

Pause and Remember

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[0 : 0 0] Well, as we just sang there in Psalm 103, verse 15 reminds us just of the nature of our remembrance today when we think of the words there, each human life is like the grass and like a meadow flower it grows. Its place will never be recalled once over it the tempest flows. We see there the nature of the loss of life during times of war. It reflects too into our own lives today as well, how human life comes and goes. But verse 17 in the Psalm reminds us, but everlasting is God's love for those who fear him and their seed, for those who keep his covenant and carefully his precepts heed.

And these words lead us into Psalm 33, where we're going to reflect this morning together. A Psalm that speaks to us as well about the steadfast love of God and how that is unchanging in its nature and how much we need it. Today is a day of remembrance when we pause to reflect. And as we pause, we want to do so coming to God's word and seeing what God has to say to us. Around the world today, millions will join in, in acts of remembrance, reflecting on those who gave and continue to give that ultimate price of laying down their lives for their friends, for the peace of nations throughout the world. But as these times of remembrance and reflection come, do we all realize, do people around the world realize just where our help comes from? That's the question for ourselves today. In our remembrance, are we seeing where our greatest help comes from? In Psalm 33, as we look at it in verse 16 and 17, we are reminded there of where our help doesn't come from. The king is not saved by his great army. A warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. So there is not salvation found in the greatness of armies or the powers of this world. So where is our help found? Well, it goes on to say, behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him. And so our eyes to be upon that Lord, the Lord who looks down upon us, the one who our soul waits for, as the psalmist describes. He is our help and our shield.

In verse 20, there's that expression of faith, that expression of our help is found in the Lord. But often, it takes various sets of circumstances to bring us to realize that our ultimate help is found in the Lord. And there's many stories told from times of war when people have seen deliverance in amazing ways, in amazing circumstance. There was a young teenage girl who, during the Second World War, she was living in Malta because her father had been stationed there as a harbormaster in Malta. Malta and the Mediterranean was a very important island during, especially maybe the Second World War, because the base was there that ships could come and go from. Many stores were brought there. And therefore, there was a lot of battles fought over it to gain control of the island. And during this young girl's time on the island, it was coming under attack very often. But there was one particular day she remembered when they seemed to be bombing so close to her where she could feel the shudder and the sound. And so they were hiding herself, her father and the family, hiding in a room of a building with other civilians there, waiting for the bombs to pass. And they were waiting there, sheltering, hearing all this noise going on outside and just waiting for that all clear bell to be rung.

And when it was, her father went outside first, out the front door of the room they were in, outside. And he said, come and see this. And when they went outside, they realized just the destruction that was all around them. The town in which they were meant much of it had been flattened and destroyed.

And even the building that they were sheltering in, most of it had been destroyed apart from the room that they were in. And there was this sense of awe and this sense of wonder among them. How had they been spared? But as a teenage girl, she didn't quite understand. She didn't quite realize it. And she went on in her life. And it was only later on in life she realized, looking back, and she was able to say, only now can I see the unseen hand of providence that spared me then. When

she had come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, she was able to look back. And it's so often after events that we are able to look back and realize just what we have been spared from. And it sometimes helps us then to realize what we really need in life. What we really need in life is to realize the unseen hand of providence that has kept us, not just throughout times of war, but throughout our lives in many different circumstances.

[5 : 49] How it has been the Lord that has upheld us and the Lord that has kept us, and that we are to come and acknowledge that. And that is what this psalm is about. Psalm 33 is about acknowledging the Lord Lord in worship. We pause in silence to remember and to reflect. But we don't want to stay in silence.

And so often when a minute's silence is observed, and you'll see it maybe particularly on Tuesday, the 11th day of the 11th, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, when there's those silence in remembrance, it's often broken by the sound of a trumpet or the sounds of pipes being played. But for ourselves today, the silence that we observe, it is broken by coming to worship God, to worship Him with praise, and to worship Him in coming under His Word. And so we're going to look at this psalm, Psalm 33. We're going to look at it in light of something I read, of what we are to see in times of remembrance, of how we are to behave in times of remembrance. Somebody suggested there's three things that we are to do, that we are to pause, reflect, and remember. And it's those three things I want to tie in to Psalm 33 and the sense of worship that it gives to us. Because we pause in worship. Worship makes us pause. We reflect in worship because worship makes us think about things that are going on. And we remember in worship. Worship helps us in focusing and remembering, and remembering in particular the Lord and His goodness to us. So we're going to pause, reflect, reflect, and remember. So first of all, we see how the psalm directs us to pause. Worship always makes us do this, to come away from everything else that we might be doing in life. We can come away for a time of worship. But what is worship, and how do we understand what it means to worship God?

