

Series: Psalm

Title: Will We Hear Christ

Text: Ps 81: 1-16

Date: Aug 19, 2021

Place: SGBC, NJ

Psalm 81: 1: «To the chief Musician upon Gittith, *A Psalm of Asaph.*» [here the church is speaking] Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. 2: Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. 3: Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. 4: For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob. 5: This he ordained in Joseph [in Israel] *for* a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt:

The solemn feast was passover and the feast of tabernacles. God appointed it. At the beginning of each month they blew the trumpet. But the 1st day of the 7th month they were reminded of the Lord bringing them out of Egypt. They blew the trumpet and rested on the sabbath day which is a type of faith in Christ our Sabbath through the preaching of the gospel. On the 14th day they blew the trumpet and Israel observed the passover which is a picture of the gospel declaring Christ our Passover who delivered his people out of spiritual bondage. The next day began the week-long feast of booths (the feast of tabernacles) where they remembered how God provided for them in the wilderness. That was the feast the Lord Jesus went to in John 7. It typifies Christ our Tabernacle in whom God's people dwell.

That was how God ordained and appointed that they worship to give God all the glory. It was to keep them remembering the Lord who brought them out of Egypt and provided for them all their journey through the wilderness. In our day we blow this gospel trumpet in the preaching of the gospel of Christ. We sing praises to God as they did. We pray, opening our mouth wide at our Lord's throne of grace, as the Lord commanded them to do. We give God our Father and his Son, Christ Jesus, all the glory. His command is, "*Sing aloud UNTO GOD OUR STRENGTH: make a joyful noise UNTO THE GOD OF JACOB.*"

Then the Psalm changes to the Lord speaking.

Psalm 81: 5...I heard a language *that* I understood not. 6: I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots. 7: Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

The Lord heard the cry of his people in Egyptian bondage and he answered. He delivered them by the blood of the passover lamb who died in place of their firstborn. He heard their cry at the Red Sea and again he answered. The cloud went between them and Pharaoh.

Then the Lord proved them at Meribah. That is where the Rock was smitten. That Rock was Christ. God will prove "what think ye of Christ?" It is called Meribah—chiding, strife, contention—because again the rebellious murmured against the Lord and Moses

What do we learn from the rebellious? Time and again they judged only by the seeing eye. When they saw trouble they chided against God. When they saw good they thought God was with them. But they had no faith.

In Egypt when God sent plagues, Pharaoh made their life bitter with more hard bondage. So they complained, telling Moses to leave them alone. But when God brought them out then they went out with a high hand rejoicing.

When God hemmed them in at the Red Sea again they murmured, saying, Moses brought us out here to kill us. But it was God they chided. Then when God delivered them, they sang songs to God.

At the bitter waters they were thirsty and lusted for water and the waters were bitter. So they chided God again. When God sweetened the waters they sang.

In the wilderness of sin they hungered and lusted for food. When there was no food again they murmured against God. God gave manna from heaven. Then for a little while they were quiet.

Then at Meribah (Rephidim) they thirsted and again chided saying, “Is the Lord with us or not?” God showed himself in the smitten Rock.

Now, Moses and the other regenerated children had plenty of unbelief in their flesh as well. They were sinners like the rebellious. But the difference was that God gave them faith, bearing witness in their hearts; testifying in their hearts. They heard God by faith and walked by faith not sight. Moses opened his mouth wide unto the Lord and the Lord filled it. The Lord strengthened him in faith in the heart. The Lord saved him from the enemies. He was satisfied with Christ. That is the difference only God makes. It is the difference made by grace. It is the difference God makes by giving faith which believes God regardless of what our outward, temporal circumstances may be.

Now listen to the next few verses. Hear the word of the Lord.

Psalm 81: 8: Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:

When God gives ears to hear, the Lord testifies, bears witness in the heart through faith. We hear and hearken to God by believing on Christ. When our inward man is set on Christ in faith then the next word is God’s promise.

Psalm 81: 8:...O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; 9: There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. 10: I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

But what did the rebellious children who had not faith do?

Psalm 81: 11: But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. 12: So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: *and* they walked in their own counsels.

Look to Christ that day at the feast of tabernacles in John 7. He is God who delivered their fathers from Egyptian bondage. Christ is the Passover Lamb who delivered his elect from sin and death. He is the Tabernacle in whom his people dwell safely. Christ is the Smitten Rock by whose stripes his elect are healed. The Pharisees and Jews were observing the very ceremony in this text and at the last day of the feast, Christ cried to them, “*Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. 10: I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*”

When did Christ cry that? When he cried, “*If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*”

Christ says, “*But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.*” They would not look to Christ alone. Instead, they went on worshipping that strange idol called self the same as the rebellious in the wilderness did each time they chided against God. So Christ did to the Pharisees what he did to the rebellious in the wilderness, “*So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels.*”

Listen to what Christ would have done had they believe on him and walked by faith and love.

Psalm 81: 13: Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, *and* Israel had walked in my ways! 14: I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. 15: The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time [the believer’s time] should have endured for ever. 16: He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

Toward the end of his earthly ministry, Christ said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (Mt 23: 37)

Jonah rebelled. Why did God not cast him off? It was only due to God's grace. After our Lord chastened Jonah and delivered him from his temporary captivity, Jonah declared this.

Jonah 2: 8: They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. 9: But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD.

Let me give you three things we learn from this Psalm.

