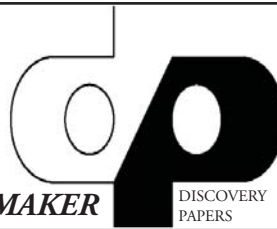


SONGS OF PRAISE, MORNING AND NIGHT

SERIES: LET US KNEEL BEFORE THE LORD, OUR MAKER



Catalog No. 5333
Psalm 92
4th Message
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Psalm 92 is the third of three consecutive psalms that are intended to be read, prayed, and sung together.

Psalm 92:1-3:

A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day.

**It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most High,
to proclaim your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.**

The Goodness of Worship

It is not difficult to understand the main point of these verses, nor is it difficult to agree with them. Those who know the love and faithfulness of God should worship him in song.

There are obstacles, though. It is difficult to give attention to a Person we cannot see, speak to One who is silent, receive blessings that accrue slowly over time instead of immediately. We are easily distracted, enticed, made anxious; and though we know that we ought to be people who adore God, we don't find it easy to do.

Gathered into congregations, we know that singing plays a central role in our experience together, but we also need to admit that it is not always a congenial one. It is all too familiar to find churches in conflict over who should lead music and what music is best. We know we should sing well, yet it is often difficult to do so.

We can be helped by observing the call to worship in the opening three verses of Psalm 92. Commentators agree that the reference to the Sabbath day in the superscription is not to the routine and weekly Sabbath of Jewish worship, the seventh day of each

week. Rather, it refers to the Sabbath day, the original Sabbath, the seventh day of creation. Singing to the Lord, offering thanks in music, connects us to eternity, engages us with truths that have no end.

On the seventh day, when God rested from his work, there was no evening and morning—no beginning and end (Genesis 2:1-3). The Sabbath rest of God extends forever. We sing, morning and evening (and all the hours between) in anticipation of the end of days when redemption is complete and rest will not be temporary.

A song for the Sabbath is a song about burdens laid down, the incomplete made full, brokenness repaired, darkness dispelled by light, the end of evil, and the eternal reign of love among the people of God.

Verse 1:

**It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most High.**

The word translated “good” is the Hebrew word *tov*—a very important, strong word. Again, it takes us back to creation in Genesis 1. At the end of each of the first five days, the Maker observed what he had done and “saw that it was good [*tov*].” On the sixth day he created man and woman in his image and saw that all that he had made “was very good [*tov*” (Genesis 1:31).

This word does not mean “good” in a comparative sense. Often in English we use the word “good” to mean something that is pretty good or good enough or better than something else, our preference. For example, we might say that pumpkin pie is good. Pumpkin pie is especially good when preceded by a turkey dinner and followed by a nap. Yet we are not making any point about the essential nature of pumpkin pie. We are just saying that we prefer it to an alternative. But the idea in this psalm is that worship is good in its essence forever, without comparison to anything else. It is essentially a good thing for men

and women to offer God thanks, to adore and praise him. It is what we were created for, this experience of adoring the living God.

Further, we note that worship is expansive in nature. Instruments are added to enlarge the capability of our voices alone. When we enter into praise, we find ourselves ennobled and made beautiful, our voices expanded by the contribution of others.

Finally, the worship called for here is wise, thoughtful. We proclaim “your love in the morning,” and “your faithfulness at night.” Morning and night—the love of God and the faithfulness of God.

The word “love” is the word *hesed* in Hebrew. It is sometimes translated “lovingkindness,” the loyal love of God. It contains certainty that God will keep his promises because he loves us. This is not the fleeting emotions of popular love songs—this psalm knows that there is enormous power in the loyal, passionate, furious love of God for his people.

So in the morning we sing of his love, freely given and never failing. There is an old quip about how two different kinds of people begin the day. Those with a song to sing begin with, “Good morning, Lord!” Those who fight life’s battles alone begin with a groan: “Good lord, morning!”

