

# Joy to the World

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Date: 11 December 2022

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin by singing to God's praise now in Psalm 93 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 93, it's on page 354 of the Psalm books.

We're going to sing the whole of this Psalm. The Lord doth reign and clothed is he with majesty most bright, his works to show him clothed to be and girt about with might.

We're going to sing the whole of this Psalm, the tune of Stroudwater. The Lord doth reign and clothed is he with majesty most bright, his works to show him clothed to be and girt about with might.

The world is also established that it cannot depart.

Thy throne is fixed of hope and life from everlasting heart.

[ 1 : 35 ] The floods, O Lord, have lifted up. They lifted up their voice.

The floods have lifted up their waves and made a mighty voice.

But yet the Lord that is on high is more of might by far than voice of many waters.

The iliostaouy ■■■baum It's famous, in constitution of righteousness, his disciples are rolled above, and able to withstand thing. The generosity of the prayer was fixed of God's force is ■ want. Thy resigned is the underwisw ■■■■■ling, he vertebrate up.

The victory of God's Italia, his desire to feed us, the sword and his ■ has shortness of power, this mount isikal.

[ 3 : 00 ] ■ asked why the Lord had laid place down. For holiness forever, Lord, thy Christ be cometh well.

I will come to God in prayer. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Our Father in heaven, we do come with thanksgiving in our hearts to be able to sing praise to you.

That the Lord doth reign and clothe to see with majesty most bright. We thank you that in all that glitters around us in these days and all the lights that we see in so many different forms.

We thank you that we come today to focus our attention on the one who is the light of the world. The one who came into the world to give us the light that shines into our darkness.

And we pray that today we would see Jesus. That we would know more of him and come to love him with all our hearts. We thank you that, especially maybe at this time of year when there is so much going on around us.

[ 4 : 15 ] That you give us this your day to be able to come aside for a time. That in the busyness of our lives and in the hectic nature of our day-to-day lives just now.

That we have this your day. A day that reminds us of the rest that you give and the blessing that is ours in Christ. And so help us to be still in your presence at this time.

And to know that you are God. That we would know you near us in every way. That your hand be upon us for good. That you would bless us young and old alike as we come to worship you this day.

Take care of us as well, Lord. In the dangers of the day when it's slippy and icy outside. Watch over each and every one of us. And be with us in all our homes and our families. As we look to you and seek your blessing on us.

Asking it all in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. But before the young ones go out to Sunday school.

[ 5 : 13 ] Just say a wee word to you. It's good to be able to come and just focus our attention on God's word today. And in fact, every day we are to look to God's word. And seek his blessing to us from it.

And maybe just now you're hearing lots of different stories from the Bible. And especially the story of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. So whether it's in school or nursery. You'll be hearing all about the one who came into this world.

For sinners such as we are. We are so thankful to have the good news of Jesus before us. But as well as that, it's a busy time. And we're often distracted as well.

There's many things that are just wanting our attention. Many things will distract us from focusing on the good news of Jesus. And one of the main things is, although it's a very good thing.

It's also something that can just lead us completely away. And that is the idea of presence. And what we want for Christmas. How often have you been asked that question in these last few days?

[ 6 : 17 ] What do you want for Christmas? And I'm sure every one of you will have an idea maybe of what you want for Christmas. Maybe you've got a very long list of things that you want for Christmas.

And it's nice sometimes to have an idea of what we want. But sometimes it can just be distracting. And you may be watching the telly. You may be looking in magazines.

You may be looking online. And you're seeing all these gifts being advertised. And they're all just saying, buy me, buy me, buy me. They're all saying, you need me. I'm the most important thing that you need in your life just now.

And today as you go into Sunday school and creche, you're going to be hearing about the word covet in the Ten Commandments. One of the commandments says, thou shalt not covet.

Now what does that word mean? Well, covet means to really want something. And especially to really want something that's not yours.

