

I Do Declare

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Bible Verse: Psalm 92
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Let me invite you to Psalm 92 in your Bibles this evening. As we've said, Psalms 90, 91 and 92 can be read together as a unit. We especially covered that last week and I'm not going to review any of that, but I just want to go through Psalm 92 kind of on a standalone basis on a verse by verse basis here this evening, and let me read it as we begin. Psalm 92, reading from the New American Standard Version which is our pulpit Bible here at Truth Community Church. Psalm 92, the inscription reads, "A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath day."

1 It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; 2 To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night, 3 With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, With resounding music upon the lyre. 4 For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands. 5 How great are Your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep. 6 A senseless man has no knowledge, Nor does a stupid man understand this: 7 That when the wicked sprouted up like grass And all who did iniquity flourished, It was only that they might be destroyed forevermore. 8 But You, O LORD, are on high forever. 9 For, behold, Your enemies, O LORD, For, behold, Your enemies will perish; All who do iniquity will be scattered. 10 But You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil. 11 And my eye has looked exultantly upon my foes, My ears hear of the evildoers who rise up against me. 12 The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green, 15 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Well, as we come to this Psalm and come to its concluding motif, you might say, for Psalms 90 and 91, I do just want to remind you ever so briefly that there has been a flow of thought through these first three Psalms that open Book 4 of the Psalter. Psalm 90 focused on the transitory nature of life; Psalm 91 brought a promise of God to inject meaning and protection into that temporary life that his disciples lead; and Psalm 92 is a response of praise to that, and you can see that especially in the closing sections of each

Psalm. In Psalm 90, look at verse 14 with me. It ends in a prayer that says, "O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us, And the years we have seen evil. Let Your work appear to Your servants And Your majesty to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands." Now what I want you to see is that Psalm 90 ends on a prayer. This is the psalmist praying to God asking for his blessing. Psalm 91, by contrast, ends with the voice of the Lord in the first person speaking to the one who has faith, and at the end of verse 14, Psalm 91 sort of functions as an answer to the prayer of Psalm 90, in Psalm 91:14 it says, "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation."

Now if you think about these two Psalms taken together, there's an element of quiet, I don't want to say desperation, but there is an earnest response to the brevity of life and the potential vanity of life in Psalm 90, and the psalmist is praying that God would help him overcome that, to see through it, and that God would bless his life so that his brief years on earth would not be wasted. Psalm 91 comes with God's answer and says, "I will bless the one who trusts Me. I will be his shelter. I will be his protection, and I will deliver him." And this deliverance is more than just from earthly problems, and it can't be an ultimate final, permanent, no exceptions policy of deliverance from physical death because we all die and we are appointed to die, Scripture says, and so God here is promising to bring meaning to life and in the full context of everything, to bring a deliverance from death.

Now ultimately these Psalms have to point our attention ahead to the Lord Jesus Christ, don't they? They have to point us ahead because only Christ has done what is necessary to deliver us from death, to deliver us from the vanity of life, and to bring meaning and to bring ultimate deliverance from this passing life that ends in the grave, and so we can look at these Psalms and read them informed with a New Testament perspective that says Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise that is expressed in Psalm 91. What is, I would ask you, what is the greatest danger that ultimately you face, is it not what we just sang about, about passing through death on to the other side of whatever lies beyond the grave? Is it not the greatest threat? Is it not knowing what happens to us when we die? Is it not our greatest need to be delivered in that dire moment, to be delivered decisively from the clutches of Satan and from the judgment of God? And that is what Christ has done, he has loved us and he delivers us at that most crucial moment and we enjoy the promise of that now as we trust in him and his righteousness for our salvation.

Well, with all of those things in mind, then, when you have a biblical perspective on life, a biblical perspective on death, when you have an appreciation of these promises of God, when you have an appreciation for who Christ is and what he has done for us, then all of that builds a momentum of praise and worship and thanksgiving and gratitude in your heart that requires you, that brings you to a point where you want to thank God for being

so good to you when you were so desperately lost beforehand, and that's what Psalm 92 does. The godly respond with thanksgiving and praise to the goodness of God.

