



Cornton Baptist Church

Demonstrating God's love in action

in the community of Cornton

Through the Bible

Exodus
Nehemiah
2Chronicles Luke
Acts 2Timothy 2Peter
Zephaniah
Ecclesiastes
1Timothy Joshua
Psalms James
Isaiah
Titus
Daniel
Hebrews
Zechariah
1Samuel 2Corinthians
Malachi
Philemon
Job
1Kings
Romans
1Chronicles
2Thessalonians
1Thessalonians
Ruth
Jonah
Deuteronomy
Ephesians
Numbers
Mark
1Corinthians
Judges
Leviticus
Ezra
Ezekiel
1Peter
John
2Samuel
Matthew
Habakkuk
Lamentations
SongsofSongs
Haggai
Colossians
Nahum
Micah
Jeremiah
2John
Joel
Amos
2Kings
Jude
3John
Hosea
Revelation
Philippians
1John
Obadiah
Esther
Proverbs

July 2012

Why have you rejected us forever, O God...remember the people you purchased of old. (v.1, 2)

The previous Psalm is the personal cry of the psalmist to God whereas this Psalm is the cry of the gathered people. This community lament expresses the agony of the people in the midst of the most excruciating of circumstances. It was bad enough that Israel's enemies had destroyed the temple but even worse it seemed to the psalmist that God had abandoned them. The first eleven verses of this Psalm show the terror of that abandonment. There is no thought here for their own sinfulness but simply a cry to God not to forget them for it seemed to them that he had. It's almost as if they lay the blame straight at God's feet.

In the midst of this it is interesting that they feel God has rejected them forever. In the agony of the moment they feel as if all hope is gone and everything is lost. Yet God has promised to never leave us nor forsake us. And the psalmist remembers this in the second half of the Psalm.

As the Psalm continues the psalmist remembers God's presence, goodness and help in days of old. He lifts his eyes from the destruction around to the Lord seated on the throne above. It is incredible how much our outlook changes when we put everything back in focus once more. As the psalmist looks up to God, he remembers his creation as well as his salvation work. In this case that was the parting of the Red Sea for the children of Israel to walk through. As he remembers God's omnipotence he pleads for the Lord to rise again and defend them.

The Psalmist was wanting God to take away his problems. But in reality, that wasn't going to happen. It wasn't time. I think that sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking that God is the magic genie who always shows up to take our problems away. Though He will many times deliver us from our problems, sometimes He chooses to deliver us through our problems. In the situation you are in at the moment, trust God to lead you through it in his time and in his way and for his glory.

Pray: thanking God for his help in days past.

Reflect: do I trust God to lead me through life?

But it is God who judges: he brings one down, He exalts another. (v.7)

In this day when people promote themselves and take care of “number one,” it’s good to read verse 7: *‘But it is God who judges: he brings one down, He exalts another.’* This rebukes our pride. Who is the One who allows people to be where they are? God. John the Baptist said, *‘A man can receive only what is given him from heaven’* (John 3:27). Peter wrote: *‘Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.’* (1 Peter 5:6). Who is the One who exalts people to places of leadership? God. Who is the One who removes people from certain positions? God. Who is wise enough to know when to do all of this? God. No one in any position should think that he is there because God needs him. It would do us good to remember that in our own lives and situations as well. It is God who places us where we are at just the right time for his purposes and plans to be fulfilled. He lifts us up and he puts us down. Let’s not boast in our own goodness and efforts.

But verse 7 not only rebukes our pride - it also encourages our patience. Think of Joseph, waiting for God to put down his enemies and set him up where he was supposed to be. This man was thrown down a pit and the sold into slavery. He was then exalted in the household of the captain of the guard only to be cast into prison. Lifted up in prison to be in charge of the other prisoners only to be left behind when the cupbearer got his job back. But just at the right time, the Lord reminded the cupbearer of Joseph and he came to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams and help lead the country through drought and famine. Let’s patiently wait on God’s timing.

May we remember that it is God who works in us and through us by His Spirit. He lifts us into the positions he requires us to be for his plans to be fulfilled. Let’s not boast in our own abilities but in God. And as we wait on God to lift us up or to use us, let’s be patient. He will do it in His time.

Pray: thanking God for using you in His service.

Reflect: do I boast in my own strength or in God? Do I patiently wait on God or do I try to do it all myself?

In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel. (v.1)

People are often recognised on account of the works they have done. Alexander Graham Bell is remembered for inventing the telephone. Alexander Fleming is known for introducing Penicillin. Bill Gates is known for the software behind the personal computer. We wouldn't have known anything about them if they hadn't done these great works. We get to know God though not only through what he has done but because he wants us to know him. He reveals himself to us.

God is known throughout Judah on account of his work. His name is great in Israel because of all he has done. He rescued them from slavery in Egypt. He led them through the wilderness. He brought them into the Promised Land and helped them defeat their enemies. God has done so much more for his people. God wants us to know him which is why he sent His Son to earth to point us back to God. He has given us His Word so that we might know him. And he has given us his magnificent creation all around us that we might marvel at his majesty.

Not only does God want us to know him but as the Psalm continues we are reminded that he wants us to trust him. Verse 4-6 show how God protected his people and gave them victory over their enemies. He kept his promise to give them the Promised Land. We can trust God for He keeps His promises. As the Psalm continues we see that God wants us to fear him as well. It was Tozer who said 'No one can know the true grace of God who has not first known the fear of God.' The people were to fear God for he is the one who brings judgement on the earth – he is the one who upholds his ways and judges against his commandments.

And the Psalm finishes with the call to obey God. We are called there to make vows to God and to keep them. We are called to walk in God's ways. Let's remember that God wants us to know him, trust him, fear him and obey him.

Pray: asking God to reveal more of himself to us through His word.

Reflect: do I know, trust, fear and obey God?

I will remember the deeds of the LORD. (v.11)

In 1970, Ronald Dunn began keeping a record of answered prayers and special blessings in a little book. He misplaced the book but found it again several years later at a time when his faith was floundering. He was surprised that he had forgotten most of the incidents he had written about.

