

“Why We Can Rest in Him” Psalm 138 Sunday 9AM

We all long for an unbroken, never-interrupted season of tranquility. We can find ourselves searching for days of comfort, and then working diligently to the best of our understanding to facilitate those seasons of ease. Eventually, we come to the conclusion that the Scriptures were pinpoint accurate when they declare in Job 14:1, “Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.” What is awesome in God’s Kingdom is that we experience the very best of God in the same seasons wherein we are experiencing the worst in life. God’s character, promises and power provide the invitation for all believers to take their rest in Him. When and if we seek our rest in something else, He will resist that very thing, even if He must destroy it. When a believer’s days are full of trouble, his soul can be made strong by the relentless grace of God.

I. We Must Anchor in The Certainty of God’s Character (1-2)

A. It elicits from us a total surrender (1a)- “I give You thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart...”

B. It instills in us a holy loyalty (1b-2a) - “...before the gods I sing Your praise; 2 I bow down toward Your holy temple and give thanks to Your name...” **The gods of: fame, fortune, success, lust, revenge, competition, and self**

C. It produces in us a growing confidence (2b) - “...for Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your name and Your word.”

The first two verses of this Psalm present to us the expression of a heart that is fully enthralled with God. A life like that will be one which releases wholehearted praise, for it is from the abundance of all hearts that all mouths speak. In a world filled with countless mini-gods that are worshipped and served by the general population, the enthralled believer is not ashamed to sing forth the praises of the one and only true God. Humility is also part of the expression of his heart’s devotion as he bows himself down in the direction of that place he associates with God’s presence – the temple. This believer is able to offer up more thanks as he reminds Himself of the steadfast character of his God. His God is constant in love and fully faithful in His dealings with His own. There is no basis for hesitant praise, trust and submission to a God like this, for He will be true to His own name and His word as He continues to lead and provide for His people. This is a God to whom it is reasonable and easy to live in devotion and surrender. It is in the character of God that all of us must anchor

our certainty. He is the lone constant. He is the only one who never changes. His nature allows us to operate in growing confidence that God is as good as He says that He is.

II. We Must Remember the Certainty of God's Concern (3)

A. Difficult days darken (3a)- “On the day I called...” **cried out, call out, shout for**

The fact that God is good, constant and praise-worthy does not keep His children immune from difficulty. The Psalm now shifts from the glories of God to the sometimes-harsh realities within the human experience. We children of God find ourselves often crying out aloud to Abba in our times of deep need. Sometimes we find ourselves so deeply moved, distressed and pressed within that our “callings” are more like loud shouts of desperation. We are crying FOR HIM, not just to Him. When difficult days darken the life of a believer, our silence is the last thing that needs to characterize our response. In all of human existence, God has never turned a deaf ear to the broken, contrite cries of any of His children. While He does not always answer as quickly as He did for this Psalmist, answer He will.

B. Able answers arrive (3b) - “...You answered me...”

The Psalmist testifies here of receiving a speedy answer from the One to whom he has cried out. He declares that God answered him on the same day in which he cried. While this is not the guaranteed experience of every believer, it is undebatable that every time God answers, He answers someone who has cried. We never know when He might break through on our behalf. If there are delays, they are developmental delays. He is producing something valuable in the waiting. We do not despair in those delays, fearing he may never respond. When today's crying out is not clearly answered, we cry out again tomorrow. Recall these others whose cries were met with God's response to them:

These got their answer: Joseph in the dungeon, Moses in the desert, Elijah at Mount Carmel, Daniel in Babylon, Esther in the King's court, Peter in the prison, Paul with his thorn, John on the isle of Patmos, Jesus on the cross.

C. Developing depth discovered (3c) - “...my strength of soul you increased.”

How we all long to be strong in our bodies, our minds and our emotions. We want stout finances, reputations, ministries and careers. We have no appetite for any weakness. The way of the world is to offer us all manner of opportunities to shore up our weaknesses by becoming externally strong. For the believer, there needs to be a constant awareness that God will actually work against our putting confidence in external strengthening. If we ever trust in those strengths, He will topple them in order that we might learn to value what the Psalmist is expressing when he says, “my strength of soul you increased.” One wise believer said to God in Proverbs 18:14, “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” It is the strengthened spirit of the believer that will sustain him or her when all else in life is serving to crush them. If we can every get to the place (and remain there) where we are content with strength in our soul, then we will live in the place of blessing. To be strengthened in the soul is to abide in Jesus. If our souls are being regularly strengthened, it is because Jesus has been invited in and is at work in us. Can we consider it joy if the badness of life is used of the Lord to bring His strength into us to stay?

III. We Must Rely on The Certainty of God’s Crown (4-5)

A. He is above human authority (4a)- “All the kings of the earth shall give You thanks, O Lord...”

B. He is above human wisdom (4b) - “...for they have heard the words of Your mouth and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord ...”