Worship can mean coming to church. We can see that as part of our worship. Worship can mean hearing God's word. It can mean praying to God. It can mean singing praise to God. These are all aspects of our worship. But is that what worship is in its entirety? Well, worship is about giving. Worship is about giving praise and glory and honor to God. And that's what pausing makes us do. It makes us look to God. And God's word directs us in that way. When you look at verse 1 to 5, here in this psalm, Psalm 33, there's this sense of giving this praise to God. Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre. There's this sense of coming. Coming to God giving him what is due to his name. And in order to do this, in order to worship, we must pause. We must come aside from everything else in our lives, whether it's in our homes, in our families, in our workplace, in the week. We come aside from it all. We pause to give worship worship to God. Otherwise, how will we hear what God has to say to us? When you think of it, imagine if soldiers, sailors, or airmen, they were going to be given instruction to go into battle. And they've all gathered together to hear their commander speak to them, to give them instruction, to give them their orders. Imagine the commander coming into our room, and the people in the room just start carrying on as they were, or just talking amongst each other, not listening to what the commander is saying.

They wouldn't carry on for very long, because they would be told in no uncertain terms to be silent. Because what they have to hear is important, not just for their own safety, but for the safety and protection of many others. They need to listen.

[10 : 34] Well, what about ourselves when it comes to worship? When we think of God as our Lord, do we pause to listen to him? Or do we just carry on with our own train of thought? Do we carry on, even as we sit in silence, our minds can be drifting away, thinking of so many other different things, and we're not pausing to reflect and to listen to what God is saying to us? God is speaking to us through his word. And so we are to pause to listen, to give that ear to him who is speaking to us.

The word of the Lord is upright, it says in verse 4, and all his work is done in faithfulness. This is the God who is speaking. He is the faithful God. Let us be faithful and pause and listen to him.

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month is a time when we so often hear the phrase, the nation stood still. There's that sense of the nation pausing. But what do we think of in that silence? Where does our minds go? For many, it'll be remembering maybe people. People can still remember those who were lost in the war. Not many now in the First and Second World War,

but other conflicts since then as well. People remember those who have lost their lives. People remember experiences that they've gone through. You can imagine those who have been through times of war remembering the kind of scenes that were before them or the noises that they were hearing. So many reflections that we can have. But do our minds come to God? And do they come to the hope that he is able to give?

When we realize that peace is found in him. There are so many emotions that can grip our hearts in life.

And so many emotions during times of war. There's fear. There's anger. There's unforgiveness. There's all kinds of emotions that can be very difficult for us. But worship helps us. It helps us to see a God who is worthy of all praise. As verse 5 makes clear for us here, he loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. You know, if our nations would pause and realize who God is, would our earth not be full of the steadfast love of the Lord more and more? An acknowledgement of it.

[13:36] A recognition of it. As verse 12 says, blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage. We must pause and reflect. But it's to look to God.

To stop what we are doing and to see what is God saying to us today in the freedoms that we enjoy, in the silence that we observe. Let's not see it what seems hopeless, but look to God who is able to give us that hope. So we are to pause. Secondly, we are to reflect because worship gives us reason to think.

We are created in the image of God. We are created with body, soul, and mind. And all of us have our thoughts. Our thoughts are always active. Our thoughts are always on the go. And a time of reflection and looking to God's word, it makes us think. Surely our minds are thinking, what does this mean for me? Is this important to me? What difference does it make in my life? Is God really, Lord? Is the steadfast love of God really abounding in all the earth when we see so much war and rumors of war and so many atrocities taking place? Is God really ruling over us? Well, as we pause for worship and as we reflect on God's word, we realize who this God is. In verse 6, we are told, by the word of the Lord, by the word of the Lord, the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth, all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap. He puts the deeps in storehouses. So there we are reminded of the power of God. As we reflect in worship, we realize who this God is. But as we reflect too, we realize the pain and suffering of this world. And in particular, at a time of remembrance. And if you do go and visit a war memorial, and you look at the names on the war memorial, the age of so many who gave their lives in their young years, many in teenage twenties, thirties, just young men and women who lost their lives. The pain and sorrow of that.

But when you look at these names, it's a reminder too of the suffering of those who were left behind. The suffering of parents, of wives and husbands, of children. The devastating impact on communities far and wide. And as we know in our own communities here, the devastation and loss that war brought, and the pain and grief that was often hidden within people's hearts. They couldn't speak about it. Such was the pain and sorrow that they felt. And these kinds of things, they lead us to question.

