

Guest Speaker

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Date: 09 December 2021

- [0 : 00] Thank you, Trent, for giving me Psalm 95. It's not a hard psalm, so I appreciate it. Being from up north, just got word from our good friends in Mankato, Minnesota area.
- They are expecting to have possibly 18 inches of snow by this weekend. I appreciate being able to measure our moisture in a rain gauge versus by the yardstick, right?
- Can I tell a story? You ever hear about Ole and Sven? A couple of Norwegian Swedes up there in Scandinavian country.
- In wintertime, when the snow comes, oftentimes a city will announce, we are going to clear the odd side of the street today.
- And tomorrow, we will clear the other side of the street. So make sure that you park your car on this side of the street for the clearing that's coming.
- [1 : 17] So Ole and Sven are drinking their morning coffee at home and listening to the radio. And the radio announcer says, Now make sure that you park your car on the whatever side of the street it was.
- So Ole goes out and he moves his car over to that side of the street and watches as the snow plow comes and piles the snow up. The next morning, they're listening to the radio and drinking their coffee.
- And the announcer says, Now remember, this is a snow day, so park your cars on the... And the radio stopped. And he says to his wife, I don't know which side of the street to park the car on.
- And she says, I think you can leave the car in the garage today. Got to think about that a little bit.
- But Ole and Sven. Lena. I want to take you to Psalm 95 and a psalm of only 11 verses.
- [2 : 24] It's kind of a unique psalm. It sounds almost like a Christmas song. We sing the song, O come, all ye faithful. Well, this one starts out, O come.
- Psalm 95, verse 1. O come, let us sing unto the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and with a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
- For the Lord is a great God, a great king above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth. The strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it.
- And his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship. And bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.
- For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation.
- [3 : 36] As in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.
- Forty years long was I grieved with this generation and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.
- Unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my rest. Kind of unique. It starts out with two.

O come, O come. One is, O come, let us sing. It's music. The other, verse 6, says, O come, let us worship. It's musing.

Meditation. And then it comes to a point of judgment. Do not murmur.

[4 : 40] So there's music, there's musing, and there's murmuring. Two of them are pleasant to talk about, one not so pleasant. It's kind of unique to me that how can we have two sections that are giving praise to God both in music and in meditation.

And then the next phrase comes out. Now, don't you harden your hearts against God. Kind of an admonition. So the first part starts out with, O come, let us sing unto the Lord.

Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. God loves music. Music is rich.

Music is a blessing. Most of the time when my wife and I go home after a service, she says, I love the music. I love the music.

That doesn't mean she didn't love the preaching. But my wife loves the music. And that's something that we enjoy very much here. A rich thing.

[5 : 50] It's always been. The blessings of the music. Charles Addon Spurgeon, who's been dead since 1892, died relatively young.

58, I believe it was. And he said this, It is feared that very much even of religious singing is not unto the Lord, but unto the ear of the congregation.

Above all things, we must in our service of song take care that we offer, that all we offer is with the heart's sincerest and most fervent intent directed toward the Lord himself.

What a challenge. When people do special music, we lived 80 miles from Branson, Missouri.

That's like living 80 miles from Pigeon Forge or something. We used to go over to Branson quite often. And you hear the musical concerts there, and you expect to be entertained.

[7 : 01] They're entertainers. But in church, I love to have my heart blessed, but I can sense it when somebody is singing as to the Lord. There's a difference.

We shouldn't take our cues on how to sing from the entertainment world. We need to take our cues from just thinking about, I'm doing this for God, not for entertainment.

And Charles Haddon Spurgeon back over 100 years ago, encouraged us with that thing to keep our eyes focused on the things of the Lord with our music.

Oh, come let us sing. Where? Unto the Lord. Something we need to understand about some of the words. Hebrew children, I think, would have grown up understanding a lot of the unique words that we find in our Bibles.

And the word Lord, when it's all in capital letters, is actually the Hebrew word Yahweh, or what we would say Jehovah. And the significance of the words regarding Jehovah, it means that he is the self-existent God.