We sing of his lovingkindness in the morning, and then we sing of his faithfulness at night. This is another great truth about God: he never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We can go to sleep at night certain that the universe, ordered by God, established by him, will not have changed when we wake. We sleep through the night knowing his faithfulness.

So we should sing. There should be instrumentation. There should be volume. We should sing of eternal things. We should sing thus because worship is essential to what it means to be human.

But a problem remains.

Can the Broken Worship?

Is my voice welcome? Will God receive worship from a broken vessel and unclean lips? In answering

these questions we recall that Psalm 92 is a conclusion to truths declared in Psalms 90 and 91.

Psalm 90 describes our unworthiness in verses 5-6:

**You sweep men away in the sleep of death;
they are like the new grass of the morning—
though in the morning it springs up new,
by evening it is dry and withered.**

And it cries out for a Savior in verses 13-14:

**Have compassion on your servants.
Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing
love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our
days.**

Help us, redeem us so that we can sing.

Psalm 91 assures us of rescue in verses 15-16:

**I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him
and show him my salvation.**

And so we join the choir of Psalm 92 without hesitation.

Verses 4-15 in Psalm 92 move from the theme of God’s glory in creation to God’s presence in the hard circumstances of life in a broken world. We have so much to be grateful for.

God Our Help

Psalm 92:4-11:

**For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD;
I sing for joy at the works of your hands.
How great are your works, O LORD,
how profound your thoughts!
The senseless man does not know,
fools do not understand,
that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,**

**they will be forever destroyed.
 But you, O LORD, are exalted forever.
 For surely your enemies, O LORD,
 surely your enemies will perish;
 all evildoers will be scattered.
 You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox;
 fine oils have been poured upon me.
 My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries;
 my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.**

The dilemma of human insignificance described in Psalm 90:6 (withered grass) confronts everyone initially. It remains the fate of the unrighteous (Psalm 92:7) but not of those captured by God's saving love. The foolish resist God and are scattered to be remembered no more. Longing for substance and significance, some resist the living God and some bow before him. And what the psalmist is saying is, "I see the difference now." Those who would exalt themselves end up lost, like grass that is blown away.

Verse 6 of Psalm 92 refers to the senseless and the foolish—those who think that fame and accomplishment will overcome human transience. American Idols and Super Bowl champions and Nobel Prize winners end up forgotten. An old bit of verse makes the same point in uncompromising terms: "Into this world to eat and to sleep. And to know no reason why he was born. Save to consume the corn. Devour the cattle, flock and fish. And leave behind an empty dish."

The psalmist says, "This is not true of me." Like an ox horn, I have been given strength to handle life. I have had the oil of spiritual insight poured out for me. I know there is an invisible God who is more powerful and real than anything I can measure. I know that he has made me for himself."

Verses 12-15 of Psalm 92 conclude this word of testimony of the singer who is singing because God

has touched him, because he is changed, and because of what he has learned. Someone broken and now healed has a song to sing.

Flourishing in the Courts of God

Psalm 92:12-15

**The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
 they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
 planted in the house of the LORD,
 they will flourish in the courts of our God.
 They will still bear fruit in old age,
 they will stay fresh and green,
 proclaiming, "The LORD is upright;
 he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness
 in him."**

We find a beautiful alternative to the temporary and insignificant (grass) with the description of palms and cedars. Old age diminishes nothing—"they bear fruit in old age" (Psalm 92:14). The most valuable fruit is a life that honors God, and fruit-bearing continues until the final breath is drawn.

So we are called to sing. We sing because we know what we were created for. We sing as those who have been redeemed. We sing as trees rooted in the courts of the Lord, not chaff blown on the wind. We sing because even in old age the best is yet to come, when this age has ended. In the Revelation given to John there is a beautiful verse (Revelations 5:13). Heaven is filled with song:

**Then I heard every creature in heaven and on
 earth and under the earth and on the sea,
 and all that is in them singing:
 "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
 be praise and honor and glory and power,
 for ever and ever!"**

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