[16:57] To questions like such as, well, what is the point in it all? Why does God allow these things to happen? And yet, when we look at it, there are things we cannot understand. But yet we can look to God and see, well, he is able to bring good out of everything. He is able to bring us through. He is the God who turns wars into peace. And it's no coincidence that after times of war, there's often a time of revival.

When people recognize God has delivered. When people recognize that without the Lord, they would not have come through. And this is the God that we see in this psalm that reflects who this God is in verse 6 through to verse 12. The psalm causes us to reflect and worship, even in the hopelessness of war and all that it seems to just leave us feeling dismayed about, that God is still sovereign, that God is still ruling. He has made all things. We are to stand in awe of him, as it says in verse 8, let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he is still the one who is able to speak and he sends his commands forth. Even in the midst of war, we remember that it is him that brought peace in it all.

Why does he allow it? So often in these things is that we might come close to him again. When you read through the Old Testament and the New Testament, you find that when people were turning away from God, God often brought hardship into their experience to bring them back to himself.

And the personal sacrifice of so many should make us reflect and ask, well, what was the price for our freedom? What was the cost of the freedom that we enjoy today? So many gave their lives that we might be able to do what we are doing today, to have this freedom in worship, to have the freedom to live our lives on a day-to-day basis. But as we worship today, does it make us reflect on all that God has done for us through his Son, Jesus Christ, the one who gave his life, that we might have life through him? Does it bring us close to him? Just like that young teenage girl in Malta, it was later on in life that she realized the deliverance she had experienced in the hand of God in it. And so often maybe it's as our lives go on, as the years go past, we begin to realize the providence of God, the way that he has delivered us in so many ways, the way that he has been with us and helped us throughout so many of our experiences. And through it all, does he not bring us to reflect and to see that he is a good and a gracious God? Let us stand in awe of him, for we find blessing when we look to him. Again, there's so many accounts of people who sacrificed themselves during times of war. Many of you will have heard about the River Kwai. Films were made about it, books have been written about it. But one book that was written about it was called Miracle on the River Kwai. Many Scottish soldiers were forced by their captors there, the Japanese captors, into laboring on a railroad that was being built. And they were in atrocious conditions and much suffering in their midst. And over a period of time, those who were being held captive, they started to lose morale and they started to turn against each other. It was a very difficult time.

But one day something happened that changed the whole atmosphere in the camp. Every time they were coming back to the camp that they were being held in from having been working on the railroad for all day, they had to go through checkpoints. And at each checkpoint, they were accounted for the number of people, but also all their tools were accounted for as well, in case they were trying to hide something or keep something for themselves. One day they were on their way back and they came to the first checkpoint. And after the count, it was found that a shovel was missing. And the Japanese commander, he became very angry at this point, demanding that this shovel would be returned. And it wasn't forthcoming. And eventually became so angry, he took out his gun and he threatened them with his gun.

[22 : 04] And this was going to be maybe death for them all. But one man stepped forward, one who was being held captive, he stepped forward. And immediately the commander killed him in front of everybody else.

And they were dismayed. And they started walking to the next checkpoint. When they reached the next checkpoint, again, they were accounting for all the tools. And when they counted all the tools, they found that there hadn't been one missing at the last checkpoint at all. It had been miscounted. And the men realized at that point that the man who had stepped forward had sacrificed himself for the rest of them. That he had given his life for them. And all of a sudden, in that moment, the whole atmosphere changed when they realized what he had done. And all of a sudden, the bonds began to grow in their midst.

They became stronger in themselves. And so that when freedom finally came, instead of having all that emotion of hatred and anger, what they said was, no more hatred, no more killing. Now what we need is forgiveness. Sacrifice makes us realize that. But doesn't it not remind us of the greatest sacrifice of all? The Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life. Who stepped forward for us. Who went to the cross.

Who died for our sins. We remember today the sacrifice of many. But the greatest sacrifice of all was Jesus who bore our sin on the cross that we might have life. That is what the steadfast love of God is.

[24 : 15] He gave that we might have life through him. So we reflect. We reflect today on many sacrifices made for us. But above all, that the hope that is found in the sacrifice of Jesus. So we pause, we reflect, and thirdly and finally, we remember. From verse 13 to the end of the Psalm, there's this sense of remembering the one who is our God. Worship is due to him.