As he was reading, something happened. “My memory of God’s faithfulness was revived and my sagging faith began to recover,” he said. “Remembering had restored my confidence in the Lord.” Dunn now encourages Christians to keep a book of remembrance, recording God’s activity in their lives. “One day,” he writes, “it may mean the difference between victory and defeat.”

The psalmist knew this to be true. As the Psalm begins we see the psalmist crying out to God in prayer and feeling as if God was not answering him. He felt helpless and alone. In the end he said in verse 9 ‘*Has God forgotten to be merciful?*’ And then at the dark, low point in his life and thinking, he suddenly remembered God’s goodness in days past and as he thought on them his heart was lifted. He hung on and God saw him through.

When it seems God isn’t listening, that He’s ‘*forgotten to be merciful*’, what should you do? Look back and remember God’s work in your life in days past. Get out that journal of answered prayer and read through it. The psalmist suggests we meditate on the truths of Scripture and what God has done for us in the past (verse 11-12). He remembered all the Lord’s mighty deeds.

Why don’t you consider getting a book and recording your prayers in them and then noting beside each the answers God gives. And then review that book at regular intervals, giving God thanks for his goodness and faithfulness and his answers to prayer.

Pray: thanking God for his mighty deeds in days past.

Reflect: do I keep a record of answered prayer and God’s work in my life?

*We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation.
(v.4)*

The late J. Edgar Hoover was once asked, “Should I make my child go to Sunday school and church?” His reply was both Scriptural and practical. “Yes,” said the former head of the FBI, “you certainly should, and with no further discussion about the matter. You may be startled by my answer, but what do you say to Junior when he comes to breakfast on Monday morning and announces he isn’t going to school anymore? You know! He goes! How do you answer him when he comes home covered with mud and says, ‘I’m not going to take a bath.’ Junior bathes, doesn’t he? Why all this timidity, then, in the realm of spiritual guidance and growth? You say you’re going to let him wait and decide what church he wants to go to when he is old enough? Quit your kidding! You wouldn’t wait until he’s grown up to choose whether he wishes to be clean or dirty, would you? Do you let him decide for himself whether to take medicine when he’s sick? Do you? How shall we respond, then, when Junior says he doesn’t want to go to Sunday school and church? That’s easy! Just be consistent. Tell him, ‘Son, in our house we ALL go to Sunday school and church, and that includes you!’ Your firmness and example will furnish a bridge over which youthful rebellion will then travel into many rich and satisfying spiritual experiences.”

There are many things we will want to teach our children in life but the greatest is to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and being. We can teach them that from a young age by telling them everything we have experienced in our Christian lives – sharing with them how God has worked in us and through us.

The main thrust of Psalm 78 is about learning to trust God. The children of Israel had problems in the wilderness and then in the Promised Land because they did not trust God. Let us trust God and show our children how much we trust Him too in order that they may grow to trust Him too.

Pray: for your children and the children of the church family.

Reflect: do I teach my children to trust God?

Help us, O God our Saviour, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake. (v.9)

There are days when we look around and it seems as though the enemy has won. That's the way Asaph felt when he wrote Psalm 79. God's people are captive, the city and temple are ruined and the heathen nations are triumphant. As Asaph contemplates the defeat of Judah by the Babylonians we see him firstly look at God's judgement on them as a nation and then we see him feel God's anger against them. He asks if the Lord will remain angry with them forever. As he contemplates, though, he is quick to realise the Lord is right to be angry – their father's sinned against God. And he is quick too to realise that they themselves are sinners who have failed God.

As he realises this he goes on to plead for the Lord's help. And the first thing he does is admit their sin and ask forgiveness for it. He calls for God to not only deliver them from their enemies but to forgive their sin. We would do well in life to remember the same. Trouble comes upon us for a variety of reasons, and sometimes our sin is at the root of the problem. When trouble comes and we think the enemy has won let's look to God and realise the ultimate victory is the Lord's. And as we look to him let us look at ourselves and ask the Lord to reveal any sin in our lives. When he does, our job is to confess it before him pleading again for his grace, mercy and love to forgive us.

The Psalmist realises that their current condition is a result of their sin. Sin brings consequences. Our cries for help in our situations that are caused by our sin are not necessarily going to get us out of trouble. When we ask God for forgiveness, when we ask Him for a new life, He will indeed do that. But He may not change some of our circumstances. An inmate on death-row for murdering someone may still be put to death. A drug user may still have to go through withdrawals. A person engaging in sexual sin may still have a disease.

Pray: spending time confessing your sin to God.

Reflect: do I regularly confess my sin before God?

Restore us, O LORD God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved. (v.19)

A lady wrote the following ‘We purchased an old home in Northern New York State from two elderly sisters. Winter was fast approaching and I was concerned about the house’s lack of insulation. “If they could live here all those years, so can we!” my husband confidently declared. One November night the temperature plunged to below zero, and we woke up to find interior walls covered with frost. My husband called the sisters to ask how they had kept the house warm. After a rather brief conversation, he hung up. “For the past 30 years,” he muttered, “they’ve gone to Florida for the winter.”’ This family needed to learn from those before them.

And this is true of the children of Israel too. In this Psalm Asaph prays three times ‘*Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.*’ The people of Israel are in trouble. Asaph is praying that God would save them and revive them. He uses the analogy of the vine. God had planted this vine, the nation of Israel, in the land of Canaan. He had cast out the other nations to make room for Israel. The vine took root and began to bear fruit. But the people of Israel began to sin against the Lord. Instead of being distinctively separate, they began to imitate the other nations and visit their altars and participate in their sacrifices. So God said, “If that’s the way you want it, you can have it.” God left His people.

This happened over and over in the Old Testament. In cycle after cycle that you look at and read we see the children of Israel being in close fellowship with God, then sin entering their life which resulted in them wandering from God and God withdrawing His blessing. They would then come back to God repentantly before repeating the cycle. Asaph cries that they would learn from their predecessors and follow God wholeheartedly. He asks God to revive them then they ‘*will not turn away from you*’ again. May we learn from those who have gone before and remain faithful to the Lord.