[8 : 09] He is the source of his own existence. Jehovah was not created. He was the creator. He was self-existent. He always lived.

He's never had a beginning. He has no end. He had no starting point. He always was eternal. Our minds can't wrap around that quite so easy to understand of someone who has always been.

Self-existent God. Jehovah, the Lord. Let us sing unto the Lord, the one who is the great God, the one who is the self-existent God.

Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Now, the word noise isn't really probably what we would think of as noise.

It's okay to be loud. If you've been in a congregation of several thousand people and you're singing one of those songs, Oh Lord my God, when I an awesome wonder and it starts out small and it builds and all of a sudden then sings my soul.

[9 : 24] I can't sing. Anyway, and the whole congregation just comes alive. Majestic. Beautiful. Loud.

You want it loud. But it's not noise. It's beautiful. Beautiful. We've been going through the book of Revelation in our Sunday school class and there are several of the passages that talk about the praise, the angelic world singing praise to God.

The 24 elders speaking of probably the gathering of all the saints singing and exalting God even thinking about His creation. You know, I don't know what always heaven is going to be like.

I don't know what people will always be thinking. I have not seen nor ear heard neither entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. All tears will be washed away.

I don't know how much of this earth will remember but there is one of the praises where they're singing and talking about the creation. So they know some things about the creation even in heaven.

[10 : 40] Fascinating to be able to just give consideration to. So, joyful noise. A week ago, my wife, my son, and I went to grab some pizza a little late at night.

Didn't realize that this place was going to have live music. And when they started, it was noise. It was noise.

You can't have a conversation. You can't talk. Saying, unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise.

The rock of our salvation. A rock is a place of security, a place of safety. We talk about Jesus, He said, and thou art Peter, Petras, small stone, upon this rock, Petra, himself, big stone, massive stone, I will build my church.

The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Jesus is the rock of our salvation. He is our safe place. He is our security. He is our anchor. He holds us safe and secure.

[11 : 53] The rock of our salvation. Verse 2, let us come before His presence with thanksgiving. Thankful for the blessings that He has given to us.

Just came through the season. And let us make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. The hymn book of the Hebrew people.

How or why do we sing the songs? Verse 3, The Lord Jehovah is a great God.

Now the word God, there's two words that are used and they're somewhat similar. L-E-L is the single term for God and it speaks of Him being a great God.

He is the God that delivers, that saves, that holds us. He is the supreme God but it says He is a great God.

[13 : 07] He is a mega great God. He is above all others. There are no others like Him. And a great king, a mega king, royalty, one who is in control above all gods.

verse 4, In His hand are the deep places of the earth and the strength of the hills is His also. The deep places of the earth.

In Revelation, it talks about the bottomless pit and the bottomless pit being opened and a great smoke comes out as if it were from a great furnace and the smoke darkens the sky.

The bottomless pit, the deep places of the earth belong to God. In His hand are the deep places of the earth.

The strength of the hills is His also. That's kind of a unique word. The word strength actually comes from a root word weary. Strange.

[14 : 19] The strength of the hills is His also. It's a little twist. In the hills, you can mine out iron, copper, silver, gold, oil, coal, water.

And in order to get at those precious elements, it takes a lot of labor, a lot of toil. Back in the day, they used to have to hand-dig wells.

Today, a driller can come in and drill down 500 feet and strike good water. You want good water. You don't want water with a lot of iron in it if you can avoid it.

You don't want a gassy smell in your water. You want a good, good water. When you drill or when you dig into the hill and you find the iron or you find the coal or you find silver, you find the precious things, you toil and you're weary.

But in your weariness and in your efforts, you have strength. So the hills are a place that you get weary to find what's there, but you have strength when you pull out that ore or you pull out that fresh water or whatever it is that you find in the hills.

[16 : 00] in his hand are the deep places of the earth and the strength of the hills is his also.