[ 7 : 17 ] And you're going to hear a story about a man in the Old Testament called Ahab. And he wanted something that somebody else had. He wanted somebody else's field.

Because he thought, this is what I really need. But it wasn't his. And when he went to the man to ask for it, he said, no, you're not going to get it.

So what Ahab did was he took things into his own hands. And he did a very silly thing, as you will hear about in Sunday school. But it all came about because he had this covetousness in his heart.

He coveted what somebody else had. And that's the danger that we have today as well. And especially at this time of year that we look around and think, that's what I want. That's what I really need in my life.

But what we really need is to keep our eyes on Jesus. And to see that he is what we really need. Not just at this time of year, but every day of our lives.

[ 8 : 16 ] In the New Testament, there's a wonderful story about a man who was blind. And Jesus asked him, what do you want me to do for you?

It was like he was asking, what do you want me to give to you? And just before he met this blind man, two of his disciples had been asked the same thing. James and John had been asked by Jesus the very same question.

He asked of them, what do you want me to do for you? And what they wanted was glory for themselves. They wanted to sit one at his right hand and one at his left in glory in heaven.

And Jesus was saying, you're asking for the wrong thing. And so often that's the way we are when we're looking at this world. We're asking Jesus for the wrong things. But Bartimaeus, the man who was blind, is a great example to us.

When Jesus asked him the very same question, what do you want me to do for you? He said, I want to see. Not just to be able to see physically, but to be able to see Jesus.

[ 9 : 18 ] And of everything that's going on in our lives just now, of all the busyness of life, all the attractions that are all around us, may we have that longing and desire of Bartimaeus.

That we would see Jesus. Keep your eyes on him. And don't get distracted away by everything else that's going on around us. Keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus.

And that the Lord would do that for us in the weeks and months and even years ahead. That we would always look to him. We're going to sing to God's praise again.

We're going to sing in Psalm 42 in the Scottish Psalter. It's not on the notice sheet, but we're going to sing Psalm 42 in the Scottish Psalter, page 262.

Again, this psalm just speaks of our longing for the Lord. We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 5 to God's praise.

[ 10 : 31 ] And the tune is Glencairn. Like as the heart for water brews, Entharched and hunt and pray, So pats my longing soul, O God, That come to thee I may.

My soul for God, the living God, Doth thirst when shall I near.

And to thy countenance approach, And in God's sight appear.

My tears have unto me been me, Both in the night and day.

While I love to be contentedly, Where is thy God they see?

[ 12 : 02 ] My soul is poor and I tend me, When this I think upon.

Because that with the multitude I here to forth upon. Because that with the multitude I here to forth upon.

With the multitude I have to forth upon. With the multitude I have to forth upon.

With the multitude I have to forth upon. With the multitude I have to forth upon.

With the multitude I have to forth upon. Holy Days. O why, why, why, hast thou my soul, why it be so dismayed?

[ 13 : 17 ] Was God for I shall praise him yet, his countenances my name.

We turn together now to read in God's Word. We're going to read two passages, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. Our first reading is in the Old Testament in the book of Psalms.

We're going to read Psalm 98. Psalm 98, we'll read the whole of this psalm, then we'll turn to the New Testament and to Luke, the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2.

First reading, Psalm 98. O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things. His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The Lord has made known his salvation. He has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

[ 14 : 31 ] All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn, make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea roar and all that fills it. The world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity. Now if you turn with me into the New Testament, to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2.

Luke chapter 2. We're going to read from verse 22 down to verse 35. Luke chapter 2 at verse 22.

[ 15 : 40 ] Luke chapter 2.

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And we thank you that wherever we read, we are always pointed to the one who is the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that your word is fulfilled in him, for he is the word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

And so we ask your blessing on your word to us this day. As we approach it, O Lord, may it not be a word that we become over accustomed with, that we come over familiar with, but there would always be a word that speaks to us in season and out of season, a word that reminds us of the world in which we live, the chaos of it, the wonder of the creation in the midst of all of it.

