

Inside Out

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Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

[0:00] You can turn back with me now to the book of Psalms, where we read in Psalm 105. Because today we're thinking of coming back to church.

We could think about it and coming back to church maybe after a long time away or having never been, or even having been here maybe just last week, just coming back to church in that sense of coming to worship.

Maybe you're here out of curiosity. Maybe you're tuning in online as well just because you're curious. What do we say? What do we read? How do we worship?

What's it all about? We can come for so many different reasons. But as we come today and in that sense of worship, I want to ask you a question.

Do you think you have a relationship with God? Do you think you have a relationship with God? And what kind of relationship is it?

[1:26] Perhaps you think, I don't. I've got no relationship with God. Or perhaps you think, my relationship feels very close. Because there can be a whole host of ways about answering that question.

We can think it's a warm relationship. It's a cold relationship. A close relationship or a distant relationship. Or an on and off kind of relationship.

There's so many ways that we can look at describing a relationship, even when it comes to thinking about God. But how does God describe it for us?

How does God describe our relationship with Him? Because every one of us has a relationship with God. Because He is our Maker.

God has made us in His image. So how do you describe your relationship with God? That verse that we just sang, the last verse. When we come into worship, this is the kind of relationship we should be longing for.

[2:26] That on the beauty of the Lord I constantly may gaze. And in His house may seek to know direction in His ways. That's a wonderful way to come to worship.

Gazing on the beauty of the Lord and seeking direction in His ways. But it's not how we maybe all came in here today. But how do we see God describing His relationship with us?

We see it if you read throughout the whole of this psalm, Psalm 105. God describes His relationship with His people in a special way.

He uses a word that's important for us. He describes it as a covenant. And that's what this psalm is describing so much for us. We haven't read it. We only read it at the beginning.

But as you go through it, you see it uses that word. In verse 8, He remembers His covenant forever. It's about relationship and a covenant. Covenant relationship.

[3:23] What is a covenant relationship? Well, in some ways we could look at it like this. It's two parties who are pledging an obedience, an allegiance to one another.

Obedience to one another. We can look at it in a sense of the things that we know in this world.

Say, for example, a phone contract. Many of you, I'm sure, will have a phone contract.

You enter into a service with a company. They give you a service. They give you a line, a number, access to it. And you pay for that.

But it can come to an end. If you fail to pay, that service ends. That's a contract. But a covenant goes further.

And especially when we think of God being in relationship with His people in that way of covenant. Where we have failed on our part so often to be faithful to God, to worship Him aright.

[4:27] And yet we could say that God keeps that line open for us. For His people to come back to Him. And that's what we see throughout this psalm.

Indeed, what we see throughout Scripture. When you go back to the very beginning of the Bible, to the book of Genesis, you see God there going into a covenant, a relationship with His first people, Adam and Eve.

Where He promised to be faithful to them if they were obedient to Him. But they broke their promise. They broke that covenant. They were unfaithful.

But God is still faithful. And the rest of the Bible, as someone puts it, it shows God repairing that broken relationship.

And in this psalm, we see a bit of that. Where God is reminding us of His promises to us. He remembers His covenant forever. He remembers His side of the agreement forever.

[5:29] And at the beginning of the psalm, what we're seeing is God calling a people into that relationship once again. Calling them back to Himself.

God's Word asks of us, how is our relationship with Him? Like what we see with Jesus and the rich young ruler.

When He comes to Him, Jesus is challenging him. What is important? What is your priority? Will you come and follow me or will you go away?

And what happens is He goes away sorrowful. Why? Because there's something wrong. There's something more important. His life is not what it should be.

He knows it, but He still can't find the answer. In fact, He's walking away from the answer. His life is what we would say inside out, upside down, just all over the place.

[6:30] There's something wrong. And that's so often what we see in our lives. There's something missing. There's something wrong. Have you ever put on an item of clothes inside out?

Maybe you did it this morning and maybe you're sitting here this morning. And you know you've got something on and it's inside out. But initially it can seem to be okay. A pair of socks or whatever. It's okay.

I'll get away with it. But the longer you've got it on, it's becoming more and more uncomfortable. It's just not sitting right. That's what life is like sometimes.

We're away from God. Our life is inside out. It can seem fine initially. It can be okay for a time. But the longer it's going on, the more uncomfortable it's becoming.

There's just something not right. There's something that needs to change. The rich young ruler had that. He knew there was something missing.

[7:30] He knew there was something wrong. But it didn't change. But what about you today? Do you know that there's something missing?

Something that's just not right? Do you know what it is? Well, it's what the Word of God speaks about. That we can find in Jesus.

