitement from creation what's causing this exciting response verse 9 tells us at the start it's the presence of the Lord creation is rejoicing at God's presence

God's presence has come because of the proclamation of victory before the nations creation is rejoicing because God has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations the nations the nations gods as mentioned last week were derived from creation and therefore the gods of the nations are now celebrating before the Lord not only is creation rejoicing about God's presence now but it's rejoicing about God's victory in the future what's happening in the future have a look at verse 9 the rest of verse 9 for he is coming to judge the earth he will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity creation is excited in anticipation of what God's going to do that is to judge the earth that fact alone is going to bring excitement to creation but wait a second there's something a bit unusual here how can you be rejoicing when something's going to be judged when you're going to be judged and going to the court you're not going to be pretty happy are you you're actually packing it you're scared stiff about what the judge is going to hand down let's turn that round a fraction by judging the earth in this passage

God means he's going to rule the psalmist means that God is going to rule over the earth and therefore that's what's making creation excited God coming to rule over his creation because what happens when God's judgment takes place over creation is that all creation will be the way that God had intended it to be in the first place absolutely perfect and that's the effect for creation of God's judgment but how will he judge the world the world will be judged with righteousness and what's righteousness righteousness means that God will bring the world in line with his standards his standards perfection what a great way for the created world to be perfectly green grass at all times even at Colonial Stadium no pollution in the city no cars at the bottom of our rivers abundant vegetable gardens plants that grow when they're supposed to grow no weeds in gardens a gardenia that will flower at the appropriate time time we have a gardenia in our backyard we've had this gardenia in our yard for nearly a year they're supposed to flower in December this gardenia has never flowered we're hoping and praying that one day we will see a gardenia flowering but not only will creation not only will creation achieve this perfection but the peoples will be judged with equity the people of the world will be judged by God's fair standard the fair standard that that it goes like this that God's people will be taken into his kingdom and those who stay among the wicked nations will be punished that's what creation is celebrating

God's perfect people in God's perfect creation now if that's not celebrating I don't know what is it's a scene that's definitely worth celebrating God's perfect people in his perfect creation and friends that's going to happen that will happen when Jesus returns and it's something I can't wait for not just Jesus' return but seeing God's being part of God's people in his creation well God gives us a great victory in that he reveals his vindication his vindication involves rescuing his people from the nations that rescue for us today is the saving work of Jesus Christ the saving work that is done out of love out of love for and faithfulness to his people all the earth have seen this victory

[26 : 04] God's people will be rescued from their enemies and brought back to him these are the good things that God has done in this passage so how should we respond our response is to praise him in music praise him with loud joyful noise God's victory is worth our praise and so is God himself a praise that is laced with excitement and not duty we should be excited as creation is going to get in the future yearning for the perfection that will come when Christ returns if we are the people of God then we need to continually give our total praise and thanks to God why for two

things two reasons his marvellous works and for who he is and we need to continue doing that and let me encourage you not to give up praising

God because what's going to happen at the end is well worth waiting for and I don't want any of you guys and girls here to miss out on it let's pray heavenly father we thank you so much for the fact that you've vindicated us here we pray for those who aren't vindicated and ask that you would vindicate them we pray lord that we would be there when your creation and your people meet together in perfection and we ask father that you would encourage us to keep praising you constantly knowing that for what you are and for what you've done for us and for what you'll be in the future and we pray this in your son's name amen you