We see your beauty around us and yet the dangers that surround us too. But we thank you that your word reproves, that your word challenges and convicts, even as the psalmist says, that your word is able to convict us, to bring us to that knowledge of salvation.

It converts us, O Lord. And we pray, Lord, for your mercy over us as a people, to bring us to that point where we will be turned from having our eyes fixed on the things of this world to having our eyes fixed on the wonder and beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 19 : 47 ] And so we pray your spirit to be with us and to be with the preaching of your word throughout all ends of the earth today. As we have been reminded in the reading in the psalm, that your wonder of your story is made known throughout all the ends of the earth, that there is the knowledge of the Lord in so many ways and nations and people.

As the psalm says, all ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. And we pray that that will be true more and more as each and every day goes past, that your salvation will be made known to all the ends of the earth, that every nation, tongue and tribe and creed of people will hear and come to have a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, but more than that, to have a saving knowledge.

We know how our world needs you and we pray, Lord, for our nations, that you will turn us towards you, that you will have mercy on us as a people, that you, O Lord, will come in a day of your power.

We thank you for the assurance and the promise that you are a God who hears your people as we cry to you. We offer up our prayers for one another and for our communities, for our people all around us, near and far.

That in all our different needs, in all our different anxieties and worries, in all our different illnesses and times of trial in our lives, in all the sorrow and sadness that life so often brings, that we'll be able to cast our cares upon you as the one who cares for us.

- [ 21 : 29 ] And so hear our prayers for one another. And Lord, we come praying for the work of the gospel around us here, thankful for the way the gospel goes out and for the way that the ministry of the gospel goes on in many practical ways as well.
- We thank you for the service yesterday, for the street pastors in the town, and we do continue to pray for the work of street pastors. Thankful for all who go out in the weekends to be there to help those in different needs.
- We pray them, especially for them, over this festive season when the nights are so cold and so many people are out and about. We pray your protection over people and for those who are out as street pastors, Lord, that you will guide them and help them in all that they do.
- Give them strength and courage and boldness as well to proclaim the good news of Jesus in the midst of a world that is perishing. So Lord, be with them in that work, not just now, but throughout the year as well.
- Remember, Lord, the needs of our congregation as well. Remember all our homes and our families, those who mourn, those who are unwell, those who are going through all kinds of difficulties just now, Lord.
- [ 22 : 46 ] We pray that you will surround us and uphold us and keep us. Remember, we pray just now for Scott as he sits exams in Edinburgh. Lord, we thank you for his sharing of the stage he's at in the call of ministry last Sunday evening.
- We do pray for him over these days as he comes to his last exam on Tuesday. Give him clarity of thought and mind and help in all things. We thank you for his work and life and ministry and pray for his family too.
- Lord, look after them and care for them day by day. Remember our presbytery and the wider work of the gospel throughout our congregations. Remember our youth.
- Oh Lord, as we pray for the holiday club this coming week and all the youth work that goes on throughout our presbytery. May you bless Sunday schools, creches, and youth work throughout the week as well.
- We pray, Lord, your blessing on our young people that you will be with them in their young years, that they will come to praise you. Remember our vacant congregations and our presbytery too.
- [ 23 : 54 ] We pray for North Tolstown, especially with the meeting this week, with a view to a call. We pray for your leading and guiding for them as a congregation and the one you will call as well.
- May your hand be upon them to lead them and to guide them. So remember the congregation in North Uist as well, praying your blessing on all there too. We do continue to remember our nation.
- We pray for Jersey at this time and then what has been such a tragic week for them with the loss of the fishermen and now this explosion in the last few hours as well.
- Lord, we pray, Lord, for your help and your peace and your grace upon them. We know, Lord, we live in a world of so many difficulties and trials. And we do pray, Lord, for a day of your peace and for your blessing over us.
- Lord, hear our prayers as we come, convicted and even in our own hearts of how faithless we are at times. But renew us, we pray, and revive us as your people.
- [ 24 : 58 ] Quicken us, O Lord, that we will come to praise you and give glory to you with all our hearts. Continue with us throughout this day. Watch over us, bless us, and keep us as we ask all with forgiveness of our sins.
- In Jesus' name, amen. Well, again, we'll sing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 98, the psalm we're going to be looking at together this morning.