Now, Psalm 92 tells us that it was especially aimed, the inscription tells us that it was especially aimed for Sabbath worship in Old Testament times. Look at that in Scripture there at the beginning that says, "A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath day." Now the biblical authorities, the scholars tell us that after the exile Psalm 92 was read on Saturday morning during their worship time after the exile. One commentator says this, "It was sung in the morning when on the offering of the first lamb, the wine was poured out as a drink offering unto the Lord." So this Psalm was read as they entered into worship, as they entered into the first motions of worship; this was setting their mind toward worship and giving them a proper framework to think about worship as the temple service proceeded.

Now, I just want to help you understand that sort of in like manner, this is why we try to at Truth Community Church, we try to open with reading Scripture every time we come together. We realize that we come in and life has scattered our thoughts and we need to be able to come and to focus and to let the word of God call us out of our worldly endeavors and our worldly troubles and our worldly preoccupations, to call us out of that and to reorient our mind to the praise and the worship of God. We come in order to serve God and we come to give God our praise when we gather together, and we need the help of his word in order to do that. If we don't refresh ourselves with his word, we're going to fall short in the process, and even when we gather together on Tuesdays after long days like this, it's good for us to come back to God's word and to be called out of the preoccupations of the day and say, "Oh yes, this is the purpose of life. This is why I exist. This is my heart's greatest treasure, to give praise and honor to my God and to my Christ who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Now with those things in mind, what you find are three different kinds of praise that are expressed as you work your way through this Psalm, three different kinds of praise, three different aspects of praise, you might say, and the first one is the praise of music. The praise of music. The psalmist opens and states his theme in the opening verses. Look at verse 1 with me. He says,

1 It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name,
O Most High; 2 To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your
faithfulness by night,

How? Verse 3,

3 With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, With resounding music
upon the lyre. 4 For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have
done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands.

So he opens with this musically dominated approach to worship, and let me just point something out to you in the section. You'll see the name of the LORD in all caps there in

verse 1, the proper name for God, Yahweh, the covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God. There in verse 1 it opens with the Lord and in verse 4 you see it at the end of this section as well, "For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done." As I say so often, when you see a bracketing structure like that, a poetic reckoning structure, it is telling you what the theme of that section is. This section begins and ends with the name of the Lord and it's simply a literary way, a literary device to show that he is the focus of attention as this Psalm opens up. He is at the center of the psalmist's thought and the psalmist prays as he opens up the Psalm.

So you have God exalted right from the beginning, you have God elevated, you have God being praised right at the beginning of this Psalm, and so your attention is drawn with laser focus to the name of the Lord, and now with that established, what happens is that there is this response that is given to him, the response that is given to him, and the psalmist says, "It is good to do something. It is good to do three things," he says here in this section. Notice it with the infinitives there, it is good, number one, "to give thanks to the LORD"; secondly, it is good "to sing praises to Your name, O Most High"; and thirdly, "To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night." Three verbal phrases there that show us the proper way to respond in worship to this Lord God. One, worship involves giving him thanks, expressing gratitude to him. Worship involves, secondly, singing, singing praises to his name, and there's that musical focus. And thirdly, there is this verbal declaration of the faithful loyal love of God by morning and by night, in other words, this day long celebration of worship and thanksgiving for the God of whom he speaks.

Now what this is telling us is this: it is good to do these things and it's good in this sense. What do you mean that it's good to do this? Well, first of all, it is good because it is fitting, it is right, it is the proper thing to do in response to God's revelation of himself for us as Christians in response to our Lord Jesus who lived and died and rose again to redeem us at the cost of his own lifeblood. Beloved, isn't it true that it's only right, it's only proper, it is fitting for us to respond with this kind of praise and gratitude to God in response to all that he has done? You see, Scripture calls us to give an external response to the nature and the works of God and so when we come together to worship week by week, when we come together as a congregation to give corporate praise, beloved, we can say on the authority of God's word that we are doing something good, we are doing something right. This is what the people of God should do, they should come together and congregate and consciously express their gratitude to him for all that he has done, to sing praises to him, to sing praises to his name which is an expression of the fullness of his character, the fullness of his attributes, to sing praise to that great God, and to declare in the exposition of his word his lovingkindness and his faithfulness to his people. So every time we come together, beloved, we can have a sense of confidence and assurance that what we are doing is good and acceptable and proper in the sight of God. This is what he wants his people to do and this is how we worship: we express our worship in thanks, we sing praises, and we declare the glory of God in the exposition of his word. That's good, it's right, it's proper, that's what we should do, but it's good in another way as well, it's good in the sense that God values it. God assigns worth to this. This is what God wants from us and so God considers it to be a good thing, it's the right thing for us to do,

and so when we come together there is just this ever-growing sense of propriety and confidence and a sense that this is what we are appointed to do as the people of God.