Pray: that the Lord would restore you and save you.

Reflect: do I follow the example others have set?

*If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways...
(v.13)*

Bill, Jim and Scott were at a convention together and were sharing a large suite on the top of a 75-story skyscraper. After a long day of meetings, they were shocked to hear that the elevators in their hotel were broken and they would have to climb 75 flights of stairs to get to their room. Bill said to Jim and Scott, “Let’s break the monotony of this unpleasant task by concentrating on something interesting. I’ll tell jokes for 25 flights, Jim can sing songs for the next 25 flights and Scott can tell sad stories for the rest of the way.” At the 26th floor, Bill stopped telling jokes and Jim began to sing. At the 51st floor Jim stopped singing and Scott began to tell sad stories. “I will tell my saddest story first,” he said. “I left the room key in the car!!!”

Trying to get ahead in life without obeying God is a little like forgetting the room key - you will find yourself having to start over and over and over. The Psalmist shares something of that here in Psalm 81. He speaks of the Lord saying ‘*open wide your mouth and I will fill it.*’ The Lord wanted to give them so much but because of their rebellion they had to settle for less than God’s best. The Lord gave them water from the rock but he was prepared to give them honey from the rock (Deuteronomy 32:13). He sent manna from heaven but he would have given them the finest of wheat.

Why did this happen? Because they forgot God’s goodness and rebelled against him. Verse 13 has that big word ‘if’ – if only they had listened to God and followed his ways he would have saved them and subdued their enemies quickly. As it is they ignored God and rebelled against him, and time after time had to start over.

May we heed the lesson of our forefathers and may we follow the Lord completely and faithfully. May we not need to start over and over.

Pray: asking the Lord to fill us up on His Word.

Reflect: do I live completely for God, walking in His ways?

Monday 9 July 2012

Psalm 82:1-8

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy. (v.3)

Leadership is a gift from God. The satisfaction that comes from unselfishly helping others and seeking the physical and spiritual welfare of those entrusted to our care is second to none.

William Wilberforce, popular leader in England from 1780 to 1833, died with the satisfaction that the emancipation bill for which he had expended so much of his time and energy would be passed. The end of slavery in the British Empire was assured.

Leaders are not always recognised but they can be content. A woman whose role had been that of mother and Sunday school teacher, faced death with contentment. She expressed gratitude to the Lord for entrusting these responsibilities to her and enabling her to fulfil them honourably.

However, people can and do abuse leadership. They use it for their own ends. They want leadership roles for the power, the prestige and the perks. And we see that all around us. Whenever we watch the news on television or read it in a magazine or newspaper, we may think that the unjust are winning and the just are losing. We get the same idea when we read Psalm 82. But this psalm also says that God is part of the judicial system. God attends the court and judges the judges. Those who have led unfairly, defended the unjust and taken bribes will be judged like any other. They will die like mere men and fall like every other ruler.

We do not have to worry about others; God is on the throne and will judge them in due course. In spite of the world's injustice, God is in control, and He sees all that happens. Our role is to keep living for him – trusting him, obeying him and doing his will. We are called to lead well – to lead well we need to look after the poor and the needy and the oppressed.

Pray: asking the Lord to help us care for weak and needy.

Reflect: do I help those less fortunate than myself?

*Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD.
(v.16)*

Trouble is upon Israel again and Asaph prays to God for help. He sees their enemies preparing to come upon them and take possession of Israel's land which was given to them by God (verse 12). In the midst of this he thinks God has missed this and does not see what is happening. He cries out '*be not quiet, O God, be not still.*' It is easy for us when trouble comes our way to cry out to God as well and say where are you? What are you doing? Do you not see this? The truth is that God see all things and knows all things. It's just that he sometimes waits before intervening. We know that ultimately God will judge the living and the dead one day, and all will be held accountable for their actions. Until then we simply have to trust in the sovereignty of God.

Asaph goes on to pray that God would do what is necessary to their enemies so that they will be saved and God's purposes carry on to completion. There are times we are tempted to pray like Asaph does that our enemies will become like tumbleweed and chaff and that they will be destroyed by the fire and flame. I am impressed though with Asaph's prayer, that while he prays that God will have his way with his enemies to overcome them, he does pray that in the midst they would come to seek God.

And that ought to be our aim in life as well for all the people we know – both those we love and those who we struggle with, indeed even our enemies. Our prayer should be that they would come to know the Saviour of the world and that their lives would be changed forever. Asaph wants them to know who the Lord is and that He alone is Lord of all.

The next time you feel like cursing your enemy, hand them over to God. Pray that they would come to know the Lord. And pray that God would deal with them in his way and at his time.

Pray: for your enemies and those you struggle with in life.

Reflect: do I hand those who hurt me and annoy me over to the Lord?

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD. (v.1)

A husband and his wife arose one Sunday morning and the wife dressed for church. It was just about time for the service when she noticed her husband hadn't moved a finger toward getting dressed. Perplexed, she asked, "Why aren't you getting dressed for church?" He said, "Because I don't want to go." She asked, "Do you have any reason?" He said, "Yes, I have three good reasons. First, the congregation is cold. Second, no one likes me. And third, I just don't want to go." The wife replied, wisely, "Well, honey, I have three reasons why you should go. First, the congregation is warm. Second, there are a few people there who like you. And third, you're the pastor! Get dressed!"

We go to church for many reasons week by week. Some are pushed and pulled along by spouses or parents. Others come out of a sense of duty or of fear. Others still, come out of habit. Many though come because they want to be in God's house with God's people on the Lord's Day.

The Psalmist wants to be in God's house. The joy of the Lord is upon him and he yearns to be there. He even says that one day in the courts of the Lord are better than a thousand any where else. How incredible is that. And he doesn't even want to be there for status. He would rather be a doorkeeper just as long as he could be in God's house.

The psalmist describes his delight in being with God in the opening verses. He then speaks of the strength of the Lord being upon him as he worships before declaring that his trust is completely in God.