And we're singing in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 98. We'll sing verse 1 to verse 4, page 1 to 9 of the psalm books.

We'll sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done. His right hand and his holy arm, the victory have won. The Lord declared his saving work and made it to be known to all the nations of the world his righteousness is shown.

We'll sing from verse 1 to 4, and the tune is blocksome. O sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done.

[ 26 : 16 ] His right hand and his holy arm, the victory have won.

The Lord declared his saving work and made it to be known.

To all the nations of the world his righteousness is shown.

His steadfast love and faithfulness he has remembered well.

The covenant he made with them the eyes of Israel.

[ 27 : 26 ] And all the nations of the earth have seen what God has done.

Our God who brings deliverance by his right hand alone.

Acclaim the Lord, all the earth shout loudly and rejoice to Him with our hearts.

Well, we can turn back together, especially to our reading in the Old Testament in the book of Psalms and Psalm 98.

We'll focus on this psalm for our time together this morning. Read again at verse 3. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

[ 28 : 53 ] All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord. All the earth break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

It is a busy time of year, and I'm sure maybe many of you feel it in that sense of being. It's a busy and a hectic time when there's so many different things going on.

But it's also a time where we need to keep our focus and keep our attention on what is truly important. It's often a time of year when I'm reminded of the words of Jesus as he looked around and surveyed the crowds.

It says in Matthew 9, verse 36, that when he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

And even just as you walk around the town or if you've been away recently to any of the cities in the mainland and you've been out and about in our busy streets when people are dashing around going to all the different shops, perhaps you've had a sense of that feeling, seeing a people who just seem to be harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

[ 30 : 13 ] You just want to say, you know, just come and sit down for a moment. Come, let's have a cup of tea, have a cup of coffee. Just take the weight off your feet for a moment.

Let's just talk. Let's just look at the world in which we live and let's look at what's important. And as we come to God's word, we are reminded of what is truly important, not just at this time of the year, but on every occasion throughout the year.

But isn't it sad that at a time of year when our attention and focus should be more so upon a saviour who came into the world that we are so easily distracted?

We often maybe hear about how early Christmas comes every year when decorations start to go up, when Christmas gifts start to appear in the shops and adverts are there focusing on Christmas.

It's become so much commercialized in so many ways. And our attention has been drawn away from what's important. You start having these conversations earlier and earlier each year.

[ 31 : 21 ] When can we put the Christmas decorations up? Is it too soon? But what about speaking about the Christmas story? Is there a time when we can say to ourselves, is it too early to speak about the Christmas story?

It's a very different kettle of fish altogether. We don't put the Christmas story away with the Christmas decorations each year. The Christmas story is a story of salvation and that's a story for all year round.

It's a story we are to hear all the time. And the scriptures throughout remind us of the promise of a saviour, that God would send a saviour into this world.

Right throughout the Old Testament and to the birth of the Lord Jesus and right to the book of Revelation. It's all a story about our redemption through Jesus Christ, a saviour who came for the world.

From the very beginning in the book of Genesis, when we are reminded of how sin came into the world and Jesus, the Lord spoke into that. He said, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

[ 32 : 32 ] He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. How Satan had come in and deceived and sin came into this world. But then there is a gospel message, the message of good news, that God will provide a saviour.

And it runs like blood through our veins as it runs throughout the Old Testament into the New Testament. It shows us the life that the Lord is able to give.

And throughout the Old and New Testament, we're always being pointed towards the saviour who will come. And Psalm 98 is one of those points where we are seeing the psalmist expressing his delight, that the Lord will make known to all the nations the salvation that is being revealed and about to be revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 98 is very much a psalm that reminds us of the real joy that is to the world and that that is through Jesus Christ.

