

Praise Him in the storm

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 March 2020

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] just want to take a moment now and uh speak to the boys and girls and uh this is very strange it's very strange to try and speak to the boys and girls today normally uh you'd be down on the floor and you'd be asking questions and and saying all kinds of things before i got going but but today i i can't see you but i'm hoping that uh i'm hoping that you're there and i'm hoping that you can see me and i can't hear you i wish i could hear some of michael's uh questions i wish i could hear all your amazing answers but but i can't but i'm hoping that you can you can hear me and it's an amazing thing to think about uh just the fact that we can even though we're not able to meet in this building like we normally do it's amazing to think that we can still be connected through the screen through the phones or through ipads or whatever it is that we might be be using we can we can be connected even though we're we're kind of a bit far apart just now because of all that's going on uh we can still be connected and that's a that's a great thing and uh we really value probably more than we ever have to the fact that we can pick up the phone and speak or we can go on facetime and we can we can see somebody that we love and and then we can have a conversation with them or we can we can use all these different things to to connect to each other and that's a great thing but the the thing that's that's better than all that the thing that i want to to uh speak to you about today just in this time is the fact that we have a god who who promises that if we trust in him he'll always be connected to us we drift away from each other sometimes connections can even be be broken but we have a god who promises that if we trust in him he will always stay connected to us if we go all the way back to the beginning of the bible uh we can think about the garden of eden we can think about how god made us and he made us for himself when we see adam and eve and they're walking in the garden with god and they're they're they're in this perfect relationship with god but but then that that relationship that connection with god that peace with god was was broken so what broke the connection between man and god this is what i want to hear john roley and i want to hear michael what broke the connection between man and god we have one or two oversized children in the congregation today so so so what broke the connection between man and god steward cinder they're nowhere near as good as you and who came to fix that connection and who came to fix that connection jesus did and where was it fixed it was fixed at the cross and the promise of god is if we're trusting in jesus if we believe in him if we ask him to to come and take our sin away and come into our lives come into our hearts he promises that he will and when he comes in his promise is that he will never leave us he will never forsake us he will never isolate himself from us but he is with us always to the very end of time and that's a great comfort it's a great encouragement for us whether we're boys and girls or whether we're grown-ups uh the fact that god is with us we'll finish with the the the verses from or the memory verse from the holiday club this year past uh do you remember what it was

so do not fear i am with you do not be dismayed i am your god and the verse is is dismayed for I'm your God Isaiah 41 10 and that is great news it's the greatest news so let's thank God for that news that we think about today our heavenly father we thank you again that we can come to you in prayer we thank you that the way is open into your presence Jesus opened up the way we thank you that you hear us in our prayers we thank you that you answer us as we come to you in Jesus name we thank you that you're the God who is with us always we know that we are sinners and we know that we drift from you but we thank you that when we pray and ask for you to forgive us you draw us near again we thank you that your promise for Jesus is that you will always be near to us you will never leave us you will never forsake us but you're with us always to the very end of time so help us whether we're boys and girls or whether we're older and further on in years help us to be trusting in Jesus and help us to know these promises are promises that we can take to ourselves by faith and we ask all this in Jesus name and for Jesus sake

Amen we will read now and we'll read from God's word in Psalm 113 Psalm 113 and we'll read the whole of the psalm Psalm 113 verse 1 to verse 9 this is God's word praise the Lord praise those servants of the Lord praise the name of the Lord let the name of the Lord be praised both now and forever more from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets the name of the Lord is to be praised the Lord is exalted over all the nations his glory above the heavens who is like the Lord our God the one who sits enthroned on high who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth he raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap he seats them with princes with the princes of their people he settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children praise the Lord

Amen we'll pray for a moment again before we come to study God's word our heavenly father we thank you again for your word we pray that you would help us now that as we take a few minutes to think upon these verses we ask that we would know the help of the Holy Spirit and we ask that you would open our minds that you would open our ears that you would stir our hearts and we ask that we would truly know that you the living God are speaking into our lives and we pray that you would give us faith and increase our faith that we may be found taking hold of the word of God and not just hearing but acting upon it so help us Lord we pray we pray for everyone else who meets as we do in different places at this time and in different rooms and in homes of this time this is a very unusual time for us and we feel quite unsettled by it but we pray that even in the disruption to our normal routines and coming together as we've been in the habit of doing we ask that we would know your presence and that we would know your help as we come together not physically but in this different kind of room we thank you that the church is not the buildings it's not the bricks and the mortar that the church of Jesus Christ is the people and we ask

