

# The Lord is Good

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 08 June 2014

Preacher: Rev. Jordan Senner

[ 0 : 00 ] Heavenly Father, we ask that you would stir in our hearts by your Holy Spirit and give us a fresh love for Jesus Christ. We ask that you would give us eyes to see him and ears to hear him tonight.

And we do ask, O Lord, that you would give us a deep joy in him. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Well, it's good to be with you guys.

And we're in, is this really loud or is it okay? Okay, we're good to go. Sorry, I just sound booming here. We're in week seven of a sermon series on the Psalms.

It's a great sermon series. This was supposed to be the last Sunday, but it's been so good. We're going to add two more Psalms the next two weeks, which will be great. And what we've been doing with the Psalms, we've been looking at Psalms in particular that center us upon and immerse us in the immense goodness of God.

And today's Psalm is really no different. Psalm 118. I would encourage you to take out your Bible. We're going to be spending a lot of time in there in the next 20 minutes or so. And Psalm 118 is a great celebration of the goodness of God.

[ 1 : 14 ] It begins and ends with an invitation to give thanks for the fact that God is good. Look at verses 1 and 29. The book ends. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

And in fact, we see at the very beginning that the psalmist is so kind of overwhelmed with the magnitude of God's goodness that he actually feels like his voice is not enough to express it. And so he starts to invite others to join his great litany of thanksgiving. Look at verses 2 to 4. Let Israel say his steadfast love endures forever.

Let the house of Aaron say his steadfast love endures forever. And let all those who fear the Lord say his steadfast love endures forever. And so right at the very beginning of the psalm, we are invited to join this great litany of thanksgiving to the Lord for his goodness.

But like most of the psalms, they don't simply leave us with a sense of give thanks to the Lord for his goodness as something that stands up here in an airy-fairy sense. The psalms always quickly point us to something specific that God has done in history to reveal his goodness toward us.

[ 2 : 33 ] God gives his king victory.

So what I want to do is I want to walk us through Psalm 118 by helping us look at three aspects of the king. The king's victory, the king's identity, and the king's people.

The victory, the identity, and the people. Somebody from the morning service told me that that has an acronym, VIP. I did not think of that because that would have been kind of cheesy.

The king's victory. Psalm 118 is a big celebration of this one fact. God has given his king victory over his enemies.

Now let's press pause there for just one moment. We need to step back and it's important for us to remember what the psalms as a whole are about. First and foremost, the psalms are not actually about our personal spiritual devotion.

[ 3 : 41 ] That's really, really important. The psalms want to draw our hearts to the living God. But first and foremost, the psalms are actually primarily about God and his king and his kingdom.

We get this in Psalm 2. Flip back to Psalm 2 with me. It's important to remember that Psalm 1 and 2 act as a sort of introduction to the whole book of psalms. So they give us a set of lenses through which we read the rest of the psalms.

And interestingly, Psalm 2 begins by telling us that God and his king have enemies. Look at verses 1 to 3. So right here in the beginning, the Lord and his anointed king have enemies.

There are people who oppose God's loving rule and do everything they can to set themselves free from his kingship. And this is not just one of the sobering and startling realities of the Old Testament.

This is also one of the sobering and startling realities of our own lives as well. It only takes about 10 minutes of reading the major headlines in the newspaper before our hearts can easily start to sink with despair over the weight of evil in the world.

[ 5 : 10 ] Nations are always trying to usurp God and take his throne. People are always grasping after power and dominion because humans would much rather be their own kings than have God as their king.

And this is the problem of our world and this always has been. And the experience of our lives and the experience of history constantly leaves us with this one nagging question.

How is God ever going to deal with the forces of evil in this world? Or to put it another way, how will the kingdom of the Lord ever be established given our experience of the world as it is?

Luckily, Psalm 2 gives us an answer. Gives us an answer to the problem and it's a promise. God makes a promise to his king.