You hear so many different songs, maybe being played on the radio or being sung out and about. Even yesterday was the carol service in the town where you're hearing all these different songs being sung.

[ 33 : 51 ] And there's one maybe you hear from time to time. It's called Joy to the World, a hymn written by Isaac Watt. And the hymn is based on this very psalm, Psalm 98.

It's a paraphrase of the psalm. It's a reminder that joy to the world is found in the one who is king. And the Lord is king over all.

And the Lord, the king, has come into this world for our salvation. Isaac Watt never intended it just to be a hymn that would be sung at Christmas time, although it is a time it seems to be brought to the fore.

Because it's a psalm that speaks not just about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, it speaks also about how we need the Lord with us in all our days. And then as you see at the end of the psalm, it speaks about the coming of the Lord in judgment.

So it's a wonderful psalm for this time of year and for all year round that we remind ourselves of the wonderful theme and the thrust, joy to the world.

[ 34 : 59 ] The Lord is come. Let earth receive her king. And as we look around ourselves today and we see the crowds harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd, don't you just want to shout that praise?

Joy to the world. The Lord is come. Let the world, let the earth receive her king to see and seek the Lord Jesus with all our hearts.

This psalm is a psalm that's then we see quoted around the time of the birth of Jesus. We see it quoted three times early on in the book of Luke.

In chapter 1, Mary's song, it's quoted there. In Zacharias' prophecy, it's quoted there. And also as we read in chapter 2 with Simeon, being able to see the salvation that was promised, we see it quoted there as well.

It's pointing us towards the Lord Jesus. He has come for our salvation. He has come to be judge over the world.

[ 36 : 13 ] And I want us to focus on three things and take three things from this psalm together today. The first thing is the purpose of the psalm. The second thing is we see the passion of the psalm.

And the third thing is the progression of the psalm. So the first thing we see is the purpose. And the purpose is so clear as you go throughout this psalm.

The purpose is to give praise to God. To come and offer up our praise to God. Like many of the psalms, sometimes we struggle just to find the exact place that it points to, the exact maybe occasion that it points towards.

But from the outset of the psalm, what is clear is that it's a sense of making a joyful noise to the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things.

His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him. There is a sense that God has been with His people.

[ 37 : 22 ] Maybe in a particular set of circumstances, or maybe just in a general sense, the psalmist is pointing us towards the fact that salvation, deliverance from all the dangers, the wickedness of this world, belongs to God.

And so the purpose from the outset is the sense of bringing a praise to Him. In the hymn, Joy to the World, it resonates that theme throughout it, that salvation is completely of God.

And when we think of just this time of year, we're reminded again and again that our salvation is come in the person of Jesus Christ.

That in everything that's going on in our lives, and all the dangers that we're in, and everything that would lead us astray, that God sent His Son into this world. He sent Him as the light into the darkness, to make His light shine upon His people, to give them the hope that is found in Him.

And so the thrust of this psalm is very much to see the Lord, to recognize the Lord as the one who is able to save.

[ 38 : 43 ] Because what does salvation lead us to? Where does a knowledge of salvation lead us to? It leads us, as we saw last week, it leads us to the cross.

It leads us to that place of darkness where Christ gave His life. It brings us to that place of sorrow. But it also brings us beyond that.

Because we remember, He is risen. He came, He gave His life, He rose from the grave, and He will come again.

And that's what we see in the purpose of this psalm. It ties our whole lives together. In the fact that the Lord has come, the Lord lives with us, He is risen, and that He will come again.

And the more we see that, the more we are led to praise God, to give thanks to Him. You know, as we come to worship God, we will hear these words, let us praise God together.

[ 39 : 52 ] As we come and sing praise to Him, we say, let us come and worship God. Let us praise His name together in song. We come and we sing praise to God.

And how we love to sing praise to God. But there's a great difference between singing and singing with conviction. Singing with this knowledge of the one who we are singing about.