Where are you at? Do you long to be in church? Do you yearn to be among God's people? Do you desire to praise and worship God? Is your trust completely in Him?

Pray: thanking God for the opportunity of worshipping him week by week with others in church.

Reflect: do I long to be in church?

Restore us again, O God our Saviour. (v.4)

An old lady had been married for many years when suddenly her husband died. This is what she put on his tombstone: THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE HAS GONE OUT. Not long afterward she met, fell in love with and married another man. After thinking at some length about it, she went to the monument maker and had him add this to the tombstone: THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE HAS GONE OUT. P.S. I Found A Match.

God wants to relight the fire within us. He wants to revive us and renew us. The psalmist here in Psalm 85 prays for that renewal and revival. He recalls how God has shown favour on both the land and the people. He recognises that God has forgiven their sins and turned from his wrath. And so he prays that the people would recognise God's forgiveness and God's mercy and his rich blessings on them. He mentions God's faithfulness and righteousness. He praises God for his goodness. He longs for God to restore the people in their walk with him and their love for him.

The people had turned from God and had spent seventy years in captivity. But God has been faithful and as they recognised their sin he has forgiven them and restored them. He has taken them back into their own land.

We too need to be restored regularly. None of us is perfect and we are all prone to wander into sin. It is a sin to disobey God and fall, but it is also a sin to stay fallen. God longs to forgive us and set our feet aright once more. He longs to revive us and use us for his glory. The Scottish preacher George H Morrison said 'The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.'

Let us give thanks to God for his goodness and faithfulness and let's ask him to keep sparking into the flame that gift of God which is within us.

Pray: thanking God for his goodness and faithfulness.

Reflect: is there unconfessed sin in my life? Confess it now and ask God to restore you once again.

You are forgiving and good, O LORD, abounding in love to all who call to you. (v.5)

In 1972, the missionary aviation organization JAARS suffered its first fatal accident. Seven people died, including the pilot, when their twin-engine Piper Aztec crashed in the jungles of Papua New Guinea. The reason? A single nut had not been properly tightened during a routine inspection, and the resulting spray of gasoline caused a fire. The experienced mechanic at fault was overwhelmed by guilt: “The sight of those caskets lined up in the little open-sided tropical church hit me like a blow to the stomach. . . . How could I face my friends? How could I face myself? I was overwhelmed with guilt. I was a failure.”

Fortunately, the families of those who had died extended forgiveness to their brother, and slowly the pain healed. He later said: “Except for God’s grace I’d be somewhere cowering in a corner in guilt-ridden despair - the eighth fatality of the Aztec crash. . . . Praise God, it isn’t so!”

That JAARS mechanic experienced true forgiveness - the blessing of God’s loving kindness as extended by His people. The joy we feel upon being forgiven is a direct result of His goodness to us and his presence with us. What could be better?

This psalm is a prayer of David. He needs help and so he cries out to God. He is leader of a great nation but recognises his weakness and God’s greatness. He desperately needed God’s power and mercy and so he prays asking for it with humbleness. He prays knowing who God is – God is forgiving and good and abounds in love. We are sinners, through and through, but God has forgiven us in Jesus. His love abounds to us as sinners in the sending of his son to die in our place. We can know the joy of forgiveness by trusting in God.

Pray: thanking God for his forgiveness.

Reflect: have I received the forgiveness of God and does that make me joyful?

The LORD loves the gates of Zion. (v.2)

Most of us have places in this world we love in special ways. It might be an old home or perhaps a school. It might even be a church or a place in that church building where God met you in a significant way. I love Crieff, the place I grew up. Oh there are bits of Crieff I don't miss at all but the reality is it is the place I was born and grew up. My family were there and still are there. It's the place where I met Jesus and came to saving faith in him and also the place where I met and fell in love with Morag, my wife. I remember it fondly.

Here in Psalm 87 we read that '*The Lord loves the gates of Zion.*' The psalmist refers to the city of God. Now Zion had two meanings in the context of the bible – the earthly place where God's people would be gathered for worship and then the heavenly city where one day we will all dwell (Philippians 3:20). This is a place where the streets are paved with gold and there will be no more mourning, sadness, pain or suffering. Zion is special to God as are the people of Zion.

The psalmist remembers the foundation of Zion – God made it and God called Israel to be his people and to worship in Jerusalem. He didn't call Israel because of any goodness of their own but because he loved them. We can revel in the love of God too for we are adopted into God's family. The psalmist shares how Rahab has come to be counted as belonging to Zion. We too belong to the family of God because of his love and faithfulness in forgiving us our sin. This means that we too can rejoice with God's people in the blessings of our salvation and the promise of a place in heaven with Jesus. That is what the fountains refer to in the final verse.

It's great to love special places in our lives but let's thank God that we have a place in the heavenly Zion for ever and ever.

Pray: thanking God for his amazing love.

Reflect: am I looking forward to dwelling in the heavenly city?

I call to you, O LORD, every day. (v.9)

A story is told that Andrew Jackson's boyhood friends just couldn't understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of others who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson's friends commented, "Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now." Another friend responded, "How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn't they usually say three times and out?"

"Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat - he would never stay 'threwed.' Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner." Andrew Jackson just wouldn't stay 'threwed'! The same should be true of each of us! No matter what we are facing, we should not let it defeat us.

I love the psalms because they are so honest. Here in Psalm 88 the psalmist is really struggling. He feels he is in the lowest pit and away from all his friends. He shares how he has been afflicted like this all his days. And yet in the midst of all of that he never gives up. There are three lessons here for us: keep praying, keep persevering, and keep praying.

Despite his circumstances the psalmist is praying to God asking him to hear his cry and save him. He prays continually – verse 9 '*I call to you, O Lord, every day.*' He perseveres through life. He has been afflicted from a young age but still he prays and keeps trusting God to hear his cry and help him. And notice it all starts with praise as he declares that God is the one who saves him.

Whatever difficulty you might be facing keep praying, persevering and praising. God will hear and answer...maybe just not in the time frame or manner we expect.