He will give his king victory over his enemies. Look at verses 8 and 9. God promises, I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

[ 6 : 18 ] You shall rule them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now that's intense language. That's a poetic way of saying the king will win.

Yes, God and his king have enemies, but ultimately God promises that his king will have victory. And when God makes a promise, it always comes through.

Now, I take us to Psalm 2 for this one point. This is it. Psalm 118 celebrates the fulfillment of the promise made in Psalm 2.

The king has been given victory and Psalm 118 celebrates the victory of the king in fulfillment of the promise of Psalm 2. Turn back to Psalm 118.

In verses 5 to 18, the king testifies to the Lord's deliverance. Verse 5, Out of my distress I called to the Lord, and the Lord answered me and set me free.

[ 7 : 24 ] And then the king in verses 10 through 13 talks about how the Lord gave him victory. He said, Remember Psalm 2? Why do the nations rage?

All the nations surrounded me, and in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They surrounded me on every side, and in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They surrounded me like bees.

They went out like a fire among thorns, and in the name of the Lord I cut them off. I was pushed hard so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me.

The Lord helps his king. In fact, the king's experience of God's helping power is so great that he uses language taken from Exodus chapter 15.

Moses' song of deliverance after the Exodus. In Exodus chapter 15, Moses sings, he celebrates the fact that God has conquered Pharaoh, and overthrown all of his armies in the Red Sea, and set Israel free on their way to the promised land.

[ 8 : 33 ] And so Moses celebrates the fact that God's power is for the Israelites. And it was regarded by the Jewish people in the Old Testament as the greatest act of God's redeeming power that all of history had ever known.

And so it's no mistake that the king quotes Exodus 15 verse 2 in verse 14 of our psalm. He has experienced the awesome power of God.

So he says, the Lord is my strength and my psalm. The Lord has become my salvation. And then in verses 15 and 16, we discover just how big this victory really is.

It's a victory not just for the king, but it's a victory also for the king's people. And so in verses 15 and 16, we hear that glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous.

Their voices are starting to raise, and they say, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The right hand of the Lord exalts. And the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.

[ 9 : 45 ] And it's no mistake that once again, the songs of the people mention the right hand of the Lord, God's mighty saving arm, three times. And in Moses' song of deliverance in Exodus chapter 15, the right hand of the Lord is mentioned three times.

So that God's awesome saving power is for them as well. The king has been given victory, and the people are starting to rejoice.

The king continues to thank God in verses 17 through 21. But eventually, the people's joy is welling up so deeply that their voices grow louder and louder until eventually their celebration takes center stage.

And so in verses 22 to 24, the people shout for joy over the king's victory. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, they say.

This is the Lord's doing, and it's marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. And then the people pray for their own salvation in verse 25.

[10:54] Save us, we pray, O Lord. O Lord, we pray, give us success. And then the people bless God's triumphant king in verses 26 to 27.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, they say. We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God. And he has made his light to shine upon us.

And so we discover that Psalm 118 is one big communal celebration of the fact that the king has been victorious over his enemies.

But the question still remains. Who is this king? The question of the king's identity still remains. Who is this king?

And if you're a reader of the Old Testament, you know right away, clearly this is King David. He was God's anointed king. He was the one that God gave victory over his enemies time and time and time and time again.

[11:59] But if you're a reader of the Old Testament, you also know that David, as glorious as his victories were, they only lasted for about a decade or two.

They were momentary and fleeting. They did not ultimately deal with Israel's enemies. And so it was that in the years to come, the Jewish people would sing Psalm 118 in all of their major festivals.

At the Festival of Lights, Festival of Booths, they would sing it at Passover especially. And what they did is instead of singing the psalm to look back and remember what God had once done in a bygone age, they started singing that song in hopes that one day God would do something new.

There would be a new great act of salvation. And so for hundreds and hundreds of years, the Jewish people sang this psalm longing for the day when God would send another king who would conquer all their enemies and deal with the forces of evil in the world once and for all.

