

## **The Benefits of a Thankful Heart**

### **Psalm 92 – A Psalm of Thanksgiving**

**Introduction:** Studying a psalm is like cutting into a juicy, thick, well-cooked steak. When you have a wonderful steak, you want to savor each and every bite. The balance of tenderness and the juices that make up the flavor of the steak are something to enjoy as you eat your steak.

I liken each of the psalms in that way. I usually preach one psalm a year and that is on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. I thought we would start the year off talking about Emotions and God and how we as humans deal with the wide range of feelings God has created us with.

The book of Psalms is interesting because while most if not all psalms stand alone, they also have themes that connect them with other psalms. I strongly encourage you for your mental health and personal spiritual growth to do some in depth study on some of the psalms. It will help you understand your emotions and how to respond directly to God about those feelings that are fully human since we are made in His image. God has emotions but His emotions are in perfect balance because of His holiness and perfection. Some of that is revealed in this psalm.

#### **Reminder**

- **The two-fold purpose of the 150 psalms**

1. To give all Christ followers a window into Israel's faith at the time of their writing
2. The psalms are man's healthy conversation with God and God's responses to man's perspective on life.

- **Types of Psalms**

1. Praise - Remembrances
2. Thanksgiving – Hymns
3. Lament
4. Imprecatory
5. Wisdom
6. Royal / Kingly / Enthronement
7. Pilgrimage

Transition: Psalm 92 is a psalm of thanksgiving. You follow along as I read.

#### **Scripture Reading**

##### **Psalm 92**

**It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; 2 to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, 3 to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. 4 For you, O Lord,**

have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.<sup>5</sup> How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep! <sup>6</sup> The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: <sup>7</sup> that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; <sup>8</sup> but you, O Lord, are on high forever. <sup>9</sup> For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. <sup>10</sup> But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil.<sup>11</sup> My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.<sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. <sup>13</sup> They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. <sup>14</sup> They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,<sup>15</sup> to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Purpose: Every Christ follower must live with a heart of gratitude that reflects continually on the goodness of God.

## Background

- The subtitle is “**A psalm for the Sabbath.**”
- It is a psalm of weekly praise since the Sabbath comes at the end of the week
- We do not know who wrote this psalm
- The tradition taken from the Mishnah is that this song was sung by the Levite priests during the time after the second temple was built at the time of the daily offerings offered on the Sabbath in worship.
- This is the only psalm that uses the tetragrammaton – YHWH – English transliteration of the Hebrew letters representing Yahweh
  - **Tetragamnton - Yahweh, name for the God of the Israelites, representing the biblical pronunciation of “YHWH,” the Hebrew name revealed to Moses in the book of Exodus. The name YHWH, consisting of the sequence of Hebrew consonants.**
  - Yahweh is used seven times in this psalm and seven represents perfection / completion.
- The theme of this psalm is God’s steadfast love, His blessings and favor on the righteous, His judgment on the evil doers.
- Notice the bookends of this psalm. The psalmist begins with the word “declare,” (verse 2), and ends with “declare” or “proclaim” in some translations – to say forth, (verse 15).

Transition: Let’s look at our first point this morning.

## Thankful for the works of God on behalf of the righteous

- The righteous praise God through music

## Psalm 92:1-3

**It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; 2 to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, 3 to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.**

- Literally, verse one reads “Good is to give thanks unto Jehovah.”
  - It is good, it is appropriate or fitting to thank God because of who He is and He is worthy of our praise
  - You see three things in the first five verses of Psalm 92
    - ✓ It is fitting to thank God for all He has done
      - Praise
      - Make music
      - Declare / Proclaim
- We give thanks not based on any merit we have but because of God’s lovingkindness bestowed on us beginning at salvation and continuing daily on our lives into eternity.
- Notice the phrase “O Most High”. – El Elyon – Our God is exalted above all. He is the one true God who has proven Himself for all time reflected in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.
- In verse two – it talks about thanking God for His steadfast, enduring and faithful love toward us.
  - It is interesting the use of the word morning.
  - Morning praise and thanksgiving is very beneficial to us as humans.
    - ✓ Thank God for preserving you through the night, giving you rest which your body and mind need
    - ✓ Thank God you woke up this morning and it is symbolic of new life, a new day in front of you
    - ✓ Thanking God in the morning, gets our mood and our attitude in the right frame of mind to serve God however He leads us. It promotes cheerfulness at the beginning of the day and sets the tone.