Pray: asking God to help you in your current struggles.

Reflect: do I keep looking to God in the struggles of life?

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever. (v.1)

The United Bible Societies reported in October that bibles have become available in ten more languages and New Testaments in twenty seven more than this time last year. This now means that the bible, either in full or in part, is available in 2,527 of the world's estimated 6,500 languages. How great is that and yet how great the challenge remains to get it translated for the other people groups of the world.

The psalmist would have been thrilled by this. According to Psalm 89 he wants the world to hear the good news of God's faithfulness and love to all generations. He begins by singing of it himself. He sings of the Lord's great love. He remembers God's faithfulness in days past and asks the Lord to keep remembering them in the current days. I wonder how many times during the week you sing songs of praise to God. Do you hear a song on Sunday and it remains with you during the week? Or as you go about your work and life do the words of a song or the tune come into your mind and you start singing? It is good to sing of God's love and faithfulness.

The psalmist doesn't just sing of God's love he goes on to share God's love and faithfulness with others. He says he will use his mouth to make God's faithfulness known to all generations. He starts speaking to people and it's not all about him – he speaks of God and his great love and his faithfulness. In his faithfulness God did not abandon us on account of our sin but he rescued us from it. He sent Jesus, his own son, to this earth. Jesus died to save us from the punishment of sin.

The challenge for us is to sing and share God's Word and love as well. The job of sharing the gospel is not only for pastors, preachers and evangelists – it's for ordinary believers like you and me. Today let us sing of God's great love in our devotional time and then let's share God's love as we go about our daily lives.

Pray: asking God to give you the courage to share about him today.

Reflect: do I sing of the Lord's great love often?

*Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
(v.12)*

First there were sundials. Then came water clocks, hourglasses and mechanical clocks. Now we have digital clocks, watches and clocks on our mobile phones that split time into hundredths of a second. Our culture certainly is concerned with time. When the Concise Oxford English Dictionary announced in 2006 that the word time was the most-often used noun in the English language, it didn't seem surprising. We live in a world where people are obsessed with using days, saving minutes, and trying to find more hours in the day. Although each of us has all the time that there is, few of us think we have enough.

This is why Psalm 90 is a wonderful Psalm to read when we are concerning ourselves with time. It focuses our mind on to God who is described in the wonderful hymn as 'Crown Him the Lord of years, the potentate of time.' He controls time, time is in his hands. The psalmist draws us back to the before the creation of the world here when he says in verse 2 '*before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*' God is eternal. Time does not count for much in the economy of God. We are reminded of this in verse 4 when he says '*for a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by.*'

The psalmist's cry is a wise one for us to consider too as he says in verse 12 '*teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*' We are only allotted a certain number of days in this lifetime therefore we should want to spend our time carefully and wisely. Too often we act as though we are immortal, taking for granted our loved ones, our family. Instead, we should value each moment and each person. Use your time wisely today.

Pray: asking God to teach us to number our days aright, that we gain a heart of wisdom.

Reflect: do I use my time wisely?

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. (v.1)

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived and the heat had singed her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, so those under the cover of her wings would live.

What a wonderful picture of God and the protection we have under the shelter of his wings. The psalmist uses some language here in Psalm 91 that speaks of God's protection. He speaks of being under the shadow of the Almighty (v.1). Shadows provide protection from the direct heat of the sun. If the heat is severe, the shade reduces what we actually feel. When we're under God's shadow, we do not face the full heat of our difficulties. He speaks of God being a refuge and a fortress (v.2). God is the strongest protector we could ever have, and we can run to Him for help. Nothing can penetrate Him to get to us unless it's part of His loving plan for our ultimate good. He mentions being under His wings (v.4). God is soft and tender like a caring mother bird. When troubles rage, He draws us close. We don't need to fear that He will cast us out - we are His. And he talks of a dwelling place (v.9). Our Father will be our home, our abiding place - now and forever. True security can be found only in our Lord, who promises to save us and be near us (v.15-16).

Let's forget about striving on our own in this world and seek to dwell in the shelter of the Most High.

Pray: thanking God for his shelter and protection.

Reflect: do I keep close to 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." (v.14)

When D. L. Moody was moving into old age, he was asked to grant permission for his biography. Moody refused, saying, "A man's life should never be written while he is living. What is important is how a man ends, not how he begins." There is a great measure of truth in those words. Of course it does matter how we start and how we progress, but equally it is important that we finish well. The Apostle Paul was able to say in 2 Timothy 4:8 *'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.'* He finished well.

John Kelley, who died in 2004 at the age of 96, ran in 58 Boston Marathons (that's 26.2 miles each time) - including his last one in 1992 when he was 84 years old. Kelley's remarkable feat is a reminder to each of us that we must stay active as long as we can. Far too many folks hit middle age and put the body in neutral. And Christians too often put their service for Jesus Christ in the same inactive mode.

The psalmist reminds us of this in Psalm 92. He begins the psalm by reminding us to be praising God morning and evening. As we look at the works of the Lord we should be drawn to proclaim his love and faithfulness throughout the day. He goes on though towards the end of the psalm to speak of our lives being like a palm tree that grows like the great cedars of Lebanon. They flourish for many years. In the same way he encourages God's children to dig in their roots early in life and then to flourish for God for many years to come. Even in old age they will be fresh and bearing fruit.

Friends, getting old does not stop us from serving God and continuing to bear fruit for him. How we do things and how much we do might change, but let's keep our hearts set on worshipping and serving the living God.

Pray: praying for strength to keep serving God all the days of our life.

Reflect: do I still serve God even as I get older?

The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty. (v.1)

Trouble comes our way, according to Psalm 93, in relentless waves that surge and pound against our souls and break upon them with furious force. ‘*The seas have lifted up, O LORD, the seas have lifted up their voice,*’ and they are deafening (v.3). And for many of us we have or are experiencing that in our lives. Trouble and hardship seems to keep rolling in on us. No sooner have we dealt with one crisis than another rolls in and hits us.