They longed for a greater king whose victory would far outshine and outlast David's. So you can imagine the sense of joy and anticipation and wonder and hope and even scandal and surprise when the people, the Jewish people, started to use the words of Psalm 118 in reference to a humble Jewish man from Nazareth whose name was Jesus.

[13:31] Could he be God's chosen king? The first time we see this happen is in Matthew chapter 21. Jesus is riding into Jerusalem mounted on a donkey and a colt and the crowds decide they want to take the words of Psalm 118 verse 26 upon their lips.

Matthew describes it this way in 21 verse 9. And the crowds that went before Jesus and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. And that line, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, is directly from Psalm 118.

It's as if they're saying, here finally is the victorious king we've been waiting for. Jesus is the one who's come in the name of the Lord. He's God's answer to the raging nations and the plotting peoples.

He's God's answer to the unruly forces of evil in the world that still wage war and wreak havoc. But the question still remains.

[14:42] How is this king going to win the victory? Is he going to act like the rest of the nations? Is he going to pick up a sword and fight the battle on the nation's turf? Well, for the answer to that, we have to fast forward another eight weeks to Acts chapter 4.

Peter is on trial before hostile enemies and rulers. And before the rulers of his day, he decides to speak of Jesus using the words of Psalm 118 verse 22.

In Acts chapter 4 verses 10 to 12, he says this, Let it be known to all of you and to the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

This Jesus, and here's the quote, is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

And so Peter proclaims before the religious rulers of his day, Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you on the cross, and he went into the grave. But Jesus is also the one that God raised up on Easter Sunday morning and made him the chief cornerstone.

[16:08] So who is the king of Psalm 118? According to Peter, his name is Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus is the king. This Jesus is the answer, God's answer to all the human sin and wickedness of the world.

This king is God's answer to Satan and all of his evil forces. This king is God's answer even to death itself. And this Jesus, as he rose from the grave and as light conquered darkness, was made the only king and savior in the world, and in him and him alone is salvation for the nations.

And so when we look at Psalm 118, we actually come to realize that it's one big communal celebration of the victory of King Jesus.

It's the victory of the king and the identity of the king. Now the king's people. How should the king's people respond to the king's victory?

How should we respond to the king's victory? And especially, how should we respond to the king's victory in light of the fact that there's still so much evil in the world?

[17:29] And I think Psalm 118, verses 22 to 25, actually outlined three responses for us. They say, we don't take up the sword, rather we proclaim and we rejoice and we pray.

First, we proclaim, verses 22 to 23, Psalm 118, that people raise their voices and say the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

And this is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. Friends, the way we respond to the king's victory is we proclaim the king's victory.

We proclaim that Jesus was rejected. Yes, he was. But God rose him from the grave. And that is good news for all the nations. We give thanks to the Lord as we proclaim his mighty deeds.

In the words of Charles Spurgeon, who was a great 19th century preacher, he said this, as he commented on this verse. He said, we are not only to believe, but to declare God's goodness.

[18:37] Truth is not to be hushed up, but proclaimed. We are not only to believe, but to declare God's goodness. Truth, especially truth like this, is not to be hushed up, but it's to be proclaimed.

I got an encouraging email from a friend about a week ago. She lives in California. She has a five-year-old daughter named Kelsey, and she told me that about a week ago, she was reading some Bible stories to her five-year-old daughter before bed.

She was reading the narratives in Genesis of Noah and Abraham. I thought Noah might be a bit intense for a five-year-old, but that's okay. She's going for it.

That's great. And as she was reading these stories, Kelsey started to ask some questions, in particular questions about God in heaven, as you do as a kid, I guess. And so Kelsey took this wonderful opportunity to tell her as simply as she possibly, I mean, not Kelsey.

Her mom took the opportunity to tell Kelsey as simply as possible about Jesus and the gospel. And after they were done talking, she asked her daughter, Kelsey, she said, Kelsey, do you want to actually pray to Jesus yourself?