Up in Pickens County near Tate is a marble mine. Y'all been to Washington D.C.

and seen the Lincoln Memorial? The Lincoln Memorial is made from marble that came out of Pickens, Georgia. Pickens County, Georgia.

Tate. Close to the Johnsons. Do you know that that marble that they have discovered there back in the 1800s?

That one mountain of marble is seven miles long, two miles wide, and 2,000 feet deep. Seven large chunks, squares of it were wherever they made that, but the Lincoln Memorial is made from marble from Pickens County, Georgia.

[17 : 24] Just up the road here a few miles, in the earth. The strength of the hills are in his hands.

The sea is his, and he made it. his hands formed the dry land.

We read in Genesis about he spoke all of these things into existence, but the Bible also informs us of the stars, that he placed the stars in their place with his fingers, with his hands.

God is a great God. He is the true God. God. He is the creator God. He is the salvation God. He is everything to us, all in all, our king, our savior, our rock.

We're to sing, make a joyful noise about that which he has created. Verse 6, musing, quiet meditation.

[18 : 39] It transitions a little bit in my mind from the joyful noise and the singing of the first five verses, and in verse 6, he changes a little bit.

He says, oh, come, let us worship. Let us bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.

It's a point of time when you get quiet. It's wonderful to sing loud and to sing praises, hallelujah, but there are those moments when we wind down and we just close our eyes and meditate and muse and think about the wonderful things of our God.

Oh, come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker, for he is our God. And the word God there, the first one we looked at was El.

This one is the plurality of the name Elohim. Different words. He's the God of gods. He is above all gods.

[19 : 58] He is El, he is Elohim. And we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

David said it in Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd. There's a double ownership there. He owns me as his sheep, but I own him as my shepherd.

Who has the better deal there? I think we come out a little bit pretty good on that one. To own him as our shepherd. Double ownership. He owns me, I own him.

He leads beside the still waters. He leads into green pastures. He refreshes. He takes care.

I am the sheep of his hand. We are the people of his pasture.

[21 : 09] A joyous thing that we have that is given to us by our Lord. We transition. We come to the point of murmuring.

I don't know how this goes together, but the psalmist put it together this way. In the middle of verse number seven, he said, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart as in the provocation, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, or tested me, and saw my work.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation. And said, it is a people that do err in their heart. They have not known my ways, unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

It happened to be that Israel, as they had come out of the bondage in Egypt 400 years, wandering in the wilderness, had a point where there was no water.

water. And God allowed it to be in his ways that this was just to see, just to let them see themselves as God sees them. I'm going to take care of you, I'm going to provide for you, but I'm going to let you experience a little bit of time where you're going to wonder, and let's see what you do.

[22 : 43] and it angered God for their attitude. They hardened their heart for 40 years.

He was grieved with this people. God wants us to have the worshipful times of singing and joy and praise and making a loud noise.

He loves the times when we bow down the knee and get quiet and just meditate on the truth of who he is and what he does. But far too often, perhaps for us, we get sidetracked, we get our eyes off of him and put the eyes on ourselves.

We get our eyes on our circumstances and think, woe is me. verse 10 it says, for it is a people that do err in their heart and they have not known my ways.

Psalm 133 says, as for God, his way is perfect. Psalm 145 verse 17, the Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.

[24 : 15] Isaiah 55, 8 and 9, for my thoughts are not your thoughts and neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

You do err in your heart. They have not known my ways. In a situation of where we as a mission church look at the needy places around the world, we wonder sometimes, why are some continents so closed?

It's God's world. They are the people that he created and put here, but by the billions, governments keep people out.

I don't understand. God loves all the people, we know that. He commands us to go unto the ends of the world, we are told to go.

We have people that try to go. They want to be there, but the door is closed and sometimes they're shut out while they're there.

[25 : 46] Does God know these things? yeah, yes he does. His ways are above our ways.

We don't understand. It's hard in our finite minds to wrap ourselves around why do things happen the way they happen. we've gone through this COVID situation and our good friends from Minnesota, my wife and this man's wife were roommates in Bible college back in, I don't know if my wife is listening probably so I tell how old that is, but very good friends.