And that's what we're going to consider this morning. How we can come near to God. And how our relationship with Him can be restored. How we can see the things that are not right or sitting comfortably.

And come and see the wonder of the love of God for us. And what He has done for us. How we come back to Him. And so there's three things in these verses.

Verse 1 to 5 of this psalm. We see that we are to praise Him. That we are to seek Him. And that we are to remember Him.

[8:29] Praise Him. Seek Him. And remember Him. This is how we are to come back. And have our relationship restored. Or enhanced. Or built up.

In so many different ways. Coming back to God just makes us realize what's uncomfortable. What's wrong. And where we need to be right again. So the first thing is we see the opening verses speak about praising Him.

The opening verses lead us into that sense of worship. And it leads on from the end of Psalm 104. You can just see the last words of Psalm 104.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord. It's that sense of hallelujah. That's the way that psalm ends. Praise the Lord is hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

And then you come into Psalm 105. And that sense of hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Continues as we come to see the wonders of what God has done.

[9:27] And it says, Oh, give thanks to the Lord. Call upon His name. Make known His deeds among the people. Sing to Him. Sing praises to Him. There's a sense of worship.

Thanks giving. Praise. Make known His deeds. Sing praises to His name. Another word for praise there is confess.

Confess. It's about recognizing who God is and what He has done. We cannot worship God right if we don't see Him for who He is and all that He has done.

Because without Him, we are nothing. Without Him, we can do nothing. And that's what the people in this psalm were being reminded about. They're looking to their past experience where God has been so faithful to them.

And they're being reminded, apart from God, you could do none of it. It is all of the wondrous works of God that has done it. But as you look at your own relationship with God, or whatever you think of your relationship with God, do you see that?

[10:40] That He is the one who has made you, created you, keeps you, sustains you? When you look at this psalm and the people the psalm was speaking about, it's looking back to the Exodus, to the children of Israel being taken out of Egypt into the Promised Land, delivered, provided for, kept, saved, all of these things.

And now the psalm is saying it's time to acknowledge that, to see God for who He is. And as we come to worship, that should be our desire, to see God for who He is.

To acknowledge ourselves, we can do nothing apart from Him. Like Paul in the book of Acts, Acts 17, verse 28 says, In Him we live, move, and have our being.

Everything depends on Him. But we're a little like the rich young ruler, aren't we? Perhaps that's you today. You're living your life in your own way, by your own thoughts, wisdom, ideas, all of these things.

But as you come back to God, as you come back to God's Word, you see it is none of us, nothing of what we do. From Genesis, where we see the earth was made and everything in it by God, to the book of Revelation, where you see that a new heaven and a new earth will be made by Him.

[12:06] And everywhere in between, you see God's relationship with His people, that it's Him who gives everything. All that we need for life and for eternity is found in Him.

Look at the rich young man. What brought him to Jesus? It was something that he was lacking.

What must I do to have eternal life?

There was something missing. But did he come with a sense of confessing God, confessing Jesus as the one who is able to do it?

Did he come in dependence on Him? No, he comes saying, What must I do? What must I do to inherit eternal life?

And that's maybe your attitude today as well. Because it's your natural condition, it's my natural condition as well. To have that kind of attitude where I will sort it, I will do it, I will manage fine by myself.

[13:19] But we can't. We can't. You can't. I can't. And that's what this psalm is making clear.

Confess the Lord.

Show your dependence on Him because that is what the Scripture says. I'm sure many of you have heard of Ian Wright. He was a footballer back in the 80s and 90s, a very good footballer, a very successful footballer.

Now he's a pundit on television. He retired in 2000 from football at the age of 36. And then five years later, there's an interview that he had where he went back to one of his old grounds with Arsenal playing, sitting in the stand.

And this man comes up behind him. And he turns round and sees this man. And he's just overwhelmed. It's this old PE teacher from nearly probably about 25 years previous.

And he's just overcome by it all. Because here he sees the man who brought him into football, who started to teach him the ways of football. And he realized just how much he owed to this man.

[14:31] And one of the saddest things was when he said, I thought you were dead. He'd heard that this teacher had passed away. He thought he was dead. And here he is before him.

And he's just overwhelmed with emotion for everything that he had done for him. He had had a successful career. But here he was saying how much he owed to this man.

Without whose help he would not have made it into football. Well, when we appear and see who God is, should we not be just as overwhelmed and even more?

When we hear it is in him we live, move, and have our being. Do you acknowledge him in that way? Do you understand him in that way? Do you realize that you need him in that way?

Apart from him you can do nothing. So this psalm is saying praise him, confess him, acknowledge him, in coming back to him. That is what we are to do.