[19:52] Would you like to relate to Jesus yourself? And she was very excited at this point. That's possible. So she was like, oh yeah. So they clasped their little hands and bowed their little heads and they started to learn to pray for the first time, Kelsey.

And when they were finished praying, Kelsey looked at her mom and said, Mom, I'm ready to go to heaven. I want to see Jesus now. And I think part of that might have to do with, because she thinks heaven, she likes to think heaven's a bit like Elsa's castle from Frozen.

But that's a different issue. But basically her mom responded like, whoa, no, no, no, no, not yet. You're five years old. You're staying put. You're okay. But the brilliant part was actually how the mom responded to Kelsey's response.

Wanting to go to heaven. And she said, she said, no, no, no, honey. Jesus has a lot more, there's a lot more people that God wants to know about Jesus.

Because Jesus loves them too. And just as mommy is here on earth and hasn't been taken to heaven yet because God wants her to tell you about Jesus.

[21:02] So in the same way, you're here and you're not taken to heaven yet because God wants you to tell other people about Jesus as well. And Kelsey was, it's hard to tell if she understood what was going on, so they just kind of went to bed.

But the next morning, the mom was in the bathroom and she came out of the bathroom to join the breakfast table where little five-year-old Kelsey was sitting and her 22-year-old uncle was sitting there having breakfast together.

And she joins in a conversation where Kelsey, the very next morning, is telling her 22-year-old uncle about how great Jesus is. And just a few days later, my younger brother Skyped with Kelsey and Kelsey wanted to tell him about Jesus too.

And Kelsey has been telling everybody about Jesus for the last week. And it's absolutely wonderful. And so it is with those who have experienced the goodness of God. Those who have really tasted and seen the goodness of God.

I mean, really tasted and seen. They want other people to taste and see too. And so we proclaim. We proclaim and then we rejoice.

[ 22 : 13 ] Verse 24. Oh, the joy of the crowds. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. We rejoice in the day of the King's victory.

Friends, Jesus has risen from the grave. He's conquered sin. He's conquered death. And we rejoice because Jesus hasn't only risen from the grave, but Jesus, because he's risen from the grave, is the true King of the world and he and he alone sits on the throne.

No one else. Satan and his evil forces may rage. Yes, they may. But they've been dethroned. Kings and nations may still fight, but they have no chance of winning.

Because when Jesus rose from the dead, Satan and the kingdoms of this world were given their final eviction notice and their days are numbered. And so we rejoice.

And I know this hymn is normally sung at Christmas, but I could not help myself but bring it into this sermon. Joy to the world, the Lord is come.

[ 23 : 21 ] Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing. Joy to the world, the Savior reigns.

Let men their songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground.

He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found. He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and the wonders of his love.

And so we rejoice. We proclaim, we rejoice. And finally, verse 25, we pray. Save us, we pray, O Lord.

O Lord, we pray, give us success. We pray, friends. We pray. We pray because we know that the King loves to share his blessings with us.

[ 24 : 29 ] We pray because we know that the King loves to share the blessings of his victory. I love the way that one Old Testament scholar, Derek Kidner, put it. He said this, The battle was single-handed, but the victory is shared.

The battle is single-handed. The battle over temptation and sin and Satan and his forces and sickness and death and destruction is single-handed.

But the victory is shared. And so we pray that the King would share his victory with us. We pray an eager anticipation and hope and longing for the day when we will get to share the King's victory in full.

We look forward to the day of the King's return and so we pray, Come, Lord Jesus, come. And we look forward to that day when we will get to welcome our triumphant King once again in the words of Psalm 118, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And it's on that day when faith finally becomes sight and we see our King that we will continue to sing with all the angels and the archangels and all the Christians who ever lived throughout all of history, thanks to the Lord.

[ 25 : 45 ] Give thanks to the Lord for he is good for his steadfast love endures forever. And that will be our song for all eternity. And we will never stop rejoicing in what God has done.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.