They are just now going through COVID in their first experience. They just have gone in, couldn't take it anymore, tried to tough it out at home.

They're scheduled for an infusion on Saturday. You know what the difference is between a transfusion and an infusion? A transfusion is when they put something in your body that's naturally there, so we call it a blood transfusion.

It's naturally there. An infusion is when they put something in your body that's produced in a laboratory. I'm not a doctor, but that's what I understand.

[27 : 15] It's what I read. An infusion is something that they chemically make and then put it in your body to try to help you out. They are scheduled for an infusion on Saturday morning at 830.

Couldn't get in before. before. I have a nephew and a niece that live in Hudson, Wisconsin. Very good friends of theirs were down in Iowa for Thanksgiving.

This lady came down with COVID. She passed away yesterday. Young lady. I don't understand. But when we begin to doubt God's ways, we lose ground.

We go backwards. You do err in your heart. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? The heart. It's wonderful when we're on cloud nine and we can sing the glorious songs and when we can take the moments of meditation and kneel down and pray and close our eyes and just meditate upon the marvels of who God is and what he does and for his love for us and we're full of thanksgiving.

[28 : 41] But we have times when things go wrong and they will. Jesus told that we are to go to the ends of the earth with the gospel.

How will let it be fulfilled in our day? What will it take in America? And I'm not saying that people need to go because we've had people go and they can't get in.

That's hard. That's very difficult. It's challenging enough to try to go and learn a new language and a new culture and try to adapt ourselves to what's there.

But when the field is so closed it's hard to understand. 1969 I worked with missionaries for three months the summer of 69 in France.

France at that time was considered 94% Catholic. 6% other. Of the 94% that were Catholic only 6% practiced.

[30 : 02] the missionaries the statement they used was that they go to church three times in their lives when they're hatched, when they're matched, and when they're dispatched. if you have anyone that's working as a missionary in France you know it hasn't changed much.

Communism is a cultural thing for them. They just they have religion but they're not open to the truth.

It's hard for us to understand. Jesus prayed, Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. Thine will be done. In the Lord's prayer, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Thy will be done. Greatest peace comes to us when we can turn ourselves over to God and say, Lord, your will be done. This is what I want but if it doesn't work, that's fine. It's okay.

[31 : 20] We move on. there's just challenges that we have in life that are hard for us to know what to do. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, I said, died at 58.

I look down here, is 57. He suffered from gout for many years. He could only sometimes minister for six months at a time and he went to a place in France to just be able to try to recover.

His wife Susanna, they had twin boys early in their marriage but she was confined to her home with a chronic illness most of their married years unable to attend church alongside Charles or to interact with their congregation.

She died at 71. Great preacher that he was but tormented with his physical condition his wife unable to even attend services.

Why? God knows. God knows. His ways are above our ways. His thoughts are above our thoughts.

[32 : 41] So the challenge for us is not to get cold and calloused and err in our judgment, harden our hearts. You can go to Hebrews chapter 3 and there's a great part of Psalm 95 that is written there as a warning again for even New Testament Christians to not fall into the same trap as those did as they were being prepared to go into the land of promise.

Harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation. God's a good God and he's a blessing to us and I don't know what the days are for us.

I don't know what the future holds for us but God does and his will be done. His will be done. Have thine own way Lord. Have thine own way.

Thou art the potter I am the clay. Father we thank you for the blessings of who you are for the greatness of your majesty that you are the one supreme God who is self existent.

You have created all things. You hold things all together. We marvel at who you are. We're thankful that we can consider ourselves as sheep in your flock.

[34 : 10] Thank you for all the ways that you provide for us. You meet our needs. You're a gracious and good God. Lord we ask that you in your mercy and grace continue to guide our minds that we may stay close and not become hard and calloused, cold and indifferent.

Have your own way with us. We give ourselves to you for your will. In Christ's name. God