And in some ways, you know, people want to know what's the will of God for my life, young people want to know what's the will of God for my life, and you know, by which they often mean who should I marry, what kind of career should I pursue and, you know, where should I live, those kinds of things, and there's a place for those concerns but what I want you to see, beloved, is this, is that the will of God for your life transcends all of that wherever you live and whoever you marry and whatever you do for a career, there's something that transcends all of that in that the will of God is for you to worship him like this. One of the things that we said in our opening series of messages from the book of Philippians was that we are saints, we are set apart for God and for his purposes, and one of the things for you young people to take to heart and to be mindful of as you go through life, is to realize that God has set you apart so that it would be an ordered high priority of your life to worship him just like this. That's a good thing for you to do. Whatever else you do, whatever else happens in your life and family whether it's for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, for you to worship God like this is the supreme priority of your life. Scripture says in John 4 that God is seeking people to worship him in spirit and in truth and the question for you tonight is whether you will be that kind of person that God is looking for, whether you will lay aside your preoccupation with earthly things and make this the preeminent priority of your heart, whether you will make this the preeminent priority that you teach your children. Not the pursuit of wealth, wealth can come or go. Not the pursuit of earthly things. Not the pursuit, let me just be really blunt here, not the pursuit of athletics and all of those other things that can tend to creep in and just take over our lives like weeds in a garden. The question is whether you will teach your family, whether you'll teach your boys and teach your girls that the preeminent priority of life is for you to worship God like this, and to worship him exclusively through Christ, to love Christ, and to trust in Christ as the preeminent priority of life. You can look at Psalm 92 and say, "If that's what I'll do, I know I'm doing a good thing because this is what God's word declares to be good."

You know, the goal of praise, this would be shocking to some, it won't be shocking to you, the goal of praise is not to make us feel good emotionally. We might respond and it might make us feel good but that's not the primary goal of worship at all. The primary goal of worship is to ascribe to God the honor that is due to his name for his love and his faithfulness and his goodness to his people. That is why we praise God, it's because it's what he deserves and it's what he assigns value to, and so whether I come away feeling good about it or not is utterly secondary. That's not the point. You know, that is just not the point. God is at the center of it and that's what we seek to return to him.

Now as you go on, as you go on, the psalmist prescribes a skillful contribution of music to worship. Look at verse 3 with me, Psalm 92:3. To do these three things, to give thanks, to sing praises, to declare his lovingkindness day and night, and how to do that,

3 With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, With resounding music upon the lyre.

And what we see here in Psalm 92:3 and this is one of the things that I'm grateful to those in our church that help make this happen because I don't have the ability to do it at all, is that the psalmist is contemplating a skillful contribution of music to worship and one of the things that a high view of Scripture and a high view of God will do is it will elevate the music in a church to a place of transcendence, and if I can say this, I think I can because I don't have a part in it, I see that just ever increasing in our music here at Truth Community Church and I'm very very grateful for it. The music of true worship should be distinct from the music of the world. It should not sound like a rock concert when you come into the worship of God. There should be a sense that this is distinct. There is a level of excellence, there is a level of approach that is distinct from what I find in the world, and the music in God-centered praise should be lofty, it should be excellent, and that's what we delight in trying to aim for in what we do here at Truth Community Church, and this is the reason why resounding music with skill and excellence is what Scripture calls us to.

