The gracious God is Worthy of all praise

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Date: 25 October 2015

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[0:00] that refers to the harvest. And I want us to take a few moments to think about harvest, maybe from a slightly different perspective. Like Daniel, a fellow Cornishman, I'd like to maybe think outside the box a little bit.

So we're turning to this psalm today to think about harvest from a slightly different perspective and see what God is saying to us through it. So you turn to Psalm 67. I like this now, because it's almost like a sword drill.
You've got your Bibles out, and some of you are on your little devices. Who can get to it first? That's pretty quick. Even quicker. You ought to be doing sword drill on Sunday mornings.
As we go into this Psalm 67, what I want you to have in your mind is the title of this message today. And the title of the message is this. The gracious God is worthy of all praise.
The gracious God is worthy of all praise. Okay? So Psalm 67. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us.
[1:06] Selah. Selah. That your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God.

Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. For you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.
Selah. Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase.
God, O God, shall bless us. God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, considering this title this morning, the gracious God is worthy of all praise. I'm going to be kind to you today. These are two points. Just two little points.
[2:11] Yeah? You can stay with me for two points. Okay? And our first point is, the gracious God to be known. The gracious God to be known from verses one and two. Now, the psalm opens with, may God be gracious to us.

Now, this is a prayer of the nation of Israel. Those uniquely blessed people. And the writer is asking for God's merciful dealings and he's using part of the priestly blessing from Numbers chapter six. But this isn't just a prayer for the nation of Israel. This is a spiritual prayer for the Christian church today. It's a prayer for this church today.
It's a prayer for each gathering of believers in this country and in further countries further afield. In the churches that you are supporting here in this church too.
It's a prayer for them also. It opens with, may God. You almost feel there's a question over it. May God? Yes, he did. Yes, he did.
[3:21] God showed incredible grace on the nation of Israel. Israel. Incredible grace. Because Israel, it toyed from obeying to disobeying.

And then we see them do that repeatedly. Obey, disobey, obey, disobey. And we look on, don't we? We read God's word and we go, are you guys dumb in the other area?
You know, it seems absurd to us that they would one minute be obeying and one minute be disobeying when God was in control and God was showing them all the time his grace. It just seems ridiculous to us, doesn't it?
But the grace shown to Israel as God delivered them from slavery, and then the grace shown by God as he delivered us from the slavery of sin, we forget we're just like the nation of Israel.
Yet God is gracious. God is gracious. He is forgiving. God is loving. And the psalmist notes, and may he bless us. See, he's recognizing that we can just bless God in word, but his blessing upon his people, it really enriches and it prospers the soul of each believer.

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[4:49] And then you get to this lovely word, selah. I love that word. Quite often when people read the Bible, they see the word selah and they ignore it. They just carry on reading. But I believe it's there for a reason.

The selah is there for a reason. It wants you to pause. Just pause. Read those first few words and then pause. And a commentator has said that it's a moment to lift up one's heart.
And you just stop and you think, may God be gracious to us and bless us and then pause. And just enjoy the moment. The psalm continues.
And it's, considering this aspect of the gracious God in verse two, it's written, that your way, that your way. And that's the way of the Lord. God's way of mercy.
The way of making God famous. Making God famous. You know, there are not multiple routes to God. You know, people these days, we live in a world where different religions say, oh, well, we lead to God.
[5:57] And this religion says, well, we lead to God. No. There is one way to God and only one. And that is by, it says in the verse here, your saving power.

It's by God's saving power. And in fact, those words of saving power, they're only a result of English translation. You see, the original for those words is salvation.
Salvation. The incredible, gracious God through salvation for all people. You know, I was reading these verses, that just put a smile on my face.
I think there is one way to God and it is through God by salvation. You know, quite often in life these days, we think that we can do it our way. But we can't.
There is only one way through God by salvation. Salvation by the one and only gracious God.
[7:05] Salvation from our deserved death for sin. There's no easy way of saying it. We deserve death, but by God's incredible grace, the graciousness of God, we've been saved.