Yet above the tempest we hear the psalmist’s refrain: ‘*Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea – the LORD on high is mighty.*’ (v.4). He looks to God as sees him reigning on high. Trouble might be there but he knows God is sovereign and in control. And that is a great reminder for us, for often when trouble hits our eyes turn from God and we lose all focus and perspective. The psalmist would remind us to look up and see God on his throne. He is aware of all that is going on and keeps his eye on it. He will not let us be tempted beyond that which we can bear the Scriptures tell us. The psalmist reminds us that God’s eternal throne is majestic, strong and firm established.

He then encourages us to remember that God is greater than our circumstances. No matter how stormy the nations on earth become, God is still on the throne and is not frustrated by the foolish words and deeds of ‘great leaders’ who are only made of clay. Do not focus on the threats around you but rather focus on the throne above you.

And if we need any further encouragement the psalmist finishes by reminding us that God always keeps His word. The truth of what is going on in the world is not in the newspapers but in the Scriptures. God is seated on the throne and will rule for ever and ever (Revelation 11:15).

Stop looking around you and start looking above you. God is sovereign. The Lord reigns.

Pray: asking God to strengthen you in your current struggles.

Reflect: do I trust in the Word of God?

The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile. (v.11)

I remember watching a Christian film some years ago called ‘The Crossing’. There is a scene in the film where the young man at the centre of the film is called into the courtroom where God sits as judge. The evidence of sin is brought against the man and we then see drawer after drawer being opened as every aspect of the man’s life is brought as evidence. A reminder that God knows everything about us. In the Christianity Explored course there is a scene with Rico Tice in a room which has bare walls which then begin to be covered with post-it notes of everything he has done. A reminder that God knows everything about us.

How would you like to have your every thought for the past 6 months flashed on a screen for all your acquaintances, neighbours, and church friends to see? You would probably want to leave town! It is sobering to realise that even though we can hide our thoughts from others, God knows what we’re thinking. This did not escape the attention of the psalmist either. Here in Psalm 94:11 he says ‘*The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.*’ God knows all our thoughts. Nothing escapes his attention.

We need to give careful attention to our thoughts not only because God knows them but also because our thoughts determine our character. Jesus said that our words and actions spring from our heart (Matthew 15:18-19). We may think our thoughts are harmless but they do begin to change our lives – the way we speak, the things we do, how we behave. Before long we are not the kind of people God longs for us to be.

As we will know and the psalmist reminds us in verse 23 the Lord judges sin in our lives. Thankfully Christ died to save us from our sin. Let’s keep short accounts with God of sin in our lives and let’s allow him to renew our minds and help us have right thoughts.

Pray: asking God to renew your mind and help you have good thoughts.

Reflect: how would I feel if my every thought was displayed to those around me?

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our maker. (v.6)

Some people think that going to a church service is not much different than going to a music concert. There are similarities: We travel to get there, we assemble with people of a common interest, our attention is focused on the front, and the ceiling is high.

There are many differences, though. You don't have to purchase a ticket to get into church. No popcorn is allowed. But most significantly, the purpose of church is not for entertainment. That's where a lot of believers have the wrong idea. They think the people on the platform are putting on church for their sakes - to excite, enthrall, and entertain them. Wrong. All wrong. The focus of the church is to be on God. We are there to worship Him.

The psalmist understood that which is why he wrote this wonderful psalm. In this psalm he recognises God as creator and sustainer of the world. He is the one who formed the earth into being with the majestic mountain peaks and the flowing seas. He calls for us to bow down before the one who not only made the world but made us as human beings. God put us together as we are. If you think about your body and all its parts it is an amazing piece of craftsmanship. Everything working in beautiful harmony to allow us to think and speak, to move and walk, to reach out and pick up.

When we stop to ponder the wonderful creation we cannot help but praise the one who made it all. And the psalmist calls for us to do just that. He says sing for joy to the Lord, shout aloud to our Saviour, come before him thankfully and gratefully, and bow down in worship, kneeling before our maker. And then he summarises why we should do just that – he is our God.

As you go to church today do not go out of a sense of duty or for your benefit and entertainment...go to bend the knee and worship your creator and God.

Pray: worshipping God for who He is.

Reflect: why do I go to church?

Monday 23 July 2012

Psalm 96:1-13

Sing to the LORD a new song...for great is the LORD and most worthy of praise. (v.1, 4)

For years, a dirt-encrusted painting hung in the San Salvador church in Venice, Italy. Entitled “Supper at Emmaus,” it showed the resurrected Christ eating with the two followers He’d met on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-32), and was believed to be a poor copy of an older work. A group called Save Venice had decided not to restore the painting.

Upon closer inspection, however, experts found that the painting was not a copy, but an original work by Renaissance master Vittore Carpaccio, worth \$50 million. Restorers removed layers of dirt and over-painting to reveal a colourful, finely detailed masterpiece. The masterpiece was there all along. It simply needed close examination by experts to be recognised and careful effort by restorers to be appreciated.

Sometimes in life we get so caught up in everything that is going on that the dust and dirt and grime cover our eyes and we cannot see God clearly. The psalmist here presents us with a clear picture of God and clear call to worship and honour him.

Psalm 96 is a universal call to praise the Lord - all people and all creation are invited to join in! Verses 1-3 are an invocation or call to worship. Verses 4-5 assert God’s worthiness to be worshiped above idols. Verses 6-10 list more of His attributes and present a picture of worshiping in His temple. Finally, verses 11-13 climax with references to creation and judgment day.

We are urged to sing a new song, proclaim God’s salvation, declare His glory and marvellous works, and recognise who He is. He is the Creator, worthy of reverence and worship, strong, glorious, holy, just, and sovereign. ‘*He will judge the world in righteousness*’ (v. 13). Let’s look closely and appreciate our God.

Pray: praise God for His splendour and majesty, strength and glory.

Reflect: do I see God’s characteristics clearly and praise him for them?

