

18.4.21 pm

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Well, good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening. And I think, as David Cameron said to me at the door, that's the first time I've been able to say personally to people in the building in over a year a warm welcome to the service this evening.

So it's good to have the congregation back this evening in the building and also good to have those who are listening online and watching online.

I think we'll begin just with a short word of prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we do thank you for this evening.

We thank you for your dwelling place. We think of the tune that we were hearing just a moment ago and the words coming to our mind. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me.

And we thank you, Lord, for the fact that we are able to come together, some of us, in this place once more, in the evening of your day, to worship you.

[1 : 21] You are the God who is everywhere at all times. We thank you for the promise that you've given us, a special promise, that where two or three come together in the name of the Lord Jesus, you are here with us.

So we pray that as we believe that promise, we would know the blessing of that experience as we come together in your name.

We pray that we would be encouraged. We pray that we would be touched by your Spirit. We pray that you would speak to us through your word as we sing it, as we read it, and as we take some time to meditate upon it.

We pray that you would speak to us, that you would deal with us, Lord. That we would see Jesus, and that we would see our need of Christ.

So bless this hour, we pray. Be with us as we gather in the building. Be with those who are at home, who are listening in different places. And we ask, Lord, that we would know your presence, and your peace, and the loveliness of knowing that you are with us.

[2 : 32] And we pray these things in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen. We'll sing to God's praise as we've been going through the Psalms over a long time now.

We'll sing the whole of Psalm 146. Psalm 146. There's some faces in here that I haven't seen for a long time. Some of you actually haven't been in church probably for a year.

So really a warm welcome to those who are back. And we'll sing now to God's praise. Psalm 146.

The whole of the Psalm. When I say we'll sing, Adam will sing.

The rest of us will listen. We'll follow as Adam leads us in singing God's praise. Praise God the Lord. Praise O my soul.

I'll praise God while I live. While I have being to my God. In songs I'll praises give. The whole of this Psalm we'll hear sung to God's praise. Praise God the Lord.

[3 : 38] Praise O my soul. I'll praise God while I live. While I have being to my God.

In songs our praises give. Trust not in princes nor man's son In whom there is no stay.

His breath departs to earth. He turns that day his thoughts decay.

O happy is that man and blessed whom Jacob's God doth aid.

Whose hope upon the Lord doth rest and on his God estate.

[4 : 43] Who made the earth and heavens high. Who made the swelling deep.

And all that is within the same. Who truth doth ever keep.

Who righteous judgment executes for those oppressed that be.

Who to the hungry giveth food. God sets the prisoners free.

The Lord doth give the blind their sight. The bow down doth erase.

[5 : 41] The Lord doth dearly love all those that walk in upright ways.

The stranger's shield. The widow's stay. The orphan's help is he.
But yet by him the wicked's way. Turned upside down shall be.
The Lord shall reign forevermore. Thy God o Zion he.
Reigns to all generations. Praise to the Lord give ye.

[6 : 39] Again let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father we thank you for the words of that psalm.

We thank you for these closing words especially. The fact that you are the God who reigns. The Lord shall reign forevermore.

We thank you that you are the God who reigns throughout all generations. And when we know that and when we believe that.

We have much reason to praise you. We have every reason to relax to be at ease. Knowing that you are the God who is in control.

And Lord that is true. Especially and really only. If we are able to say that you are our God. So we pray that you would be working.

[7 : 52] In each of our lives this evening. That we would be able to take the words of this psalm upon our lips. That they would come from within our hearts.

That we would be people who are trusting. Not in princes. Not in the powers of this world. But in the God.

The one true God. Who is the saviour of our souls. And the one who is omnipotent. Who is sovereign. Who rules and reigns forevermore.

To help us Lord. To trust you. We confess Lord. That we are a people who are. Who are prone to be anxious.

We look around us. We look within us. We see trouble. We see difficulty. We see things that concern us. And cause us to worry. But we pray that our eyes would be lifted this evening.