### **Illustration: Benefits of a Thankful Heart**

- 1. Better Sleep**
- 2. Higher self – esteem**
- 3. Improved physical and mental health**
- 4. Gratitude can even help us through trauma**
- 5. Improve how we relate to people**

Source: THE BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE AND WHY YOU SHOULD PRACTICE IT DAILY - NOT JUST ON THANKSGIVING - [www.keepabreast.org](http://www.keepabreast.org)

- He mentions God’s faithfulness at night
  1. Night is the calm of the day after work.
  2. Night is a time for reflection

3. As a result of that reflection, we can be thankful for the things of the day
  4. We close out the day, in the evening, reminding ourselves of God's daily mercy and grace.
- God's gracious love toward us is given to us by His grace.
  - We have standing with God based on that grace – Romans 5:2 and as a result, we can thank God because of the grace given to us. This brings glory to God and He shares that glory with us so we can continue to glorify Him.
  - In verse three, the psalmist moves beyond words to music to show His gratitude toward God.
    - At the night time offerings on the Sabbath, the Levitical singers led the people with musical instruments in worship.
    - The ten stringed harp or lyre is mentioned here. The lute as well.
  - Instruments used in praise and worship.
    - Percussion
      - ✓ Timbrel – tambourine – wood frame with skin
      - ✓ Cymbal – two bronze plates – clanging sound
    - Wind Instruments
      - ✓ Horn – few different sounds – used to announce the coronation of a king or celebrate Jehovah's rule and reign

### **Psalm 98:6**

**With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!**

- ✓ Blowing trumpet which was a call for an assembly of the people
  - Worship
  - Coronation of a King
  - Battle
- ✓ Flute – pipe – commonly used in Egypt but also Israeli worship. Often more for secular music celebrations.
- Stringed instruments
  - ✓ Lute - The lute was originally an Arabic instrument. It resembled a guitar, though with a longer and more slender neck.
  - ✓ Harp / Lyre – curved, rectangular instrument often with ten strings.
- All sorts of instruments to accompany singers to praise God.

**Illustration: "The Power of Music - In 1530 the great reformer Martin Luther wrote: "I am not ashamed to confess publicly that next to theology there is no art which is the equal of music, for she alone, after theology, can do what otherwise only**

theology can accomplish, namely, quiet and cheer up the soul of man, which is clear evidence that the devil, the originator of depressing worries and troubled thoughts, flees from the voice of music just as he flees from the words of theology." Source : From a sermon by John Boquist, "Jesus Our Motivator" 8/3/2008

- The righteous praise God by declaring His works

#### Psalm 92:4-5

**4 For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. 5 How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!**

- Made me glad – singing about the completion of a week, much like God's completion of creation in six days and then He set an example by resting on the seventh day; the Sabbath. Isn't it a good feeling that after a week of productive work or study, you can sit back and relax??
- Declare means to confess, make known, report, tell plainly with certainty and authority
- The acts of God are not to be separated from His attributes and the essence of who He is. In this case His steadfast love and faithfulness as stated in verse 2. The works of God are demonstrations, expressions of who He is.

#### Romans 5:8

**But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

#### Psalm 89:2-4

**For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness." 3 You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 4 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah**

- God is a God of action, of putting His words and His nature on display for all to see and for us to give Him glory.
- "Works of His hands" – mighty acts of deliverance – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Sennacherib to name a few.

**Illustration:** In his novel *Jayber Crow*, the Kentucky farmer and writer Wendell Berry has his character Jayber talk about the quiet work of God's guidance in our lives: **"Often I have not known where I was going until I was already there. I have had my share of desires and goals, but my life has come to me or I have gone to it mainly by way of mistakes and surprises. Often I have received better than I deserved. Often my faintest hopes have rested on bad mistakes. I am an ignorant pilgrim, crossing a dark valley. And yet for a long time, looking back, I have been unable to shake off the feeling that I have been led—make of that what you will"**

- God's thoughts are deep – Verse 5b - **Your thoughts are very deep!**
  - This was a weekly hymn intended to recharge spiritually and emotionally and remind them as they sang that life is a drop in the bucket of eternity.
  - God reveals His mighty works and how incomprehensible He is.

### **Romans 11:33 – 34**

**33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”**

### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

**8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

Application: Are you daily thanking God for His works found in your life?

Transition Second,

### **Thankful for God's judgment on evildoers**

- The life of evildoers ends suddenly at death

### **Psalm 92:6-7; 9**

**6 The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: 7 that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever**

**9 For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered**

- You see the two contrasting responses to God's work in human history.
  1. The fool responds by rejecting God's redemption
  2. The wise respond by following God and accepting His redemption coming up in this chapter.
- Stupid here means fool, useless or senseless
- In verse 7, we see the wicked sprout up and flourish for a short while. Like grass that gets green in the spring and early summer but when the summer heat comes and the rain dries up, the grass is burned up
- The wicked man does not have common sense. He begins and ends with himself and has no morals because he is insensitive to God.
- Even when he gains wealth, power and prestige, it will be short lived. When he dies, it will all be left to someone else. People will eventually forget His name.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:15 – 17**

**15 As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. 16 This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? 17 Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.**

### **Legacy by Casting Crowns**

**Make it count, leave a mark, build a name for yourself**

**Dream your dreams, chase your heart, above all else**

**Make a name the world remembers**

**But Jesus is the only name to remember**

**Chorus: And I, I don't want to leave a legacy**

**I don't care if they remember me**

**Only Jesus**

**And I, I've only got one life to live**

**I'll let every second point to Him**

**Only Jesus**

- The life with God is eternal

### **Psalms 92:8**

**8 But you, O Lord, are on high forever**

- Notice the “but” here showing contrast to the short-lived, here today, gone tomorrow wicked man
- God is eternal and He is instilling in His Christ followers and eternal perspective; taking the long view.
- He reigns in absolute supreme authority.
- Because of the psalmist’s conviction that the Lord is the ultimate ruler and judge, he lifts his voice in song as praise to the Lord. He praises God for taking down the wicked.