Lord that you would bring us together in worship as we open your word and as we fix our eyes we pray upon Jesus so hear us help us bless all who gather and be exalted amongst us we pray in Jesus name Amen Well if you have your Bibles open then you can hopefully follow along with me in the passage that we've read together from Psalm 113 and let me just begin by saying that standing in front of a camera and preaching in a almost empty church it doesn't feel normal I would tend to be one of these people who would run away from a camera never mind a video camera but just a normal camera I'm the one who disappears out of the family photographs but here we are standing in front of a camera today and it doesn't feel normal and for those who are listening online rather than sitting in your normal seats in the church building

[9 : 45]

I'm sure I'm sure that also doesn't feel normal to be able to sit in your chair in your living room and perhaps feel your eyes going down at points and not have me looking at you as you're starting to drift that doesn't feel normal and if we'd been told even 10 days ago that this is what we'd be doing today we'd have struggled to believe it and yet here we are nothing seems normal this virus COVID-19 which at first seemed to be so small and so far away from us has turned our lives upside down to the extent that many of us are asking the question what should I now do how do I respond how do I process this how do I act how do I react what do I do in the middle of this storm that seems to have hit us so suddenly and I want to address that question as we think through the verses of

Psalms 113 you might ask the question why are we in Psalm 113 today and the answer is in part because well we were in Psalm 112 last Sunday Psalm 113 follows on from it so that's where our gaze was in the last few days but the other reason that we're in Psalm 113 today is that it's the Psalms that Jesus went to when he was under pressure Psalm 22 Psalm 41 Psalm 31 these are Psalms that we've read in past weeks as we've gone through Mark's Gospel and we're familiar with from the other Gospels these are Psalms which Jesus had upon his lips as he suffered in Mark 14 we were there just a couple of weeks ago we find Jesus and he's in the upper room and he tells his disciples one of you will betray me and he says to the gathered disciples you will all fall away and at that point in time in the upper room the sufferings of Jesus were becoming very intense and yet

Mark tells us in Mark 14 26 that before they left the upper room they sang a hymn you might have wondered when we read that what hymn did they sing and the commentators tell us that the hymn that they sang was likely to be a grouping of Psalms from Psalm 113 through to Psalm 118 so it's an amazing thing to think about the fact that the psalm that's opened before us today is a psalm that Jesus wrote and Jesus sang as Jesus wrestled with a level of anguish that we cannot really enter into in any meaningful way as Jesus advanced into the storm of Calvary where he would suffer for our sin he was in the sun so as we study this text briefly we're taught I think what to do when the storm hits us we're taught how to act and react when we feel stress and pressure and anguish we were taught what we're to do when life doesn't seem to be normal anymore there's three things to structure our thoughts from this psalm what are we to do when life seems not normal what are we to do when the storm hits well there's three things first thing praise the Lord second thing trust the

Lord and the third point is we're to depend upon the Lord so that gives us the structure for the message first of all praise the Lord there's a song that was composed by a band called Casting Crowns a song that's called I'll praise you in the storm some of you have heard it and the story behind the song is the story of a Christian family and they were suffering they were losing their daughter to cancer she was sick life was bad for them life was hard and yet in the storm of it all they continued to praise God and it's a really powerful thing when we praise the Lord in the storm not in the calm but in the midst of the storm and that's what we're taught to do in this psalm verse 1 praise the

Lord praise those servants of the Lord praise the name of the Lord sometimes we get messages and on our phones on different devices and they sometimes come and block capitals and when these text messages come and block capitals we know we're being told we're always being shouted at to pay attention and read this sometimes we get emojis and they're also things that are designed to give emphasis to the message so that we'll take notice and we'll just not flick it off the top of the screen now how does the psalmist bring emphasis to a psalm well the psalmist does that through repetition if something is said once in a verse we should listen it's God's word if something is said twice in a verse we should sit up and pay particular attention but if something is repeated three times in one verse as we see in verse 1 here then that's an instruction for us to pay absolute attention because this is a message that's coming with the greatest of power and emphasis so what are we to do according to verse 1 we're to praise the

[16 : 24] Lord three times one verse praise the Lord it's the duty of the servant of God it's the joy of the man or the woman or the boy or the girl who trusts the Lord we are called to and we want to if we truly do trust the Lord we want to praise him it's what we're to do when are we to praise the Lord is it only on the good days is it only when things are easy is it only when life is going calmly and you feel at ease well the answer to that is no in verse 2 it says let the name of the Lord be praised both now and forever more that's not yesterday and today and tomorrow when things are going well perhaps but that's every day we're to praise the Lord in the normal days when life is going okay and we're to praise the Lord in the not normal days when life feels like it's really not okay and where is the