Let me just say this, those who devote their time to make our music excellent are doing a great service for all of us and it's good for us to acknowledge that and for you to thank them as, you know, we go through life together for that contribution that they make. And let me also say, let me also say this because there are a lot of you young people that are developing musical skills with your life and I give thanks to God for that as well, let me encourage you to take to heart the fact, whatever musical ability God has given you, he has given to you for the express purpose that you would use that to his glory. The music that you play, the songs that you sing should ever be centered around the thought of how can I use this to the glory of God and to declare the praise of my King? Now I don't mind people playing in secular orchestras or anything like that. That's not my point here. My point here is this, is that you should recognize that the giftedness that God has given you is for his purposes and to find a way for an outlet of the ability and the training and the opportunities that he's given you to look for a way in your life to use that to his glory. That is crucial for those who have been given musical ability, to consider it in that way.

Now he goes on in verse 4 and he says why is it good? Well, look at verse 4 and look at the spirit with which this is done. This is not a sober meager kind of response that is compelled by force. No, this comes from a heart that finds joy in the Lord himself. Verse 4,

4 For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands.

Now what this shows us is that this God-centered praise makes us glad. It makes us joyful, and it even does this, beloved, that we all understand that life gets difficult, what we see in this Psalm is that even when life is difficult, we bring together, we gather our heart together and put the effort into excellent worship that gives thanks to God, that sings praises to him and that declares his lovingkindness by day and by night, and that when we come together, we are putting our best effort forward when we gather together for worship, we're putting our best effort forward not in just mumbling the songs as

they're said, but we realize that there is something lofty that we each have a part to play and we enter into and say, "I am going to give this my best effort here. I'm going to give the Lord the best fruit of my heart as I respond, and I'll leave behind the difficulties, I'll leave behind my sadness to orient my thoughts vertically toward God and to give Him the praise that He is deserving of."

Now why is it, why is it that we, in a sense, we neglect ourselves to do that? Why is that appropriate? Why do we leave ourselves behind when we enter into the court of the Lord's praise? Well, look at again with me in verse 4. Why all of this effort for praise with excellent music and so forth? "Well, God, You've made me glad by what You've done. I'll sing for joy at the works of Your hands." As it were, to look in the face of Christ by faith, to look in his face by faith, to look at his hands by faith and see the wounds of the hands that bore the nails that your sins might be borne at the cross of Calvary, and to realize the eternal love that was expressed at the cross when he died for your salvation, when he came out of the grave with power and ascended on high and is now your elder brother interceding for you in heaven, oh, beloved, don't you see that this makes the Christian heart rejoice, that this brings us gladness no matter what the challenge may be, and that when this is why we set aside our preoccupation with the world in order to come and say once again, "Christ, You are the preeminent affection of my heart. You are the preeminent priority of my heart. In You I find perfection. In You I find the culmination of all of my affections and desires. You are all that I love and I'm going to praise You for that no matter what else is happening in life."

So he praises God. Look at it there with me in verse 4, at the end there, "I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands." He praises God for what he has done in time and space, and for us our praise rises even higher as we contemplate the coming sacrifice, the resurrection, the ascension of Christ and his imminent return. These are why we offer God our praise and music helps us to express that, for which we are very grateful. So that's the first aspect of praise that you see in Psalm 92, this right and fitting response of the praise of music toward our Lord.

Now, he shifts gears rather dramatically as we move into the second section of the Psalm because he gives us what you might call a praise of contrast. A praise of contrast, and in this section the psalmist is exclaiming the glory of God and his great works and his great mind. Look at verse 5 with me now as we look at this praise of contrast. He says in verse 5,

5 How great are Your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep.

He contemplates the works of creation, he contemplates his work for his people, the works of redemption. He redeemed his people from Egypt, now we celebrate our redemption from sin and what kind of mind is capable of speaking creation into existence from nothing? What kind of mind is able to do that? Who has the power to create out of nothing, ex nihilo? Who has the power to do that? Well, our God does and so his works are transcendent. They are great works that no human could do, and it's not just that he has the power to do this, he had the mind to conceive what the plan would look like. He

had the mind to establish the order that we see in the heavens about us, and when you contemplate those things at any depth at all, you realize that the mind of God is beyond human comprehension. His mind is great, his works are great, and it humbles us to realize that we're in the presence of one who is so transcendently greater than we are. We have none of that capability in our own and the contrast of the greatness of God's work and the greatness of his mind draws us to worship, draws us to praise him. "Lord, look at all that You've done. Look at who You are. It compels me to worship You."