And in addition to this way is the aspect of being known on earth. I just love this, being known on earth, which is, you know, the whole, the whole of the earth. From east to west, the whole earth. You know, it's a really beautiful thought, isn't it, of salvation being made known in every single nation. Because God is gracious. Because God is gracious to forgive so that he may be made known.
So that God may be made known. all nations and all the people in them, they need salvation. Every single nation, every single person needs salvation because there is only one way to God.
And all these nations and the people within them, they need salvation even if they do not know it, even if they do not desire it, and even if they don't seek it.
[8:23] There's plenty of nations who are going through life like that at the moment. Salvation, the grace of God is as universal as the sun that shines across the world.

You know, I love it when you, like a day like this, it's a bit cloudy out there, you know. You get in a plane and you take off from the runway and you're above the cloud and what is there?
There is this sun shining. It's just incredible. It never stops. It just continues going. I love that. It's just an incredible feeling that you can suddenly leave behind all the doom and gloom and that is just what it's like when you come to know Christ as Saviour.
When you're in salvation. Just phenomenal. In the Old Testament, God chose the nation of Israel to be a light to the nations.
To tell the world about himself and to tell the world about his saving power. In the New Testament, God continued to work to make himself known to the nations.
[9:32] How did he do it? By coming to the nations in human form. In the person of his son, Jesus Christ. Jesus came as the substitute, the sacrifice, the payment of ransom for the sins of those who would trust him as Saviour.

And trust him as Lord. God didn't only make himself known to the world, but through Jesus provided a way for people to know him in a very, really personal way.
It's not just a God that's out there and you can't know him. You can have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, his son. See, God has taken away the barrier that kept humans from God.
The barrier for us knowing God has disappeared. That barrier of sin has been obliterated by Jesus Christ. I want you to think for a moment.
Sometimes you see on the news when some of these oil fields and tankers, there's an accident and you have oil slicks and it just spread across the ocean.

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[10:46] And you always see these little birds and they're caught up in the oil. And they're just covered head to toe, claw, whatever, in oil.

And the bird, when it's covered in oil, it's trapped. It's trapped. The inevitable death, the inevitability for that bird is death.
Because it can't move its wings anymore. It can't open its beak anymore. The inevitability is death. It no longer has freedom at all anymore, that little bird.
And then you have this rescuer, it comes up and you pick up the oil-covered bird and then over a period of time, just washing it and washing it. I'm washing it.
And over a period of time, the oil is washed away. And that bird can enjoy life again. The oil disappears. See, God is the rescuer of humanity.
[11:53] You know, he's come down and he's scooped us up and by the blood of Jesus Christ, he has washed away our sin so that we can know freedom, true freedom and know God in a personal way.

I want to ask you a question this morning. Are you following the way of the Lord? Are you truly following the way of the Lord? Because there is only one way and that is through Jesus Christ.
Are you following the way of the Lord knowing Jesus Christ is your saviour this morning? And do you know this gracious God that is willing to forgive you no matter what you have done in your life?
And only you know what it is that you've done. Only you know whether the way you come to church each Sunday morning or midweek event and you have that smile on your face but inside you know what you've done in that week.
What you've thought. The way you've behaved. Whether it's right with God or not. Only you know that. But actually that's not right because God knows too.
[13:07] And he wants your honesty with him. The purpose of this prayerful psalm is that the gracious God saving ways would be known throughout the whole of the earth.

For if God saves them then others would know it too. Isn't that why we see churches being planted in other countries? Because you want Christ to become known there? You know that's where you see the church you're supporting in Botswana and other places?
Because you want Christ to be made famous there so that other people will get to hear about Jesus Christ and then it will spread and spread and spread and what you want it to be like is this wildfire. You know? The gospel wildfire as it just spreads through these other nations and souls get saved.
That's what you desire for there isn't it? That's what we need that desire and that passion here in our country too. You know some people say to me well Kian why are you going to be a missionary in the UK?
Why can't you go to a foreign country? Because in this country there are millions who are going to a lost eternity. Millions who are going to a lost eternity and they need to hear about Jesus Christ. I'm moving to a rural environment because people in those rural environments they live behind closed doors a life that is far away from God and they need to hear about Jesus Christ.
[14:24] There is a need here in the UK and just because I'm a missionary in the UK doesn't mean I'm any less of a missionary than any of a missionary in a foreign country. There is a massive need here in the UK.