Lord to be praised it's just a call that's just for the for the psalmist and for a few israelite people way back then to hear and to respond to well the answer to that is no this is for us verse 3 from the the rising of the sun to the place where it sets the name of the Lord is to be praised from east where the sun rises to west where the sun sets in every place in every land at every time for everyone there is this call to praise the Lord and it strikes me how powerful would it be at such a time as this when we are going through such a storm as this how powerful would it be if God's people if we who are trusting the

Lord Jesus would praise him you know our news channels are in meltdown the political pundits are in doomsday mode the man on the street is full of fear and dismay and anxiety how much the world would notice how great a contrast it would be to the mood of our current climate if in the midst of this storm we will determine as we are called to praise the Lord I remember when the late Archie MacLeod who was an elder in the congregation in Harris for years she was well known to us I remember when his wife Mary was in hospital in Invernecks she had a bad fall and she was dying and Archie and the family in spite of all that was happening in spite of the suffering and the struggle and the grief they were going through they were full of praise of

God and even as Mary died I heard from people in the hospital that there was a calm that the Lord brought to that deathbed and the nurses and the doctors and all those that were in that room they noticed something very different going on they were all deeply impacted by the fact that God was being praised in the most difficult of circumstances and even when Mary was going through the valley of the shadow of death God's name was being praised so let us be encouraged especially in these days to praise the Lord the first thing the second thing we're to do is we're to trust the Lord when I was preparing this

I got an email through from the agent who looks after our wee flat and Inverness and the message the gist of the message was she was saying in these unstable days though you have tenants in your flat we can expect many of the tenants will stop paying their rent so make sure you have insurance that covers defaulting payments on rent so I went to check the policy just shortly after that to see am I covered can I trust can I trust the insurer to give the protection that I need if this should happen you know we're always wondering can we trust things can we trust this policy can we can we trust this promise that's been given to us we're seeing people on the news all the time just now they're walking down the streets and they have these face masks on and they hope that these masks will protect them from any kind of virus but the experts tell us they're not sure how much protection these masks can give they don't know to what extent these things can be can be trusted if you're sitting alone just now you're likely sitting in a in a chair and clearly you believe the chair will hold you you can you can trust it and the message of this psalm is a call not just to praise the lord but there's an assurance that's given to us that we can trust the lord look at verse 4 to 6 the lord is exalted over all the nations his glory is above the heavens who is like the lord our god the one who sits enthroned on high who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth the thing that comes through so clearly there is there's no one like god we don't have language really which can can sufficiently communicate to us the the glory and the magnitude and the power of god there's no one like him he is trustworthy there's nothing he can't handle there's nothing that's above his his reach he is verse four exalted over all nations there's nothing that causes the lord to panic we're seeing panic all the time just now nothing nothing causes the lord to panic there's nothing that catches the lord off guard there's nothing that causes the lord to to rise up in a state of alarm he is the one verse five who who sits enthroned on high the posture of the king the king of kings he sits he is enthroned on high his glory is above the heavens and yet the lord doesn't remain aloof from us he doesn't he doesn't turn away from us but he looks on the heavens and the earth verse six and as he saw us in our sinful state in our great need he's the god verse six who stooped down to save us this is the lord our god he's the one that we can trust and as we look at these verses and we we begin to think them through and as we think about them in the wide span of scripture who do we see in these verses well we see Jesus the Christmas carol that we often sing says he came down to earth from heaven who is lord and god of all we see Jesus one who

[25 : 00] stooped down to us in philippines 2 the apostle paul he directs us to christ jesus who humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross i think the reality is if we're honest that there are times when we do struggle to trust god but if we have trust issues we need only look to jesus if we find ourselves wondering whether the lord knows and understands and cares for us if we find ourselves wondering if the lord can truly be trusted we only need look to jesus it's the one who cared enough to leave the glory of heaven and stoop down not just to look but to come into this world jesus is the one who got involved in our lives he knows what it's like to laugh he knows what it's like to cry he knows what it's like to sweat in the workshop he knows what it's like to bleed he knows what it's like to actually be in the midst of a world that is full of sick and suffering people and he knows what it's like to take the sickness of our sin into himself he knows what it's like to suffer for our sake so that we could be saved eternally and when we look to the lord jesus we look to him who he is when we look to see what he has done for us surely we can trust him the call we have here is a call to trust the lord and i know it's easy to preach that it's easy to say that but i have to confess there are points even over the last few days where i like probably many of us have felt totally overwhelmed and stressed out by the things that are going on but you know it's at these points when we are anxious about the things that we have to do and more often actually we're more anxious about the things that we can do the places all of a sudden that we can't go the people all of a sudden that we can't see it's at these points where we feel so helpless and when we feel stress and pressure it's at these points that we have the opportunity to trust the lord he's the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine that's what we're told in ephesians 3 20 and our calling especially in these strange days peace is to trust the lord hebrews 11 6 says without faith it's impossible to please god and today when we can't with any clarity see what's ahead we have daily opportunities to please god as we trust him more than our eyes can see as sally lloy jones put it in the jesus story bible oswald