Then by contrast, here is the contrast, very sharp, direct, blunt, immediate contrast here in verse 6.

6 A senseless man has no knowledge, Nor does a stupid man understand
this: 7 That when the wicked sprouted up like grass And all who did
iniquity flourished, It was only that they might be destroyed forevermore.

He's contrasting the unbelieving atheistic mind, the fool, with this mind of God, and this mortal man is foolish. He's like a brute beast who misinterprets the world around him and has no clue to the reality of life. In our day, we could look at Hollywood, we could look at the media, we could look at the professing church, and how they love to look upon men and women of charm to seem to have it made, and all is directed toward appearance and the like. Here in Psalm 92, however, the psalmist is praising God because he has seen through all of it. He is not attracted to the superficial appeal of the world. He's not attracted to the boastful pride of life or the lust of the eyes or the lust of the flesh. He's seen through it all. What he is saying here is, "Lord, that mindset, that approach to life only ends in judgment and in destruction. Those who live apart from You, who rebel against You, are senseless stupid men who don't understand the brevity of life and the fact that judgment is coming. They give themselves over to the most utterly superficial and transient matters of life," he says, look at it in verse 7, "not recognizing that all of that passes like the grass of the field and ends up in destruction."

Look at verse 7 with me. They don't understand, he says, "That when the wicked sprouted up like grass And all who did iniquity flourished, It was only that they might be destroyed forevermore." What he's doing here, remember this is a Psalm of praise to God, he is praising God now by contrasting the eternal mind of God with the mind of the fool which is preoccupied with transient things. He says, "God, You are great and planned out creation. God, the fool is enamored with the things of this day. God, how great You are by contrast with the stupid foolish men around me." And what he's doing here is in praise he is stepping – watch this – he is stepping outside the mindset of the world in which he lives, he is separating, he is rejecting the world, rejecting the mindset of the world and saying, "God, I am praising You in contrast to what the world is like. I recognize You're in a completely different realm and I honor You for that. I reject the environment like a fish rejecting the water in which he swims. I reject that, Lord, and I honor You and I extol You." And you see this in verse 8 when he says and gives the contrast,

8 But You, O LORD, are on high forever.

A couple of things about that verse. Notice how brief it is. Notice how brief it is, eight words in our English translation compared to the lengthy verses that preceded it, and there is sort of a quick punch that with the brevity it just delivers a punch that stuns you, that arrests your attention. After developing the thoughts of the senseless man, the wicked man, and expanding on that, he says, "By contrast, O LORD, You're on high forever." The man in vanity perishes but God is sovereign forever. He is the supreme Judge. One writer says this, he says, "This is the great pillar of the universe and of our faith." In the midst of whatever is happening in life, you can come back to this verse and find something that will quickly reorient you, "But You, O LORD, are on high forever. God, as the wicked man flourishes, You're on high supreme over him. As the wicked man perishes, You're on high and supreme over him." And that great contrast informs our praise. This helps us understand why we praise God like we do and it is this, and it is so necessary for us to remember because we tend to walk by sight and not by faith. What's this great contrast do for us? It informs our praise. It tells us that God will triumph over everything sinful that we see around us. Every time that the wicked man flourishes, we come back and remember that the Lord is on high forever. Every time that life changes, we realize that God reigns unchanging on. He is immutable. He is sovereign over it all. He is unaffected by the changes the time bring to us.

Look at verse 9 in light of that. He says,

9 For, behold, Your enemies, O LORD, For, behold, Your enemies will perish; All who do iniquity will be scattered.

That "behold, behold" draws you in. It builds and stresses their doom and brings everything into sharper focus. It's like he's saying, "Look. No, look!" And now that he's grabbed your attention, he declares what it is that he wants you to see, "God's enemies are going to perish, all who do iniquity will be scattered." The majesty of God, the greatness of God does a couple of things, does a lot of things, but God's majesty, his supremacy, his sovereignty guarantees, beloved, the end of his enemies. All of the enemies that rise up against God's people, the philosophies that rise up against the truth, those who have martyred faithful Christians, those who have opposed and persecuted and mocked and lied against the people of God, who have lied against Christ, who have mocked his name, those who do that in an unrepentant sense are guaranteed their doom is sure. And not only that, when we look beyond the human manifestation of these things and look at the invisible, satanic, demonic realm which fuels all of that as we fight battles in the heavenlies, this tells us and guarantees for us that the doom of Satan and the doom of all of his demons is certain. It could be no other way. Satan rails against Christ, rails against his people in vain because the Lord is on high forever. In both the visible and the invisible realm, God's enemies are doomed. God's thoughts are very deep. By contrast, men are senseless.