We get to the point two of praise God. You know we've looked at the graciousness of God and he is full of grace. You sung it in a song just a second ago about the grace of God and it is phenomenal and so what should it fill our hearts with is praise for him.
Praise for God and it is in verses 3 to 7. We have seen a little bit of this gracious God and how the psalmist then responds in verse 3 is in a chorus form.
Just imagine the psalmist is writing this and think what the psalmist has gone through. I want you to get a hold of just the joy in the psalmist's heart. Let the peoples praise you oh God.
Let the peoples praise you oh God. Let the peoples praise you oh God. And really what you've got going on here is this obligation to praise God. An obligation. You sit there and go no one's obligating me to do anything.
[15:33] But God is. God wants you to praise him. God wants you to praise him this morning. You know we need grace to adore and appreciate God's grace.

God's grace. All remember and turn to the Lord and worship to praise him. To praise him.
It says let the nations be glad and sing for joy. How that the nations will be full of joy and triumph. Not of themselves. You know you look at the number of nations they say we're doing well and they

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go it's all because of us.
Do you know what no it's not. It's not. You only have what you have because of God. Things are going well in your life. I'm really sorry to burst your bubble.
It's not because of you it's because of God. The grace of God. Being poured out on nations.
[16:34] And wants them to sing in overflowing joy. Overflowing joy. My name's Kian and I admit that I like listening to a good choir.

I like listening to a good male Welsh choir. I am no Welshman. I'm a very proud Cornishman. But there is something lovely about listening to a Welsh male voice choir.
Singing something like bread of heaven. You know a choir from the valley. Something really so very stirring about that sound.
God. And as I was preparing this I listened to a few of them and I almost had tears trickling down my cheeks. Because it is stirring. It is so moving to hear this song of praise.
Perhaps you listen maybe to the choirs at last night at the proms. I love the last night at the proms. And I love the rousing singing that goes on during some of those songs as well.
[17:40] It's just fantastic. I want you to think now and just imagine for a second whole nations of thousands and thousands and thousands of people singing together.

Take that male Welsh choir and make it thousands singing. Can you imagine that?
Perhaps some of you are going too loud. But just imagine just phenomenal sound. The word that came to me for this was a cacophony.
You know just this amazing singing and the joy of all these voices lifted up. What a phenomenal sound. I'd love to hear.
I'd like to hear that this morning. Thousands upon thousands singing in overflowing joy to God because he is gracious. Can we imagine what our churches would be like if God's people, if his believers, if you and me gathered here today were truly filled with joy and with thankfulness toward God and his grace for us by the revelation of the salvation to us.
[19:10] Can you just imagine what our churches could be like? You're sitting there, maybe you're like me, you're thinking, but it's not like that. Why?

Why aren't we like that? What holds us back? Is it that British stiff upper lip? Why do we worry what others think about us?
Why is it that we sing sometimes, we look down the row and is the other person singing like I'm singing? Or they don't have their hands up, I better not put my hands up. We compare ourselves with each other all the time, don't we?
Why do we think more of what others think of us than what God thinks of us? I'll tell you, I'm guilty of that. I stand in church sometimes and in my heart, I am full of praise and joy and thankfulness, but my face and my scene doesn't show it.
Why? Because I'm actually a bit nervous about what Joe thinks, sitting next to me there. Oh, he's a bit exuberant today. What's got into him?
[20:24] You know? Well, that's pride. And we need to let go of things like that. Because it doesn't glorify the Lord's name.

Perhaps if we came to church in praise and adoration, it could be a trigger for others too. Now, for next week, you all took it on board and you came next week and you've been practicing your singing all week, you've done some vocal warm-ups, first thing Sunday morning, and you come through those doors with our hearts that want to come and praise and sing for joy.
And we'll see if the singing next Sunday morning can raise the roof. Now, for once, I can say that and I can test you next week because I'm obviously going to be back here again. And we'll see if we can raise the roof with the singing next Sunday morning.
If you're really filled with the joy of what God has done for you. See, God is the God of justice. justice. For you, the judge, the peoples with equity. Sorry, for you, judge, or he will judge the people with equity.
That is that God rewards the righteous, ruling by putting everything to rights. Why? Because he is God. He is the God of power.
[21:38] And I loved it even in the kids' talk where maybe the word power wasn't quite the right word that Daniel was looking for. But power, you know, it's a great word.

Power able to guide the nations upon earth where worldwide happiness can only come when God is king and God is shepherd of all nations.