*The heavens proclaim his righteousness and all the peoples see his glory.
(v.6)*

David Brainerd was an American colonial missionary to the Indians who died at the age of twenty-nine. His diary reveals a young man intensely committed to God. Brainerd once said to Jonathan Edwards: “I do not go to heaven to be advanced but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high seat or a low seat there...My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory.”

Clearly, David Brainerd had caught a glimpse of God that far too few believer’s experience. Once a person has been captured by the holiness, majesty, and glory of God, nothing else looks quite so bright.

That is true of the psalmist here in Psalm 97. He has been captured by God’s glory and shares his thoughts here. He uses the imagery of a thunderstorm to illustrate the mighty works of the Lord. The writer paints a scene of rolling clouds, jagged forks of lightning, and rumbling thunder to describe God’s power. The thick, dark clouds that hide the sun remind me that man cannot stand the full view of God’s glory (v.2). In the lightning I see a picture of God’s fiery wrath on His foes (v.3-4). In all of these forces of nature I see the glory of God (v.6).

We’ve all witnessed the power of a thunderstorm. And sometimes we are afraid. But each storm that rolls across the sky can bring to mind great truths: God is awesome in power, He judges His foes, and His glory fills the earth.

So, when the next storm comes, join the psalmist in praising God for His wondrous power and majesty. See God in the thunderstorm.

Pray: praise God for His wondrous power and majesty.

Reflect: do I see God’s power and majesty in the world around me?

The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. (v.2)

There was a man who was walking along a narrow cliff on a dark night. It was so dark that he couldn't see what was over the edge. Suddenly he slipped and found himself falling off the edge. As he started to fall, he caught a tree branch sticking out, and managed to just barely hang on. But there was no where to go. He didn't have enough strength to climb back up. He cried out, "Oh God, if you're really there, please help me!" Nothing. He cried out again, "Oh God, I'll go to church every Sunday and read my Bible. Please help me!" Nothing. He cried out again, "Oh God, I'll do whatever you tell me to. Just please help me!" And then he heard a still, small voice, "Just let go." He thought about it a little bit. He cried out again, "Is there anybody else up there?"

Sometimes we're not willing to do what the Lord wants us to do, so we look to other things to help us instead of Jesus. They may not necessarily be bad things. But the problem comes when we look to those things for help instead of looking to Jesus. Jesus may very well use those things, but He wants us to come to Him first. Will you see God's salvation when it's there? Salvation is in Jesus.

The psalmist recognised God's salvation in his day. Oh he didn't know that Jesus would die on a cross to save us from our sins but he knew God's saving grace in the history of his own people. He knew that God had done mighty things in saving the children of Israel in days gone by. He recalled the Lord's faithfulness to them as they passed through the waters of the Red Sea. And that led him to say in verse 2 '*The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.*' Because the Lord had revealed his salvation the psalmist urges the people to shout for joy to the Lord. We too are to shout for joy for the Lord has made his salvation known – he took on flesh and dwelt among us.

Pray: thank God for making his salvation known to us.

Reflect: do I see God's salvation?

They called on the LORD and he answered them. (v.6)

One of the greatest joys in the Christian life is the joy of answered prayer - to be able to say to someone, "God answered my prayer today," or to hear someone say, "Thank you for praying - let me tell you what God did." The psalmist writes about this: '*Moses and Aaron were among his priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; they called upon the Lord, and He answered them.*'(v. 6) Moses called upon the Lord many times when he had the burdens of the people on his shoulders. Aaron, as the high priest, also called upon the Lord. Samuel had some disappointments in his life. His family was not all it ought to have been, and Israel was not all it ought to have been. So he cried out to the Lord as well.

If we call out to the Lord will he answer us? Yes he will. I do think this psalm teaches us two important ingredients for prayer though – ask and obey. Verse 6 tells us about these great men of God who called out to the Lord. They might have been mighty in their own ways and respected in their own time by their own people, but they each recognised God's power and authority. They came before God and asked for his help. When we hit difficult times the call is for us to pray and ask God to help us. Too often we think we are more important and strong than we are; we try and resolve issues ourselves rather than first taking them to God in prayer. Ask and you shall receive said Jesus in Matthew 7:7-8.

Each of these men obeyed God. We read in verse 7 that God spoke to them and they kept his statutes and decrees. They obeyed the commandments of God and followed in his ways. They didn't ignore them and do their own thing. They didn't think they knew better than God and walked in their own ways. They listened and obeyed. If we listen to God's word and obey it then when we call on him he will hear and answer.

Pray: thank God for answered prayer.

Reflect: do I listen to God's word and obey it?

Friday 27 July 2012

Psalm 100:1-5

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. (v.4)

During the last few years of his life, a well-known theology professor in Scotland lost all memory of his past. While remaining cordial to former university colleagues who came to visit, he had no idea that they had taught together and were close friends for many years. But despite his memory loss, he never forgot to say thanks to God.

One friend recalled that whenever a member of the nursing home staff brought some bread, butter, and tea, the professor would exclaim, “This calls for a prayer!” Then, bowing his head, he would say with deep feeling, “Praise God forever and ever. Amen.”

I wonder if thanksgiving is ingrained in our minds and lives. It was certainly ingrained in the life of the psalmist here in Psalm 100. He calls for us to shout for joy, to worship the Lord, to come before him with joyful songs, to know that the Lord is God. He calls for us to enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. The psalmist is sure of what he should be doing and what we should be doing.

And why does he call for us to give thanks to God? Well verse 5 tells us ‘*For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*’ God is good. This seems like a limited description for God, but the words means good, pleasant, beautiful, delightful, glad, joyful, precious, correct and righteous. It can also mean, expensive. Everything God does is an expression of His goodness! We can praise our God because He is good! Regardless of what happens in life, God is good! No matter how things turn out, God is still good! Therefore, praise Him for His goodness! And because he is good his love endures forever. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Let’s learn to be thankful every day for God is good.

Pray: giving thanks to God for his goodness, love and faithfulness.

Reflect: is thanksgiving to God ingrained on my mind?