### **Psalms 92:9**

**9 For behold, your enemies, O Lord, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered**

- God allows the wicked to flourish for a period of time with the hopes that He will repent. Always remember that God never forces anyone to repent and turn to God.

### **Romans 2:4**

**Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?**

- God's steadfast display of love, softens the human heart and leads it to repentance if the person responds to it. If the wicked do not repent, they are headed for eternal destruction
- Verse 9 is hymn like with three verses.. Read the verse.
- Behold is repeated for the emphasis on how sure the psalmist is of the destruction of the wicked.
- He says, the wicked will be scattered like an army being routed by the enemy. They are in disarray, discouraged and demoralized as they run for their lives.

**Application: Do you see the downside of disobeying God?**

Transition: We live in a world of removing the consequences of sin. Abortion pills available to be mailed to your home. Our last point is that we should be;

**Thankful for God's continual blessing on the righteous**

- The righteous flourish

### **Psalm 92:10 -14**

**10 But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil. 11 My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. 12 The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green**

- Exalted the psalmist's horn – symbolic of strength and power based in his salvation.
- Fresh oil – anointing – oil is symbol of divine blessing
- The righteous get to see and hear of the fall of the wicked.
  - The psalmist expresses his joy because God is perfect in His justice and is a holy God.
  - The psalmist rejoices in verse 15 that evil is destined to cease once and for all.
- In verse 12, we see the example used of a palm tree and a cedar tree to describe the righteous



- These trees represent prosperity and a life of happiness. These trees represent a picture of a life that is filled with good fruit, good health, and vibrancy

#### **Isaiah 65:22**

**For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.**

- In verse 13, they are planted in the house of the Lord symbolizing the nearness of God to His followers.
  - It stresses here the importance of being in God's church
    - Salvation, baptism, discipleship, maturity all part of the process of being with other believers. Iron sharpens iron.
- In old age they bear fruit and are vibrant, healthy in their walk with Jesus. God's favor rests on the righteous to the end of their life.

#### **Psalms 37:25**

**I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.**

#### **Psalms 1:3**

**He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers**

- The righteous declare God's righteousness

#### **Psalms 92:15**

**15 To declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him**

- Declare – say forth that the Lord is righteous.
- This verse is the summary of the purpose of this psalm. It circles back to verse one and creates a bookend to this psalm
- His works reflect God's perfection
- Rock – rely on God for sustenance, the supply of resources we need physically and spiritually to live, and for our stability
- God does not disappoint His followers, notice the end of verse 15 – there is no unrighteousness in him. God is the friend of the righteous. God can be trusted and is so worthy of our trust.

**Quote: "What would the universe be if God, a Being of infinite POWER, were not a Being of perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS, and could not be trusted by the creatures which He has made!" - Barnes, A. (1870–1872). Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms (Vol. 3, p. 25). Blackie & Son.**

**Illustration:** The Chinese character for "righteousness" is most interesting. It is composed of two separate characters one standing for a lamb, the other for me. When "lamb" is placed directly above "me," a new character "righteousness" is formed. This is a helpful picture of the grace of God. Between me, the sinner, and God, the Holy One, there is placed between God and me, by faith the Lamb of God. By virtue of his sacrifice, he has received me on the ground of faith, and I have become righteous in his sight. God gave us the righteousness of Christ at



our salvation.

**Application:** Are you recognizing God's continual blessings on your life?

**Illustration:** F.E. Marsh has enumerated some of God's blessings:

An acceptance that can never be questioned. (Ephesians 1:6).

An inheritance that can never be lost (I Peter 1:3-5).

A deliverance that can never be excelled (2 Corinthians 1:10).

A grace that can never be limited (2 Corinthians 12:9).

A hope that can never be disappointed. (Hebrews 6:18, 19).

A bounty that can never be withdrawn. (I Colossians 3:21-23).

A joy that need never be diminished (John 15:11).

A nearness to God that can never be reversed (Ephesians 2:13).

A peace that can never be disturbed (John 14:27).

A righteousness that can never be tarnished (2 Corinthians 5:21).

A salvation that can never be canceled (Hebrews 5:9). - F.E. Marsh – Pastor in England

**Key Thought:** No good thing does God withhold from those who walk uprightly – Psalm 84:11

### **Questions to Ponder this Week**

1. Are you starting your day with a grateful heart?
2. Can you write down specific works that God has done in your life?
3. Are you able to thank God for lessons learned from past trials and tribulations?