To sing the words, you know, such the well-known psalm as Psalm 23. If we were asked to sing it just now, I'm sure you could sing it probably without even looking at the pages before you.

You know the words so well. But there's such a difference between singing the words that you know well and the Savior that you know well. Because the more that you sing with a knowledge of the Savior, the more your praise is full and complete.

And so the psalmist here is saying, Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to Him of the wonders that He has done. Convinced in the saving work of God.

[ 41 : 02 ] In the book of Romans chapter 10 verse 14, it says, How then will we call on Him in whom they have not believed? How can we offer up our praise if we have not fully believed, if we are not fully convinced?

Well, the psalmist here is saying, To come and know the Savior for yourself. The purpose is to know that the Lord has provided His way to salvation.

Psalm 40 puts it like that as well. He gives us a new song to sing. He has put a new song in my mouth. Our God to magnify, to praise.

And that is the longing of this psalm too, that we would come and praise Him with all our hearts. It is leading us to God. It is leading us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who has brought salvation for us. And how undeserving we are. And yet He came for us.

[ 42 : 08 ] And so often we feel our lives may be just a mess. Our lives are just caught up in the ways of this world.

And we think, Well, what can God do with me? Well, God can do so much. There was a story told about a sculptor who had ruined a huge piece of marble.

An enormous piece of marble. And he'd started trying to sculpt it, but it just ended in disaster. Everything had gone wrong for him.

And this was in Florence, in Italy. And the sculptor just abandoned this work. And it was left for almost a hundred years with no one almost daring to go near this piece.

It was an expensive, a valuable piece of marble. But no one could see a way forward with it because of the mess that this sculptor had made. Then in the year 1505, a young sculptor by the name of Michelangelo, he started to look at this giant piece of marble.

[ 43 : 22 ] And he started to get an impression in his mind of what he could do with it. And he measured it carefully. He looked around. He saw all the imperfections in it.

But he started working on it. And the image that came to his mind was David, the young shepherd. And he worked away on this piece of marble for three years.

Chiseling away bit by bit. Shaping it skillfully. And finally, it was finished. And out of this, what had been seen as a disaster to so many, Michelangelo had created this wonderful sculpture.

And one of his students, when he saw it, nine tons of marble shaped in this wonderful sculpture, exclaimed, Master, the only thing it lacks is speech.

It was so impressive. The only thing it lacked was speech. It was so real. But isn't there a greater story than that about the way God brings our lives, how he works away at us?

[ 44 : 31 ] It takes time. Sometimes it takes years. But in the mess that we have made of our own lives, in all that we have done wrong, God can come and chip away and shape us and form us and make us into something beautiful, but something that doesn't lack speech.

Because we have that. He's able to put a new song within us, to make us praise God. And the reality for us all is that we're never the finished product.

He's still chipping away at us all, shaping us, correcting us, writing us, and putting us back on the right track again and again. But the wonder of it is that the Lord has come.

He has made known his salvation. It has been revealed to us as his people. May we know more and more of the purpose of this psalm, to see a Savior given for us, a Savior given to so many people who are imperfect, with every wrong chip in us, so much wrong about us, but God chipping away at us day after day.

The second thing we see about this psalm is the passion of this psalm, the passion that there is in this psalm.

[ 45 : 56 ] And it just reminds us, as you look at these words, the purpose is to show us God, but then there's the passion that runs through these words of what God has done.

For he has done marvelous things, it says. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness, it says in verse 3. Verse 4, make a joyful noise all the earth.

Sing praises to the Lord. There is this passion that we are to sing with. The Christian faith is very much a singing faith.

And as Christians, we are to be a singing people. Our praise is expressed so much in song. In whatever tongue we sing with, whether it's in English or Gaelic, or whatever other language we might be able to sing in, we are to offer up praise to God.

Because there's a passion in our praise, and there's a passion to our praise. And the passion is the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 47 : 03 ] Because we're able to sing about God's victories. The battles that we could never fight by ourselves. The victories that he has won for us.