C. He is above human achievement (5) -“...for great is the glory of the Lord”

When the Lord strengthens an individual or a people in their soul, it will not be contained to that individual or that people. The Psalmist testifies that his own confidence in God will spread to a global extent. Kings will bow before the Lord when they receive the words that He has released and is releasing. So great will be the glory of the Lord that human kings will become worshippers of Yahweh. They will not merely be impressed with Him, they will worship Him and sing songs of His ways. The climax of these two verses comes with the human kings acknowledging the greatness of the Eternal King. May we all remember Who is in charge. May none of us tremble before human

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authorities who seem to be in control. God is on the throne. He is not merely sitting there. He is ruling over the entire ordered cosmos. He is above every human. He is above every angel. He rules above every single demon and Satan himself. Our Lord is a King on His throne and He has called us eternally to be His children.

IV. We Must Rejoice in The Certainty of God's Commitment (6-8)

A. He is fully aware of when we are broken (6) - "For though the Lord is high, He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar."

Again, the dependent Psalmist testifies that the God who is high and lifted up is also the same God who stoops in tender grace to encounter those who are lowly, meek and contrite. With those who have insulated themselves via their own external strengths, the haughty, there will be an impassable distance. God will observe them, but He will refuse to offer them encounter with Him. Your weakness never causes God to turn from you. It actually magnetizes you to the Lord if you will steward it in humility, refusing to compensate for it by developing artificial strengths.

B. He is intensely personal when we are struggling (7a) - "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life; You stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand delivers me."

With all of this praise, worship and glory coming forth from the Psalmist, we might be tempted that all of his troubles have ended. Yet, this verse is clearly saying that walking in the midst of trouble was still occurring. From that ongoing trouble, He was learning more of the preserving power of God. He was learning how to leave his human enemies to the Lord who was His shield. Ultimately, the Psalmist learns that his life-trouble only resulted in him becoming more convinced that God would be his continual deliverer.

C. He is faithful not to leave us when we are weak (8) - "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of Your hands."

Verse eight begins with the declaration of spiritual maturity: the Lord finishes what He begins in us. God has divine destiny assigned to each of His children, and He will complete it as we allow our weaknesses and troubles to be entrusted to Him. Trouble will come to an end, but God's steadfast love for His own will not. He can pray

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what he knows to be true, namely that God will never forsake him, the work of His hands.

11:15 Notes Below

“Heaven’s Remix” Psalm 126 Sunday 11:15AM

A remix is a newer version of something previously released which has been altered from its original state by adding, removing, and/or slightly altering pieces of the item. The primary characteristic of a remix is that it appropriates the core of something done previously, and changes certain elements to create something similar, but also discernably new. Psalm 126 is an ancient cry for a spiritual remix to be released from Heaven. As the Psalmist thinks upon Israel’s history with God, he remembers a time when God restored them with some unspecified touch from Heaven, but he is not longing for the past. The Psalmist is asking the Lord to do something similar in the present. He hungers for the core of revival to be released, but with something fresh on it for a time such as this. Let your own prayer be for that very same thing among your people and in your present generation.

I. We Remember Your Mighty Power (1-3)

A. Your intervention was incredible (1) - “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.”

We are not exactly sure what event or time period the Psalmist is referencing when he speaks of former days of restoration. All he reveals in the beginning is that, when God began to release a turnaround from Heaven, it felt too good to be true. What an awesome thing to recognize that God is both able and willing to take the dry, plateaued, mundane seasons of our lives and infuse them with presence and power. He can restore that which has been neglected. He can restore that which has faded. He can restore that which has been forfeited. When He moves on our behalf in such clear ways, it may very well feel like a dream to us.

B. Our experience was uncontainable (2a) - “Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy...”

Whoever told us that true spirituality is best displayed with stoic, unemotional responses to the presence of God was sadly mistaken. One cannot help but to note throughout Scripture that God loves laughter. Dancing, celebrating and feasting are all authentic components of the Kingdom of God. When did it become accepted that God’s primary characteristic is dignified, starchy quietness? We cannot support that from the Bible. The ancient Hebrews knew how to celebrate the goodness of God. The Psalmist writes here that the time of restoration resulted in fulness of laughter and loud, joyful shouting. Perhaps that is part of the reason why so many places of religious/church meetings do not experience the manifest presence

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of God - because *there is no celebration of Him*. He likely appears most frequently and most intensely to those who celebrate His goodness. May we reclaim mouths full of laughter and tongues that launch shouts of joy.

C. Your favor was undeniable (2b) - “...then they said among the nations, The Lord {Yahweh} has done great things for them.”

It is wise to note that the expression of joyful praise was a precursor to the glory of God being acknowledged among the nations. There is already plenty of dead religion to fill the planet. Only scavengers are attracted to dead carcasses. What will awaken the dead are anthems of praise for the living God. How can those who have experienced pardon not celebrate? How can those raised from the dead not rejoice? As we do so, there is a new dynamic accompanying the objective message of the Gospel. In Israel's day when the Psalmist was penning this song, the people in the nations declared that the God of Israel had done great things for them. They may not have fully bowed to Yahweh, but they were impacted enough to discern that He was alive and working among His chosen ones.