So what does this praise do? What does true praise do? Well, one, it leads us into this praise that offers God our thanksgiving and our declarations in music and in worship, and what you see here in this second section is this, is that praise leads us away from the world to the glory of God. It leads us away from a preoccupation with the world. It lets us

see through the prosperity of the wicked to see the ultimate end of these things so that our mind and our affections are not drawn away from praise but are reinforced in praise all the more. So let me ask you, let me ask you a question, then: do you see through the world? Do you agree with this assessment of Scripture that all of the vanity that the world embraces is foolishness before God and is of no ultimate value? Have you seen through it enough to reject it? Or do you still love and find yourself attracted to it? Approaching the question from a different way: have you seen the surpassing value of Christ in giving yourself to him? Do you see that Christ is more valuable than anything in the world? He is the Pearl of Great Price which is worth selling all that you have and giving all of yourself over that you might own Christ, even if you lose everything else in the process. Do you know Christ like that as the exclusive valuable object of your affections? That's where this leads us, is to a praise that is given in the giving of ourselves.

Well, there's a third and final aspect of praise that we see in this Psalm and it's the praise of testimony. The praise of testimony here in the final section of the Psalm. The sweep of this Psalm into music and into a rejection of the world and then a personal testimony of faith is just a magnificent poetic achievement by the writer of the Psalm. So he shifts from the transcendent to the personal as he begins in verse 10. He says,

10 But You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil. 11 And my eye has looked exultantly upon my foes, My ears hear of the evildoers who rise up against me.

Now, as you're reading through this Psalm, the sudden introduction of all of the personal pronouns is rather striking. Look at it with me, "You have exalted my horn. I have been anointed with fresh oil. My eye has looked exultantly upon my foes. My ears hear of the evildoers who rise up against me." He's changed the focus. Now he's still praising God but he's making it all personal. This personal dynamic lends to the praise here. The horn was a symbol of strength. The oil of verse 10 pictures God's care and his provision for him. "God, You have made me strong with Your care and Your protection upon me. With all that You have provided for me, You have made me strong and what can I do except to praise You." And that strength changes his perspective on the people around him. He now has confidence as he expresses in verse 11.

Look at it with me. He says, "my eye has looked exultantly upon my foes, My ears hear of the evildoers who rise up against me." This God has made him strong. This God who said, look at it with me, come back to Psalm 91 and see how all of this ties together at the end of Psalm 91 again. This God has promised the people of faith, verse 14, "Because he has loved Me, I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation." What the psalmist in Psalm 92 has done here is brilliant and instructive at the same time, and he's done that which is available for you to do in all of the simplicity and even obscurity of your own life compared to, you know, what the world loves. What the psalmist has done, what this Psalm calls you to do is to take God at his word. When God says that for the one who has loved him, for the one in our day who has put his faith in

Christ, there is this promise of God's ultimate deliverance, there is this promise of security. Look at verse 14 of Psalm 91 with me, this promise of security, this promise of answer in verse 15, this promise of his presence in trouble, this promise of rescue and even honor and satisfaction and ultimately beholding his salvation. What the psalmist has done here in Psalm 92 is he is simply taking God at his word and said, "I believe You and I trust You to keep Your word to me personally in that, and therefore I can look at my foes and, as it were, I can laugh at them. I am not intimidated any longer. I live with courage. I live with confidence because I know my God and I know my God is good and I know my God is faithful, I know my God cannot lie and God has said He will do this for me and, therefore I'm at rest. I am secure. I am strong. I am no longer afraid."