The Lord looks down from heaven, it says. He sees all the children of man. God's eyes are always upon his people. And so as we remember today, those fallen in conflicts past and even present. And we know that there will be more who will perish in conflicts to come. That's the nature of the world in which we live. It's hard. But is there hope in it all? Well, the hope is found in God in God and remembering him. As we read previously, our salvation is not found in the horses or the armies of the king or any of these things. But our salvation is found in the Lord. The king is not saved by his great army. A warrior is not delivered by his great strength. None of these things can save us. But

our remembrance today is directed towards God, the God who holds all things together. And again, you see it in verse 18. Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him. So there's this theme of God looking down from heaven. God's eyes are upon his people. And in verse 20, our soul waits for the Lord. He is our help and shield. There is what we are to remember today.

That our salvation, our hope is not nothing that this world offers us, but that our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ. He sees everything that happens. He sees all our pain, our suffering, our anxieties, our fears. He sees all of these things. And he is able to help. Isn't it a wonderful thing to think that God sees you today? That he knows you in that personal and intimate way.

A lost world, a lost people live in fear because they do not know God. There is no hope found apart from God. And yet here is the hope that we can have found in God today. A God who is great. A God who shows steadfast love up to his people. And the psalm ends with that word, those words, let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. There's that prayer in these words. It's not just for today, but as we go on, as we go forward, that we would see the steadfast love of God upon us.

[27 : 47] But it's as we hope in him. And so today, as we reflect, as we pause, as we remember, is our hope in the Lord?

He is worthy to be praised. You may have seen some of the programs on this week where veterans have been on various news programs speaking about their experience during times of war. One World War II veteran was on a program this week reflecting on his experience during those times. He's now a hundred years old, and yet he's able to remember those days as if it was yesterday. And in his reflections, it was so moving to hear him speak, to speak about everything that he had gone through, the friends that he had lost, the things that he had seen. But it was a question that he was asked at the end that was quite telling. He was asked the question, what are your thoughts now on Remembrance Day? And his answer was this, or part of his answer was this, I remember my friends and my colleagues who lost their lives.

And when I look at the nation now, I think it wasn't worth it. When you think of that, when he sees the state of our nation, he thinks today, it wasn't worth it. How sad is that?

Because our nation has turned away. Our nation is not a nation that says we are blessed because God is the Lord.

And so today, we need to see that we need God. That he is our greatest need in our day. But we need to see too, that although that man said it wasn't worth it, that when we look to the cross of Jesus, Jesus never says that. In fact, he says the opposite. When you go back to Isaiah chapter 53, that whole passage is speaking about the suffering of Jesus. And in verse 11, it says this, Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. In other words, he's saying there, it was worth it. For the salvation of his people, out of the anguish of his soul, he sees and is satisfied.

[30 : 42] He is satisfied with all that his suffering achieved. He is saying it was worth it for those who believe, for those who put their trust in him. There is so much sorrow in our remembrance today looking back.

And in our remembrance of Jesus, there is sorrow that he died for our sin. But there is hope because he says it was worth it. He gave his life that we might have life through him.

So we remember today those who served and who serve even to this day for our freedom, the many who gave that sacrifice of their lives being given.

But in it all, let us not lose heart and think it wasn't worth it. When we think of Jesus, and when we think of the cross, and when we think of how he gave and was satisfied, is he satisfied with you today?

Are you putting your hope in him? Because that is where salvation is found. Nothing of this world, but looking to the cross, we can have peace through him.

[32 : 14] Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, help us in all our remembrance today to think of the great sacrifices made for us, but to think especially of the greatest of all, that Jesus Christ gave his life, that we might have life through him.

Lord, be with us, be with the many who gather this day in remembrance and reflection. May it be that there is worship in the midst of it all, that glory is ascribed to you as God and Lord of all.

For we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 16.

Psalm 16, the Sing Psalms version, page 17 of the psalm books. We're going to sing from verse 8 down to the end of the psalm, a psalm that reminds us of the hope that there is in the Lord.

Before me constantly, I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.
We stand to sing from verse 8 to 11 to God's praise.

[33 : 31] Amen. Before me constantly, I set the Lord alone, because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

Therefore, my heart is glad, with joy with joy with joy with sing.

My body too will rest secure In hope unwavering For you will not allow My soul in death to stay Nor
will you leave your Holy One To see the tombs decay You have made known to me

The path of life divine Bliss shall I know at your right hand Joy from your face will shine After the
benediction I'll go to the main door Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit Rest upon and abide with you all Now and forevermore Amen Thank you Thank you

Thank you

Thank you