I will be careful to lead a blameless life. (v.2)

Officials in Philadelphia were astonished in 2006 to receive a letter and payment from a motorist who had been given a speeding ticket in 1954. John Gedge, an English tourist, had been visiting the City of Brotherly Love when he was cited for speeding. The penalty was \$15, but Gedge forgot about the ticket for almost 52 years until he discovered it in an old coat. "I thought, I've got to pay it," said Gedge, 84, who now lives in a nursing home in East Sussex. "Englishmen pay their debts. My conscience is clear." Now that is integrity.

David the psalmist had not always lived a good life. He had failed God and sinned against him. Writing this psalm he is declaring his intention to live a blameless life before God. He has resolved to change his ways and walk in God's ways. He says there in verse 2 '*I will be careful to lead a blameless life.*' His integrity would begin in the privacy of his own house (v.2) and extend to his choice of colleagues and friends (v.6-7). In sharp contrast to the corrupt lives of most kings of the ancient Near East, David's integrity led him to respect the life of his sworn enemy, King Saul (1 Samuel 24:4-6; 26:8-9).

Now living a blameless life can be a hard thing to do and I doubt if any of us will ever make it...but we can try. We are called to walk with integrity before God and to walk in his ways. To do that we must commit ourselves to reading and learning from Scripture and then putting into practice what we learn.

It is often easier to walk a blameless life in public when people are watching us but harder to do at home when no one is around. That is why David says he will start at home – walking in his house with a blameless heart. The challenge for us is to watch what we do when no one is looking...and to remember that God is always watching over us.

Pray: asking God for strength to lead a blameless life.

Reflect: do I walk with integrity at home when no one is watching?

But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever. (v.12)

Photographer David Crocket of Seattle's KOMO-TV knows that solid mountains can move. On May 18, 1980, he was at the foot of towering Mount St. Helens when it erupted. For 10 hours he was nearly buried by the falling debris. As the atmosphere cleared, a helicopter pilot spotted him. He was dramatically rescued and flown to a hospital.

Writing about his horrendous experience, he said, "During those 10 hours I saw a mountain fall apart. I saw a forest disappear...I saw that God is the only one who is immovable...I feel somehow that I'm being allowed to start over - whatever is in His master plan for me."

Nothing in our world, not even a mountain, is absolutely indestructible. God alone is absolutely unchangeable - He endures '*forever*' (v.12). The Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote "There is nothing permanent except change", a statement that John J Kennedy paraphrased as "everything changes but change itself." The truth is everything does change...except God. He is the same yesterday, today and forever

The psalmist speaks of the changing circumstances of life in the first eleven verses of this psalm. With his days as flimsy and temporary as drifting smoke and his frame burning with fever, he was like a man in a furnace. His heart was like the cut and withered grass, paining him so much he forgot to eat. Like the evening shadows as the sun goes down, his life kept changing, but his days had no substance.

Then he looked to God and saw that God's character and covenant were unchanging. The Lord sits enthroned forever. Although God's creation would perish God would remain and his years would never end. Next time you feel like everything is changing and is out of control, look to God who stands firm forever. God is unchanging, we can trust in Him.

Pray: thanking God that he is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Reflect: do I worry about my ever changing life?

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him. (v.13)

After a devastating 1989 earthquake in Armenia, a father rushed to his son's school, only to find the building destroyed. Going to the area where his son's classroom was, the man began digging through the rubble with his hands. Other parents tried to convince him it was no use. Officials tried to make him leave, fearing fires and explosions. But the father kept digging alone, and after forty hours found his son and thirteen other children still alive. "I told the other kids not to worry," the boy told his father. "If you were alive, you'd save me."

That's a great example of a father's love for his child. The psalmist understood this. He had sinned in so many ways not least with Bathsheba. He had prayed that penitent prayer Psalm 51 and he knew the Lord's forgiveness. This psalm is a psalm of praise to God for his compassion and love.

The psalmist begins with a call to praise God and not to forget his benefits. How often in life do we forget God's blessings on us? The new song we have been singing recently reminds us we have 10,000 reasons for our hearts to find to praise and bless God. God has blessed us so richly in so many ways and yet we are quick to forget. The psalmist says come now let's remember. And he begins with God's forgiveness. He goes on to recall how the Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love. The Lord does not treat us as our sins deserve but rather because of his great love for us he has saved us. He sent his own son to take the punishment which was rightfully ours. Praise God for our salvation.

The psalmist then gives other reasons for praising God – he heals all our diseases, he redeems our life and crowns us with love and compassion, he satisfies our desires and he renews our youth. God blesses us in so many ways. Let us not forget and let's praise a compassionate and loving God.

Pray: praising God for all his benefits.

Reflect: do I forget all God has done for me?

How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all. (v.24)

These days, Velcro fabric is used to fasten everything from trousers to coats to duffel bags. The word “Velcro” (which is a registered trademark) was coined by combining the French words “velour” (velvet) and “crochet” (hook) to describe how it works.

A Swiss mountaineer named George de Mestral invented Velcro by trying to imitate something he’d seen in nature. He’d noticed that burrs would stick tenaciously to his dog, using tiny hooked ends to cling to the dog’s softer hairs. After much effort, he was able to duplicate this ability in his design and patented Velcro in 1955.

A tiny burr taught Mestral the secret of a clever, useful product. God’s creation is full of such examples of practical design! He made and controls the whole system, every part of the entire created world.

Psalm 104 reminds us of the greatness of God as well. The psalmist speaks of God as creator and looks at his creation. He draws our mind to the mountains and valleys and even to the little springs of water on the mountains. He speaks of the water that flows to quench the thirst of the donkey and the birds of the air; of the grass that grows to feed cattle and which man can cultivate for growing food. He points to the moon and sun bringing night and day.

And then in verse 24 the psalmist catches his breath to exclaim at the creation panorama as a whole: *‘How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all.’* We have seen many wonderful inventions over the years but let’s remember everything was created by the hand of the Lord. His works are many and wonderful. Let’s join with the psalmist in proclaiming *‘Praise the Lord, O my soul.’*

Pray: praising God for his magnificent creation.

Reflect: what part of creation amazes you the most? Praise God for it now.