That kind of faith is designed to strengthen you against every obstacle that you face in life. Are there people who design your harm? Are there people who would try to mislead you? Are there threats to your economic security? Are there those who hate you without cause? Are there those who lie against you and create difficulty for you? What Psalm 92 is teaching us here is to draw upon these promises of God and to see through it all; say, yes, the temporary consequences of this may be difficult, painful and cry out for justice that is temporarily denied but, beloved, where we are to go as believers in Christ is we are to go beyond that and say, "I view all of this not through the lens of my human oppressor or through the human circumstances, I view this through the God who has saved me, who has brought me to Himself and who has said, 'I will be this kind of God to you. This is the kind of God I am to you, I will deliver you. I will secure you. I will keep you. I will be with you in your trouble. I will rescue you and I will ultimately honor you and one day you'll see My salvation.'"

That is designed to bring you to a point where you can say with the psalmist in Psalm 92:10, look at it again with me, "God, You have exalted my horn. God, I look at Your promises, I look at Christ, I look at the empty tomb, I look at the throne of God where my Brother is interceding for me in heaven and I realize I'm in a position of great security, of great confidence, of great blessing, and this is what You have done for me. I know it based on the testimony of Your word. I have an inward persuasion of certainty wrought by the Holy Spirit that these things are true and they belong to me," and therefore through the promises of God, through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, our hearts are brought to a place of serenity and confidence, trusting that God will do exactly what he has said for his people. "I belong to You, therefore, You will do this for me. It could be no other way." And all of that personal dynamic adds to the grounds of the psalmist's praise for the intrinsic worth of God. "God, Your glory, I praise You in music. God, in contrast to the world, You're so great. God, I now see it personally how good and wonderful you've been to me and I thank You for that. I'm confident in that. God, my soul rests in You. I put aside, I leave behind the agitation of heart that has a way of dominating my thinking, O God," you say. "God, I leave it behind because I'm utterly persuaded that what You have said You will do for me. You have exalted my horn. You've brought me into a place of security in Christ and all I can do is praise You and rest in You right there."

Now he goes on in Psalm 92:12 and he says this and he expands it out. It's not just him, this is true of all of those who are righteous by faith. Verse 12,

12 The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green,

As I said last time, the palm trees and cedars are stately trees in that region. The palms can live for 200 years. The cedars for thousands of years. Years ago on business I was in Lebanon and I saw some of the cedar trees in Lebanon, it's stunning, the size and the magnitude of these trees and this picture of a flourishing, strong, steady tree is in contrast to the passing grass of the wicked. So the picture of the trees are designed to instill in you a picture of permanence and of strength, full of sap, very green, full of all of their vitality even after the passing of much time, so much so that he says in verse 14 speaking about the nature of the lives of the righteous, "They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green."

Now there's something really important, really practical here; the longer I go in life, the more that something like this becomes important for me to take to heart as well. You know, it's easy to look ahead to old age, to be in old age, I won't make eye contact with any of you so that you don't think I'm thinking of you when I say that, and to look ahead at old age with a sense of fear. My health is declining, for some of you you are right in the middle of that, you're battling with doctors and battling with cancer even as we speak, and old age brings about a diminishment of our mental ability and our physical abilities, and we all know that and we've all observed it in our loved ones and some of us are starting to feel it now. Well, beloved, what I want you to see is that what Psalm 92 is saying is that the reality of these things of which Psalm 92 is praising God for means this, that even as the righteous grow old, they are still alive and productive with the vitality that comes from God. It means this, it means this: that even in old age there is no cause for fear because God so blesses the righteous that he will invigorate them with life and vitality even if their bodily strength is fading. The wicked perish prematurely but the righteous flourish in their old age. The idea is this: you may be physically weak but in Christ, in reliance on these promises of God, you have spiritual strength, and you have the ability and you have the opportunity even in your physical weakness to give testimony to the greatness and the goodness of God and find a revitalization of your spirit even as your body is breaking down all around you, even as gravity is taking its toll. And the further along we go in life, we should look forward as we anticipate old age, to have a sense that, "I am going to trust God to give me spiritual vitality even when my body weakens along the way." You, beloved, as a Christian, you should look forward to old age with this expectation: that God is going to enable me to glorify him even as my body breaks down and I am going to look forward to that, I'm going to trust him for that, and I am going to aim my life for that so that I am not afraid that I will bring forth spiritual fruit even if I am physically more and more limited as each day goes by. In the end, the aged righteous add to the praise of God.