chambers in my devotionals this week he said this living a life of faith means never knowing where you are being led but it does mean loving and knowing the one who is leading it is literally a life of faith not of understanding reason a life of knowing him and the question i suppose that comes to us is do we know him do we know the lord jesus if not he's only a prayer away there's no one who loves you like him there's no one who can be trusted like him and the call of the gospel is a call to come to him what are we to do we're to praise the lord we're to trust the lord and have we got time for a final point we're to depend upon the lord verse 7 to 9 very briefly he raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap he seats them with princes with the princes of their people he settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children and these verses from verse 7 to 9 they're actually borrowed verses the psalmist takes them he lifts them from the song of Hannah you'll find in 1

Samuel chapter 2 verses 1 to 10 and Hannah was someone who was barren she couldn't change that and it was of great distress to her but God changed that for her God blessed her with a son and these verses which the psalmist lifts were part of Hannah's song of praise and as we look at them here what have we taught through this well we're taught something about the nature of God first of all we're taught that he is the God as one commentator put it whose greatness is seen in his concern for those who cannot help themselves our God is a God of grace in other words his nature and his greatness is seen in his concern for those who cannot help themselves we learn that we learn that about the nature of God as we look at these verses but we also learn something about ourselves we look in these verses they're like a mirror we see us who are we well we are those who cannot help ourselves we are poor we are frail creatures of the dust sometimes we forget that sometimes we think that we're masters of our own destiny sometimes we think that we are the ones who are in control sometimes we think that we don't depend on anyone and yet at times like this we're reminded of how frail we are we're reminded of the fact that our sin has put us on the ash heap our sin makes our lives barren that's the bad news but the good news is that the Lord

Jesus can lift sinners out of the ash heap and put them on the throne so what Warren Wearsby says the Lord is the one who can lift sinners out of the ash heap and put them on the throne and his promise is that he will do that for all who will ask him all who will come to him and depend on him on his grace for our salvation for our eternal security so what are we to do in these strange times what are we to do as we find ourselves in this storm praise the Lord trust in the Lord and depend upon the Lord and may

God enable us to do that he and a I think is going to read us in prayer in God in God in God Mayrent one syndrome expect a■■■ to ■ây from West Africa to this battalion.

[34 : 18] We won't be able to speak to you again. Th Terms are known. I'll wish you learned a lot about us for this, to be able to use this as we'll see you again.

But you are onspent the ropes and that goal will lead you to save you. Remember that it is not significant He is the most harmful thing in hiding about what is coming from you in the absence of a thought and up again on that occasion.

talked to the president to do this thing I spoke about when the president had asked him for a while A Coronavirus is of course normal, unfortunately, the conservation squadron Candle before experiencing a equation and had further examples.

How can he learn from both of themselves? són like the doctor getting tired and 19 as they re SolarEx. So now they are scared of people because they are the meals■■■■ here...

This moon ending for the time for the ■■■■ and skim. Once youy Ray til the town for you, I'll give you a second child.

[35 : 59] I received a French competition or Japanese aut tuna■■■. So I encountered all thedragon■■■ we beganade in rivalry.

AddNT-like word from the creeds to addkar on your house as de■■■ Strawberry or vegetable.

Also souleC, cultivates things around you are so important And consuming So I turned the robot end to theší and then Oh, yeah.

Well, we should play surely on a story about colonialism and youth. All the turns of each person out there into an animal and lives. We will be watching all this 400 years and the the sun when we see each other's blue and ■■.

Even when he got food, I've lost some estate. And for those years he was who was sweet, butonnaonna never00■■■ in the world, and, when they are weak providing information from when they are lost.

[37 : 42] They're always ■■ their hope and Dora Schwein, and they'll essee to you, and they're alsoolics contributing to his faith back.

and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore Amen