Subject: Will We Hear Christ

Proposition: Through the gospel Christ gives us faith, bearing witness in our hearts by the Spirit, so that in every trial our Lord brings us to cry to him and he continues to deliver us unto the end, providing all our need.

WE WORSHIP CHRIST ALONE

Psalm 81: 1: Sing aloud unto God our strength—make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

As we blow the gospel trumpet, Christ speaks in his gospel and reminds us that God is our Strength. He is the God of his chosen sinful Jacob's. We come to hear the good news of Christ's accomplished redemption. He bears witness, testifying in our hearts, each time we hear the gospel that "*I removed [your] shoulder from the burden: I delivered [your] hands from the pots.*"

Christ is the smitten Rock who bore our stripes at Calvary. He delivered us from the bondage of sin and death. Christ delivered our hands from serving the flesh pots. He made us the righteousness of God in him.

As we hear the gospel, Christ reminds us, "*Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder.*" Christ heard our cry in the first hour and delivered us. He continues to hear our cry and deliver us. These things are what we are continually reminded of in the preaching of the gospel. That is why we blow the gospel trumpet. That is why we sing songs that give God all the glory. That is why we open our mouth wide in prayer making our supplications known to God.

We worship none but Christ our Redeemer! Salvation is of the Lord!

TRIALS ARE TO PROVE US

Psalm 81: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

In school the teacher spends days teaching us. Then comes the test. It is to prove whether or not we learned what we were taught.

When God brings us to the trial, it is proving time. It is as Rephidim was to Israel. And Christ is always the proving point as was the smitten Rock. The point of contention that separates his true people from the rebellious is Christ.

The trial does not put faith in the heart. But it proves those in whom God has given true faith. The trial does not put grace in the heart. But the trial reveals what is already there.

To you who believe, the gospel is life because Christ is your Life. The Spirit of Life flows into you. Christ is your Rock. The trial proves your faith in Christ is genuine, the gift of God.

But the rebellious children only see with carnal eyes. They will not and cannot hear the Lord. The rebellious chide against God and his people. Doing so they accuse God of not doing what is right.

Remember, the devil's desire is to turn us from Christ to anything else. He cares not what it is just so we turn from Christ to something below. He appeals to our sinful lusts, our pride, our covetousness.

The only way we will not fail is because God makes us hear Christ speak. We may at first be overcome by unbelief as Moses was at times. But Christ speaks through the Spirit into our hearts saying, *“Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”*

Brethren, at all times, hear only Christ and look only to Christ. Immerse yourself in the gospel of Christ. Immerse yourself in his word. And when the trial comes do so even more. He says to you right now. May God speak now into our hearts. Christ says to you, believer, “There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. LOOK UNTO ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” (Is 45: 21).

Every trial is to remind us Christ alone is our Savior, our Redeemer and our Righteousness. He alone provided salvation by his precious blood and shall provide all else. We are saved by Christ’s power and ability alone.

Whatever you need, Christ says, *“Open your mouth wide and I will fill it!”* Open your mouth wide in praise and prayer to him, and he promises, I will fill it! Like little birds when the mother robin flies in with food. Open your mouths wide in supplication to the sovereign of the universe, your Savior, and he promises to fill the soul with the Bread from heaven. He alone is our strength. He alone saves us.

Why are you here this hour? God in His sovereign mercy has created a spiritual hunger and thirst in you which only Christ can satisfy? Call for him and Christ shall make his presence and power known in your heart. He said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." He gives us desperate times to keep his child crying to him and to keep us knowing he alone is our Bread

Deuteronomy 8: 3: And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live

God’s trials are God’s mercies to his children. They are our loving Father’s chastening love. Troubles are opportunities God gives to approach our great High Priest’s throne of grace. Open our heart and mouth to God, depending upon him alone to fill it and he promises he shall.

Psalms 107: 5: Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried UNTO THE LORD in their trouble, and HE delivered them out of their distresses.

CHRIST’S PROMISE

Christ promises that he shall deliver us from all our enemies and make us endure by making us walk by faith in him—*“I [shall] soon subdue [your] enemies, and turn my hand against [your] adversaries. The haters of the LORD [shall] submit themselves [to the Lord’s omnipotent hand]; but [your] time [shall] endure for ever.”*

By bringing us to the end of ourselves, he keeps us trusting him alone. He saves us from the enemy within who would worship the strange idol of self. But as we hear him testify in our hearts he makes us walk by faith looking to Christ alone. Only by his power and grace is it a promise that you shall not have that strange god. In those sweet times when the Spirit turns our affection to Christ above then we behold and trust none but Christ alone. He continually does this work in us through the gospel and through trial. He keeps us knowing that Christ alone is our salvation. And every other enemy he shall subdue as he keeps us enduring—persevering in faith—by his grace throughout this wilderness walk.

What else does Christ do? What is our strength? Our gracious Lord promises, *“I [shall] feed [you] also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock shall I satisfy thee.”* Christ is the finest of wheat. He is that Rock who gives us the very best honey. He promises, *“I shall satisfy thee!”* Christ says to you who believe,

Song of Solomon 5:1: I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Psalm 107: 9: For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Will we hearken to Christ? He says hear none but him. Look to none but him. He says,

Psalm 50: 15: Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

By God's grace all who are his shall. David did. What did he find? He said, "In the day when I cried thou answerest me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Psalm 138:3).

Amen!