Look at verse 15 with me. He said they will still yield fruit in old age, they will be full of sap and very green. What's the point of that? Why? Why do they have this vitality? Because, beloved, as long as you are breathing, even in your old age you still have this same purpose to fulfill, you have this opportunity and this responsibility in your old age, verse 15,

15 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

To have this sense, as life advances on, when others are complaining about their aches and pains, as others are fading around you, there is this pulsating vibrating sense of spiritual vitality that says even now, even in my physical brokenness, I am still going to declare that God is good, that he is great, and he is faithful to me. I want to tell you, you find an older saint who has that on their lips, it's a great testimony, isn't it? All of a sudden you see that there is a unique declaration of the worth of God on lips like that, and what the people of faith do say is that they aim their hearts and say, "I want to be like that when I'm old." Do you know how you get to be like that when you're old? It starts when you're young. It starts by doing it day by day while you have the vitality and strength to do it now so that old age just becomes the capstone of a life of declaring the praise of God in your life.

These metaphors in verse 15 are an expression of the way that God protects and shelters his people. He is my rock. He is upright. God defends me in perfect faithfulness. God does not disappoint me. God is completely reliable.

Now we're at the end of the Psalm. This is one of those times where it's kind of sad to bring it to an end because this series of messages on Psalms 90 through 92 has been a real refreshment to my own heart. First of all, God is transcendent and God is faithful to his people. That's who God is. What do we do with that? The honor, the glory, the majesty of such a transcendent God who is loyal to his people like this, the honor of that God should be declared. It should be stated. It should be made plain without qualification, without shame, with gladness, with passion, with love, with loyalty, by faith declared, "That's who God is and He's great," and it should all be done with joy and gladness and there's a sense in which the whole point of Psalm 92 is to say, "I do declare that. I do declare it."

Look at the beginning and the end of Psalm 92. In verse 1, "It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises." Verse 2, here it is, "To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night." It's good to declare the loyal love of God. Now look at the end there in verse 15. Why are the aged full of sap and very green? He comes back. He closes where he began. He's come full circle. He's tied it all together, "To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." This whole Psalm has taught us that to know this God by faith is to declare him in praise. That's why we exist. That's why you exist as a believer in Christ, you exist to extend the praise and the proclamation of the glory of this great God, and as we do that, we do so with confidence in Christ who is our rock. With confidence in Christ, we can always rest unshaken. Beloved, the one who loved you and gave himself up for you will

most certainly deliver you to your heavenly home. If he died for you and rose for you 2,000 years ago, if he is at work in you now, don't you see the inevitability, the consequence of that? If he has started the work, he will most certainly complete it. You are safe in Christ. You can rest in Christ. The one who delivered you from sin will also deliver you from this mortal world so that you arrive safely in your heavenly home. He said, "I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am, you may be also."

Is that your hope tonight? Is your faith in Christ to that extent? Do you trust him like that? Well, so, then what can we do except declare his praise?

Let's pray together.

Father, we close by doing that which You have declared to be good, we give You our thanks. We thank You for Your creation. We thank You for Your rule over history. We thank You for our redemption in Christ. We thank You for the indwelling Holy Spirit. We thank You for our eternal home that is secure for us in heaven, reserved for us, our name on the plate at the banquet table waiting to be fulfilled. We thank You for that, Father. We praise You. We ascribe honor to Your name, O Most High. In the fullness of Your attributes, we honor who You are, transcendent God and yet full of lovingkindness toward Your people and, Father, we declare Your lovingkindness. You are a God of loyal love. It was loyal love that Christ manifested as He went to the cross for His elect. It's loyal love that keeps us. It's loyal love that will lead us safe on Canaan's shore. O God, how You have blessed us, how we declare Your praise. Help us all as we advance in life. Help those especially who are dealing with the infirmities of old age, Father, to yield this fruit of praise, to declare that You are upright, that You are our rock and there is no unrighteousness in You. We honor You, our God, and it is a joy to do so. You have made us glad by what You have done and we offer You our praise as we close this evening in Jesus' name. Amen.

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