[8 : 49] To see that you are in control of all things. And even as we look back over the last year. So much in our lives changed in a year. Things that we could never have imagined.

To not have been able to come into your house for such a long period. It's something that never. That we never thought we would see in our lifetime. And yet none of this took you by surprise.

You are the God who is in control. Your ways are higher than our ways. Your thoughts are higher than our thoughts. And so we thank you that you have been working Lord.

Through what? There's been a difficult year. And we thank you that you are working presently. You are working as year succeeds to year. And we thank you Lord that our times are in your hands.

And if we are trusting in you. That our lives are in your hands. And so we hear the words of Jesus saying. Do not worry. Do not be anxious.

[9 : 57] Don't fixate on the things that you are going to eat. And drink and wear. But trust in your Father who cares for you. To help us Lord to do that we pray.

Help us we pray. First and foremost. To trust you for our salvation. We are sinners. We confess it. Each time we bow before you.

But we thank you that Christ is the saviour. And we pray that he would be the saviour of all. Who are in this place this evening. And all who listen in. And who watch in from a distance.

We thank you Lord. That the age of grace is still ongoing. We thank you that today. If we hear the voice of the saviour. Our hearts must not be hardened.

But we can come. And be assured of that salvation. And we thank you Lord. That when our souls are secure. When we know where we are headed for eternity.

[10 : 56] We do not need to stress about what goes on in time. So yes we engage. And yes there are things that we. That we give ourselves to. In this world.

But we thank you that we don't need to worry. We pray for anyone tonight. Especially who may be worried. Those who may feel anxious. Those who may be discouraged. Those who may even feel crushed.

Even depressed by. The things of this world. That crash in. We ask Lord. That they. That each one of us. I would look to you.

What a friend we have in Jesus. Not only a saviour. But what a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything.

To God in prayer. Lord. We pray for those who are up in years. Those who. Are lonely. Who have been in isolation. Some for some.

[11:55] Long months now. We ask that you would draw near to them. We pray for those who are sick. Some who have been receiving treatment. Some who are. No longer receiving treatment even.

We ask Lord. That your hand. Would be upon them. That they would know your grace. And your protection. Your presence each day. We pray for those who struggle with.

Addictions. And who cannot break these habits. And we ask Lord. That you. The God who is able to. To set the prisoner free. Would be working in their lives.

Pray for those who. Have so many responsibilities. And who. Who struggle with the pressures of life. Enable them. Enable each of us. We pray to seek first your kingdom.

Knowing that all. Other things will be added. And subtracted. As you see fit Lord. We pray for our young people. Especially those who have just gone back to school.

[12:56] Some who may have exams. And assessments. And may. Be anxious about the prospect of these. And the forthcoming weeks. We ask Lord. That they would trust you.

That they would be looking to you. And we pray for the. The young people. Of this community. Especially. We think of the. The YF. That meet afterwards. We pray your hand.

To be upon them. We think of the Sunday school. That met this morning. Those who listened. To lessons online. Some who gathered here. We commit them to you. And ask that they would remember you.

In the days of their youth. We pray for the. The work. In SU. In school. We pray for the girls group. That meet on. Tuesday evenings. We pray for the.

Children that came in the past. Here to connect. And to jam clubs. Those who fill the church. With. The activities of the holiday club. And although we're not able.

[13:51] To reach them at this stage. We thank you. That you are the God. Who is able to reach them. And so we pray. That you would be working Lord. That you would be working. Through your people. And we.

We pray for the young folks. Of this place. We ask Lord. That they would. Look to you. That they would trust you. That they would walk with you. All the. The days of their lives.

And we thank you once more. For the freedom. That we do have. To meet here. We think once more. Of those that we saw. On screen. On Wednesday evening. We think of the reports.

That we heard. Of Christians. Who are persecuted. Ferociously. In countries. Across this world. We think of brothers and sisters. That we. Have not yet met. Those in Eritrea.

Those in Libya. Those in Pakistan. Those in India. Those in North Korea. Those in China. Many places. Where the name of Jesus.