We start singing to the Lord. No matter how low or defeated we might feel, we can come and offer up our praise to God.

Psalms 42, which we sung together, it's one of these Psalms that you just see this turning in it. So often you find the Psalmist low or challenged or in difficult circumstances.

But he says in Psalm 42, why are you so downcast, O my soul? He says, praise God. And isn't it great as God's people, that whatever goes on in our lives, we can still come and say, yet God is good.

That we can come and say it with passion. We can say it with conviction. Because we know the victory is in God. It's not in ourselves. So we sing about his victories.

[ 48 : 07 ] We sing about his salvation. Praise God, my soul, the Psalmist so often says. From our very soul, we are to often up with passion our praise to God.

We sing about his mercy and his faithfulness. We sing about his steadfast love, how he has remembered us. Even as we were singing together last week at the Lord's table, we come and remember him.

We come and rejoice in him. We come and give all glory to him. And we do so today again. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

In verse 3, all ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God. He has made himself known to us. And so the question is, are we singing with passion?

Are we singing with that passion and praise to the Lord? You know, there's times when we can lose our song. When we don't feel like singing.

[ 49 : 15 ] It means we've lost something else, so if that's the way we feel. It brings us to realize we're losing our vision of God.

We're losing our sight on him. We're looking at the troubles that surround us. We're looking at maybe the wickedness of our own hearts. And we feel, how can I offer up praise to God?

And yet we are to come with passion and conviction to sing to him. The psalm, like so many other psalms, they refocus our attention. They point us back to the Lord of our salvation, to the God who is good, whose steadfast love goes on and on.

Sing to the Lord a new song, he says. And isn't it interesting how when you sometimes look around the things of this world and you see how song plays such an important part in people's lives.

Often strikes me how when you see maybe films more so, but other times it's seeing footage of old films where you have maybe soldiers or slaves or workers doing a very hard work or sailors in difficult conditions.

[ 50 : 32 ] You look around and you see people going through all these hard experiences, these hard jobs, but what you so often see is they sing. It is song that keeps them going.

And yet how as God's people we have a greater song to sing. The song of salvation. The song of the one who is the Lord who has come to be with us.

Born into this world for the salvation of his people. And we are to sing with passion. To sing the song that keeps us going.

To sing the songs through all our trials, through all our experiences. And that's the beauty of the Psalms. They speak into our circumstances, into the reality of our lives.

They don't hide the things that are difficult. They don't shy away from the trials and temptations of this world. They focus on them in order to bring us to see the Lord Jesus.

[ 51 : 39 ] To see how he has come to save us from our sins. What he has done is worthy of all our praise. But again, we see the sin that so easily clings to us.

But when we come to sing the song of salvation, we are reminded that he has come to deal with all our sins. Look at it in this way as somebody once highlighted.

A story about a national park where there was many trees growing, but there was this one particular oak tree that was, if you looked at it, just seemed to be surrounded by this vine that had grown all around it.

and the vine had started growing and over a long period of time the talons of the vine were just reaching out and out and surrounding the whole tree.

And it almost seemed like this vine was starting to crush into the oak tree. It was going to take the life out of this tree. But the gardeners had seen what was happening.

[ 52 : 44 ] And if you looked closely you could see that the gardeners had dealt with a problem. They had dealt with it down at the root of the vine with one precise cut the vine's root had been cut into and it was being killed.

And although to the eyes of those who were passing it seemed like this vine was still holding on and clinging to the oak and crushing it, the life was gone out of the vine.

And over time the vine would gradually fall away. And that's sometimes the way we can look at our own lives too. Where we see the sin that so easily clings to us.

And where focus is on that and can seem to be just crushing in on us. But as we focus our attention on the one who has remembered us with his steadfast love we remember that he has cut that source to our sin that he has dealt with it.

Yes we'll sin. Yes we'll still go on and it seems that it's clinging to us. But the wonder of his salvation is that he has dealt with our sin.