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This is imagery of God that is worthy to praise him for. Rather than maybe the groans and the murmurs that we often live with.
And the psalmist, he pauses again. And he gets that word, see, and we're pausing. And we've got this moment to just lift up our hearts again.
And what the psalmist does is he then repeats the chorus. I wonder why he did that. I think sometimes when we're speaking about something and you're full of excitement for it and you repeat yourself again and again, you know.
[22:47] If you've got kids, do you remember when they've come back home and something amazing has happened at school and they start telling you about it and they're so full of it, they tell you again. And then give them 30 seconds and they're going to tell you again because they're just full of that excitement.

And that's exactly what the psalmist is doing here. He repeats the chorus because actually it's like he's just unable to contain and just can't contain his joy.
You know, he just needs to take a pause because this is just great, you know. And then he goes on and he starts, he comes back down from this moment of time out.
He says, and the earth or the land, it's yielded, it's increased. So here the psalmist is saying that the harvest like we have here, it's been physically collected.
And he's just full of praise to God for the physical harvest that's just been collected. But also, what he's also talking about here is that one day there'll be a spiritual gathering on a worldwide scale of the harvest of souls.
[24:04] And the psalmist is aware of that. It's a prophetic psalm. As he looks to the future of this gathering of the saved souls, can you not understand now a little bit of why the psalmist was just so excited and so full of joy?

I know in Genesis that sin had laid a curse on the land. And it's only the gracious God who can remove that curse.
And at that time, there were some nations, they were tyrannical. You want to read about some tyrannical nations and you think it's bad now, look back in the Old Testament, look at what the Assyrians were getting up to and the way that they were living their life.
There were some tyrannical nations at that time. With rulers who had absolutely no interest and no concern whatsoever for God. None at all.
And what happened? The lands became unproductive. The lands became unproductive. There was no blessing of God on those lands.
[25:12] I want you to maybe think about an example today. The nation of Zimbabwe. Until recentish years, it used to be described as the breadbasket of the world.

The breadbasket of the world. Full. Full of minerals. Full of rich agricultural land. I mean, it was a wonderful, wonderful nation.
In terms of what you get from the land. But the situation today is so very, very different. So, so different. The psalmist, he's consumed with praise though.
And he continues, God, our God shall bless us. For the Lord gives what is good and it is the Lord who blesses the land to give the increase. Why?
Yeah, why? Why does he do that? Why does he bless? Why does he pour out his blessing in this way?
[26:23] See, this is what is the crux of this whole passage. And the crux of harvest. The crux of everything we've got here today.

It's all to show that he is God. Just to show that he is God. Because God is God.
And in verse 7, God shall bless. You say, was the psalmist being presumptuous? Oh, God shall bless me. It wasn't written like that at all.
The psalmist understood that God doesn't turn away from doing good to his people. Let all the end of the earth fear him with blessing his fear.
You say, blessing with fear? See, it recognises God's blessings encourages people to fear and worship him. When you understand what God can do, there is a reverential fear.
[27:23] Just like, you are so pissed. And I am just so small. So, so small. Those who are far from him shall fear.

Why? Because the time is going to come when ignorance, insolence, injustice, idolatry, they're all going to be overcome as God will be king of kings and lord of lords over all who are directly on this

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earth.
God is jealous to be known. God is jealous to be praised. God is jealous to be enjoyed. And God is jealous to be feared. And he's displeased when people are ignorant of him.
When people are disrespectful to him. When people are bored around him. When people are unduly casual in his presence. It displeases God. What he wants is us to praise him.
Today we're celebrating harvest. Celebrating this feat of the ingathering. We're celebrating this final harvest of the farmer's year.
[28:33] The farmers have done well this year. God's done better. The harvest is all about God. The focus of the harvest is the true and living God.

So today, do you know the gracious God whose harvest of the field is to be rejoiced over? Do you know that gracious God? Will you join with me today in praising God?
Maybe not just for today but in all the rest of our days. Praising him. And can we be like the psalmist?
Wouldn't this be great? Where you are unable to contain your joy. Where all you want to do is just praise God and let the joy overflow into everything that you do in your life.
where we are infectiously joyful believers living out the salvation that we've received from God. With the intention of making him known in all the nations.
[29:43] And with the intention of making him known in the communities that each of us live within. Just imagine if you were that over the top of joy with the people around you.

the gracious God is worthy of all praise. May we go from this place today to praise God. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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