[14:50] Upon the lips of a believer. Is enough. To bring life to an end. And yet we. We hear reports of. Churches. Which are growing. Much more.

Quickly. And far more deeply. Over there. Than we see here. In places of freedom. So bless Lord. Those who are persecuted.

Protect them. Encourage them. And touch our hearts. We pray. That we may not be. Be lukewarm. And apathetic. But that we would make.

The most of every opportunity. That you give to us. To worship you. And to reach out. With the good news. About Jesus. We thank you. That he. Is the one. Who lived for us.

He is the one. Who died for us. He is the one. Who rose from the dead. He is the one. Who will return. And take all. Those who are trusting.

[15:45] Him. To be with them. Eternally. So enable us. To look to. To trust him. To tell others. About Jesus. And we pray. All these things.

In Jesus name. Amen. We are going to read. The psalm. That we sang. Psalm 146.

Psalm 146. We will read. The whole. Of the psalm. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

O my soul. I will praise the Lord. All my life. I will sing. Praise to my God. As long as I live. Do not put your trust. In princes. In mortal men.

Who cannot save. When their spirit departs. They return to the ground. On that very day. Their plans come to nothing. Blessed is he. Whose help.

[16:57] Is the God of Jacob. Whose hope. Is in the Lord. His God. The maker. Of heaven and earth. The sea. And everything in them. The Lord. Who remains faithful forever.

He upholds. The cause of the oppressed. And gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free. The Lord gives sight. To the blind. The Lord lifts up.

Those who are bowed down. The Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the alien. And sustains the fatherless. And the widow. But he frustrates the ways. Of the wicked. The Lord reigns forever. Your God. O Zion. For all generations. Praise. The Lord. Amen. And may God bless that reading. Of his word to us. We're going to hear. Another hymn. Son. Now. Mission Praise.

[17 : 53] 495. 495. Hymn by Charles. Wesley. Oh for a heart. To praise my God. A heart from sin set free.

A heart that always feels thy blood. So freely shed for me. And we'll hear the whole of this hymn. 495. Son. To God's praise.

Oh for a heart.

To praise my God. A heart from sin set free.

A heart that always feels thy blood. So freely shed for me.

[18 : 53] A heart resigned. Submissive meek. My great Redeemer's throne.

Where only Christ. His heart to speak. Where Jesus reigns alone.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart. Believing true and clean.

Which neither life nor death can part. From him that dwells within.

A heart in every thought renewed. And full of love divine.

[20 : 09] A heart of God. A heart of God. A heart of God. A heart of God. A heart of God. A heart of God. And pure and good. A copy, Lord of thine.

Thy nature. Thy nature. Gracious Lord. Impart. Come quickly from above.

Write thy new name upon my heart. Thy new bed's name upon my heart.

Thy new bed's name upon my heart. We'll pray again just for a moment as we turn back to that psalm.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that we are able to hear your praises sung in this place.

[21 : 24] We look forward to the day soon, we hope, when we're able to join our voices in praise.

But we ask, Lord, that you would be working in our hearts.

It's one thing for us to make a sound with our voices, even as we unite our voices. But we know that hearts are the places where praise flows from.

And so we ask, Lord, that as we've heard sung, we would know this work of God in our own hearts.

We pray, Lord, that you would take our hearts which are sinful and you would cleanse them in the blood of Christ.

We pray that you would take our hearts which are so prone to being hard and cold. And that you would soften them through the work of your spirit.

We pray that you would take our hearts which can be so filled with self. And we pray that self would decrease. And Christ would increase in us.

[22 : 28] So work, Lord, we pray. Speak through your word to each of our hearts in the power of the Holy Spirit. And what we pray for ourselves here, we pray for every other church around us, close by and far away.

Every denomination, every place where Christ crucified is preached. We ask, Lord, that you would be working. That you would be building your church. That you would be blessing your people.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Sometimes we can be reading an article in a magazine, in an article or a letter even in a local paper, the Gazette or Gia Dahl or whatever.