[ 53 : 57 ] And so we are able to praise the Lord our God. The final thing and just briefly that we see with this psalm is the progression of this psalm.

It's a psalm not just for this season. It's a psalm for every season of our life for every day of our life. It's a psalm that reminds us of the battles that we're in but the victory that is the Lord's.

We may not be in the same battle as the psalmist was focusing on but we may be in a very similar battle. We're all in the same battle against sin. And it's why the likes of Paul in Ephesians chapter 6 reminds us how much we need the Lord.

And he says there in Ephesians 6 that wonderful passage on the whole armor of God he says put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers against the authorities against the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

[ 55 : 08 ] we are all in this battle. But the progression of this psalm is it reminds us that we go on in the strength of the Lord.

We go on through him. You see the progression of this psalm and how it's quoted in those early chapters of Luke reminding us of the fulfillment that there is in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the psalm also goes on as you see towards the end where it says in verse 9 before the Lord for he comes to judge the earth. He is coming again.

And so this psalm is reminding us to go on in his strength. To go on reminding ourselves that when the Lord came there was a choir of angels that proclaimed his coming.

That's as you see in the early chapters of Luke the angels sang glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill to all men. We go on in that knowledge that Christ has come.

[ 56 : 16 ] Joy to the world the Lord has come. Let earth receive her king. That is the king that we are to look to today. So do you rejoice in God today?

Or are you saying why should I rejoice in God today? Well if you look through verse 1 to verse 3 of this psalm you see six reasons given for singing praise to God.

The psalmist puts it in six different ways. He says he has done marvelous things. Can you not say that today? He says his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation.

Can you not put your confidence in that today? He has made known his salvation. Can we not say that today as we come before the word of God his salvation is made known.

He has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. It's seen around the world. He has remembered his people with steadfast love.

[ 57 : 27 ] As we saw last week as we saw in the Lord's supper we remembered that how he has remembered his people with steadfast love. And all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of the Lord.

The Lord makes known to people far and wide. How often have we boasted or heard people boasting in gifts and purchases that they have made saying oh you need this.

What a difference this will make in your life. Oh it's pricey but it's worth every penny. Well how much more we have to rejoice and boast in the Lord who has come to make himself known.

And if we know this for ourselves how much more we are to show that forth in our praise of him. just remember Simeon and the joy that he had that we read of in Luke where it says Lord now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word for my eyes have seen your salvation.

It is the only way that we can ever depart in peace if we behold the wonder of this salvation. The saviour who came into the world joy to the world the Lord has come let earth receive her king.

[ 59 : 03 ] May we receive this king anew today and keep our eyes fixed on him in the busyness of this life in the busyness of this season may we know the joy of salvation that is in him.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven we do thank you for your word and the way we are able to sing your praise we thank you that you put a song in our mouth that song of salvation and help us Lord to rejoice in you and to know the joy that you are able to give in salvation and the peace that is ours through looking and focusing on and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to have even the peace of Simeon who was able to say those great words your servant is able to depart in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation may we see with eyes of faith ourselves as we ask it in Jesus name Amen we sing to God's praise and conclusion in this psalm psalm 98 at the end of the psalm verse 5 down to the end page 129 of the psalm books psalm 98 at verse 5 with harp make music to the Lord with harp his praises sing with trumpet and with horn rejoice before the Lord the King let earth and all in them rejoice triumphantly let streams clap hands and mountains sing together joyfully we'll sing these last three stanzas to God's praise and the tune is Gainsborough with harp make music to the Lord with harp his praises sing with trumpet and with horn rejoice before the Lord the King let earth the sea and all in them rejoice thy heart humbly let streams clap hands and mountains sing together joyfully now let them sing before the Lord who comes to judge the earth he'll judge the world in righteousness the people's heaven is through after the benediction

I'll go to the door to my right we'll close with a benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God Father Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore Amen Christ amen while tonight we're here and there those are Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.