[15 : 33] We can do nothing apart from him. So we acknowledge him. And then that leads us to the second point that we see here where we are to seek him.

To seek him. We see this in verse 3 and verse 4. Glory in his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength.

Seek his presence continually. This psalm very much is one that reminds us that God is sovereign as you read through it. God is in control of everything.

We can do nothing apart from him. But it is also a psalm as we see in the opening verses, and if you read on to the end, that shows that we have a responsibility as well.

We have a responsibility as well, because there are many imperatives here for us. Things that we are to do. Give thanks to him as one. Call upon his name.

[16 : 33] Make known. These are all things that we are to do. And then you see in verse 3 and 4 that repeated phrase, Seek the Lord. Seek the Lord.

Seek his strength. Seek his presence continually. It's so important. What the psalm is getting at here is acknowledging our dependence on him by seeking after him at all times.

Not just once now and again, but continually going on in that way. Looking to him. Trusting in him. Why do you seek God?

You could say, well, it's only because God gives me that desire. Because God is the only one who can do it.

But when he puts that desire into your heart, it moves you. It moves you to seek him all the more. You seek him because you realize you need him.

[17 : 38] You seek him because you realize that you are lost without him. The rich young man had a need to seek Jesus.

He recognized it. He said, what must I do to inherit eternal life? He was seeking after eternal life. But what was his motive in seeking?

And what is your motive in coming here today? Are you coming in obedience? Or are you coming in a sense of performance in mind?

Are you coming because you wanted to? Or just to please someone? What is bringing you here today? What was bringing the rich young ruler to Jesus?

Something that he saw missing. Something that he thought he needed in his life. But it was all about him. Somebody said this about the difference between obedience and performance.

[18 : 38] They put it like this. Obedience is seeking God with your whole heart. Performance is having a quiet time because you'll feel guilty if you don't.

Obedience is finding ways to let the word of God dwell in you richly. Performance is quickly scanning a passage so you can check it off your Bible reading list.

Obedience is following God's prompting to start a small study group. Performance is reluctance to let anyone else lead the group because they might not do it as well as you would.

What is your motivation in what you are doing? Why are you doing it? That's what's behind it. Why are you seeking the Lord? Well, the rich young man, he was seeking it.

It was a performance seeking. He had so much in life, but he'd heard of this eternal life and he wanted that as well. But it was on his terms.

[19 : 42] I'll do it my way. If it means giving everything else up, you can forget it. That's basically what he said. I have riches. I have wealth. I cannot give that up.

Eternal life is not more important than that. So it was all about performance and nothing about obedience. We are to come in obedience.

Think about how the scriptures talk about seeking God. In Jeremiah 29 verse 13, You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

All your heart. Is that how the rich young man came? Well, no. Because his heart was focused on his wealth. That is where his heart was drawn to.

And what about you? What brings you to seek God? Have you come to seek God with all your heart?

[20 : 46] Because you know it's the greatest thing that you need. Or are you still just fixated on the things of this world? Where God is just to be an addition into your life.

And you'll carry on with everything else that you want as well. Performance or obedience. Obedience is seeking God with your whole heart. That's what Jeremiah says. And you have another verse like Matthew 6 verse 33. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you. You see there it's about relationship. What is the most important thing in your life? Is it to seek first the kingdom of God? And then realize everything else. Not just to be added to you. But you'll have a perspective of things. Of what's important and what's not. That relationship where we know that there's something missing.

[21 : 47] And the rich young man did. Perhaps you do today as well. Because as Blair Pascal once put. There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of each man. Which cannot be satisfied by any created thing. But only by God the creator made known through Jesus Christ. We are inside out. Uncomfortable. Until that void is filled. Our relationship with God is wrong. Until we find that heart that is coming in obedience to him. There will always be a piece missing until we seek him. Then there's a thought here as well of seeking him that alludes to a warning. Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually. We go to a verse like Isaiah 55 verse 6. Which says seek the Lord while he may be found.

[22 : 53] Call upon him while he is near. Because there is a sense of this passing opportunity. For the rich young man we don't know. If he got another opportunity to come to Jesus. If he got an opportunity to say actually. I have to leave all my wealth behind and come and follow you. We don't hear of it. And that's a warning to us. Our opportunity is now. While he may be found. While he is near. That is the urgency of seeking the Lord. Seek the Lord. His strength. Seek his presence continually. Continually. He is there. He is longing for our relationship to be restored. He is faithful. We are the ones who are so often unfaithful. And he calls us back to himself.