D. Our gratitude became irrepressible (3) - “The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.”

Seemingly in response to the acknowledgment among the nations of Yahweh's goodness to Israel, the Psalmist writes, “Yes, He has done great things for us – and we are glad!” When the level of our gratitude, the volume of our praise and the joy from our hearts begins to wane, this is when we need God to send a modern remix of revivals that He has written in past generations. We do not want to travel back in time to those revivals. We want God to move toward us in the present moment with something fresh for us, with His glory and name remaining at the core of anything He does.

II. We Need A Renewed Touch (4)

A. The hunger in the request - “Restore our fortunes...” **Paraphrase: Bring us back to that God-kissed way of life!**

We need to take a moment to get precise with what all we are reading here in this Psalm. Israel once had something precious from God. Somewhere, they had lost it. God had restored it to them in such a fashion that it seemed like a dream to that generation. Then, shockingly, they lost it again. Now the Psalmist is asking for God to restore it once again. This is the request for God to once again impart

a mix of the wind and fire that previously restored fortune to Israel. This is an example of what it means to intercede for revival and restoration on behalf of a people. One believer is putting down in song the cries of his heart for God to do again what He has done in the past. We must not be content with the way things are. If we are unable to declare dogmatically that God is moving among us in sustained presence and power, then we should assume that it is time for us to be interceding for God to do it again. Bring back to us, Lord that God-kissed life! We are not content to do another day without your manifest presence.

B. The hope for the request - "...O, Lord..." No props. Church cannot do it. Strategy cannot. Gifting cannot. ONLY GOD.

Simply: Church cannot satisfy us. Religious routines will not do it. The most spiritual thing our own strength can generate falls woefully short of what our souls desire. We are convinced that there is no other source from which our hope can spring forth. What we are asking can only come from the Lord. The Psalmist places all of his hope in the personhood of God. God must send the wind. God must send the fire. The next phrase reminds us also that God must send the moving water.

C. The desperation in the request - "...like streams in the Negeb!"

This arid region, the Negeb, is desolate in one season but quickly filled & flowing with Spring rains. The Psalmist is asking God for rapid & dramatic change! Take the barrenness, Lord, and make it into an oasis. Flood the dry places with Your presence and power. Let those waters not be standing and pooled, but *moving waters* which flow in many directions. Lord, let it not be merely a season of refreshing movement, but let Your touch remain on us. Release a remix, Father! Do it again, Lord Jesus! Release those streams from the fountainhead of your goodness, love and glory.

III. We Envision A Lasting Breakthrough (5-6)

A. We will not ignore our hunger pangs (5a) - "Those who sow in tears..." We have invested tears and enduring work

What was the Psalmist communicating to his generation? What can our generation learn from what he writes? He is speaking in an agricultural metaphor which paints a vivid picture of releasing in weakness and hope. When a seed is placed in the ground during dry seasons, it is often with desperation. Scarcity results in minimal seed

to be planted in the next season. Many times, the days of planting are long, hot and demanding. The sower releases and can never retrieve the seed he puts in the ground. At the end of the day, there is nothing left to plant. From that moment on, it is waiting on the Lord to provide the sun and the rain. It is a position of complete dependence. There is a hunger for the harvest season to come. It is then that there will be an opportunity to feast. Much of the season after sowing was filled with prayers, intercessions for rain and sun, and a daily embracing of hope for the harvest time to come.

B. We will not diminish the possibilities (5b) - “...shall reap with shouts of joy!”

And then the Lord moves in restored favor and fortune. The harvest arrives and great joy breaks in upon those who previously knew labor and tears. There is no more wondering here. What was released by faith is received in hand. This is not merely a return of the released seed – it is a granting of abundance which sprang from that which was released. The Psalmist describes the posture of his heart as one who has released the seeds of his prayers. He now declares that he is confident of God’s forthcoming release of bounty. He has been both the one who wept in waiting and the one who received with shout of joy. He wants the Lord to do in the present something like what He had done for Israel in the past. Do it again, Lord!

C. We will be faithful to our portion (6a) - “He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing...”

Now convinced of the reliability of the Lord to bring harvest from seed, his one-time prayers here become confessions of confidence. He sees a principle at work in God’s dealings with His people. He sees that the weeping and the release are the means through which God restores the fortunes of His people. He has learned something about the Lord’s ways which he will never forget.

D. We are looking for appointed breakthroughs (6b) - “...shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.”

Now, the lesson moves from the individual heart into the lives of others. What the one believer believes, his family can experience. They will feast on what has been sown. There is plenty for everyone to come and dine. The seed released has become a harvest received. Here again appear the shouts of joy which have appeared in these verses twice before. All disappointments will give way to God-appointments if we will move into the presence of the Father and release the seed of our petitions for Him to restore the fortunes

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of ourselves and those with whom we do life. He is the kind of Father who will emphatically answer the humble cries of His people. He wants His glory and favor to be released more than we ever could. These pearls will not be thoughtlessly tossed out to just anyone. For those who treasure the preciousness of restored fortune from the Lord, there will arise the cry of the heart which cannot go on any longer without it. When those cries touch the generous willingness of God, revival will come again.