[23 : 50] Will you seek him? Will you seek him while he is near? Will you seek him while he can be called upon? The line is open. The line is open with God. His covenant. His side of the covenant. He is keeping. But the line will go dead. One day. And he is saying. Seek him. While he may be found. So we are to seek. The third thing we see here. Is remember. We see that in verse 5. Remember the wondrous works that he has done. His miracles. And the judgments he uttered. The warnings he uttered. Remember all of these things. His wondrous works. His miracles. His warnings. His judgments. So going from inside out to the right way round brings a sense of comfort.

[24 : 49] Things make sense once again. And that is through when we come to see God. To confess who he is. To seek him. With all his heart. And then we can remember him. Through. And how we come to worship. Is that we must come. In obedience. To him. We are to remember. Not just for just now. But for always. Every day of our lives. We are to go on remembering. The wondrous works. The word of God. Always before us. Guiding us. Showing us the way. Remembering is such an important part. Of our lives. In so many different ways. Last Sunday we were gathered here. Remembering the Lord's death. Until he comes. And in life we have so many things. We remember. Anniversaries. And birthdays. We remember. These things. Joyous times.

[25 : 47] We remember too. Sad times. Remembrance of loss. And grief. That cut us deep into our hearts. There are so many different things. That we remember. And the word of God. Describes our lives. So often in that way. With all the different challenges. The ups and downs. The psalmists. Are so often describing that for us. The struggles in life. The joys in life. But like Psalm 105. There's reminders of the constant faithfulness of God.

That he is with us. Remember the wondrous works that he has done. Remember the miracles. Remember the judgments he has uttered. All these things should stay with us. The rest of the psalm. It goes on reminding us. Of what God has done. It says. This is what I did. This is what I did.

[26 : 46] This is what I did. It's ongoing. It's so important. But when you look at the rich young man. All he could remember.

Was the riches that he had. That's what he counted as greatest. In his life. Not what the Lord had done.

And he had obviously heard. Of who the Lord Jesus was. Because he came to him. Seeing him as a good teacher. Seeing him as the one who had. Authority over eternal life. So he had heard. But yet. Coming looking was not enough. Because he went away sorrowful.

He just remembered the good things. That he had. But instead. He was to remember. What was done for him. And so are we. So are you.

[27 : 43] So am I to remember. The works of the Lord. What he has done. For us. And there are so many. Thy wonders. Are so many. The psalmist. Often says.

And do you remember today. What God has done for you. Do you remember today. That you are actually. In relationship with him. Sin. Makes us forget. Sin makes us believe. There is no God. And I'm not accountable to him. It doesn't matter. At the end. Of the day.

But the word of God says. Confess him. See that you are dependent upon him. Seek him. While you have opportunity. And it says. Remember him.

Remember what he has done. Remember his miracles. Remember. His warnings. He is to be remembered. In all of these things.

[28 : 45] Coming back. To church. It's not about performance. It's not about seeing. Greater numbers. In church. It's not about making.

Somebody happy. By accepting an invitation. To please them. It's about coming to see. The wonders. Of who our God is.

Of the relationship. That he has with us. And the relationship. That he calls us. Into with him. That we might gaze.

On the beauty. Of the Lord. The rich young man. Came. He sought something. He went away. Empty. Because his focus remained. On the things of this world. Today. You've come. How will you go away?

[29 : 42] Will you go away. With no thought. Of eternity. Or the eternal life. That he has to offer. Because there's too many. Important things. In this world.

For you to deal with. Too many things. You want to do. Yet. Don't go away like that. Because you'll still. Be sorrowful. Your life.

Will still be inside out. Everything. Will still be uncomfortable. There'll be something. Missing. That cannot be filled. Until you come. And find. What Jesus is.

A saviour. For his people. So he says. Come. Confess. Who he is. Seek. After him.

Remember him. And go away. Not sorrowful. But rejoicing. That rejoicing. That it speaks of. In verse 3. Glory in his name.

[30 : 36] Let the hearts. Of those. Who seek. The Lord. Rejoice. Rejoice. Rejoice. Rejoice. The rich young man. Went away. Sorrowful.

It was all about. Performance. Come. In obedience. Return. To the God. Who is calling you. Glory. In his name. And may your heart. Rejoice. As you seek him. Let us pray. Lord our gracious God. We thank you. For your word. We thank you. For the call it gives. The call it gave. To that rich young ruler. Who had heard about. Jesus. And the offer of eternal life.

And yet could not leave. The things of this world. Behind. Because he had great wealth. And went away sorrowful. Let us Lord. Be able to leave. All. Everything behind.

[31 : 32] Let us leave all that we have. And come. And follow him. And that we rejoice. In seeking him. That we rejoice. In knowing him.

And the wonders. That he has done. For us. So hear us Lord. Go before us. Forgive our sins. As we ask it all. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to.