And we're reading it and it's of interest to us. It's local news. It's of interest to us. But perhaps it doesn't really affect us directly, personally.

So we read it with interest. But as we're reading it, we're thinking, I wonder what the people who are most directly affected by this are thinking as they're reading this.

[23 : 48] I mean, take, for example, a post-match football. That post-football match report in the Stormby Gazette. We might be reading about the Harris team. They might be getting a good press.

They might be getting a bad press. And we read with interest. But we wonder what Andrew Brownie or Hugh or James' face might be like.

What are they thinking as they're reading this account of the post-match report? Now, we've reached Psalm 146. The end is almost in sight.

And as we look at this psalm, there's a lot in this psalm that's for us. And we can see the application. Even on our first reading, we can see how this connects with, it affects us.

But the thought that was in my mind as I was reading this psalm this week is, is what did Jesus think?

[24 : 48] What was going through Jesus' mind as he read this psalm and sang it? And I think that's a thought that we should take and chew over for a moment.

It's an amazing thing to think that the psalms that we pick up, that we read through, that we sing, these are the same text, these are the same songs, these are the same prayers that Jesus had open in front of him.

So I want to keep that thought in our minds as we approach this psalm and as we step through it. What was Jesus thinking as he read, as he sang this psalm?

Three points in the time that we have. And boys and girls, it's good to see a few young ones here. We will be finished before seven o'clock.

It's a promise to you. Three points in the time that we have. The first point is we have in the first two verses here, a commitment to praise.

[25 : 59] So as we look at verses one and two here, we hear from the psalmist that there is a commitment to praise God. Praise the Lord, verse one.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Now we don't actually know who wrote this psalm. But we can see that there's a very sincere commitment to praise the Lord within it.

Four times in two verses, we hear the psalmist. He's preaching to his own soul, first and foremost, in the same way that he's speaking to the Lord's people who are gathered around him.

And he's saying, he's making this commitment that he will praise the Lord. He's encouraging those around him in that day.

[27 : 04] He's encouraging us many years further on that we would be those who would praise the Lord. And the kind of praise that the psalmist is committed to, it's not a kind of shallow, superficial noise of praise.

But this is coming from deep within his soul, verse one. He desires to praise the Lord, O my soul. I notice that it's not just a kind of momentary thing.

It's not that he's caught up in the sort of emotion of some spiritual event. But this is an everyday thing that he's committed to.

It's easy to be in a... We go to Keswick in the summertime, although we didn't get last year. And it's an amazing thing to be in a tent with four or five thousand people who are all committed to praise the Lord.

And there's such a volume of praise. There's such a sense of God's presence and praise. It's easy to sing in that moment. But the psalmist here, he's saying, it's not just these moments.

[28 : 23] But this is an everyday thing. He says, all my life, verse two. For as long as I live, verse two.

He makes this commitment to praise the Lord. So that's the first point that we see in these opening two verses.

There is that commitment. There is that will. There is that resolve to praise the Lord. Now, I could pause here. And say, let's just take a moment to apply this.

And the application very easily could be, well, the psalmist made a commitment to praise. The psalmist made a resolve to praise. So we, as those who are God's people on this day, we should be as committed as he was to praising the Lord in this way.

That could be an application. And it would be probably a correct application. But I think, actually, it would be a very discouraging one. If we're honest.

[29 : 34] Because if we're honest, as we read this psalm, even these opening two verses, we know, as we look back, that we have not praised the Lord like this.

We know, as we search our hearts in the present tense, that we are not praising the Lord to this level. And we know, realistically, as we consider the rest of our lives, however long or short they may be, we know that we will not steadily, steadfastly praise the Lord day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, like this for all of our lives.

And if we look at David as an example of a psalmist, he may not have written this psalm, but he's an example of a psalmist, one of the greatest psalmist.

As we think about him as a psalm writer, did David, did he praise the Lord always? Did he praise the Lord without a blip, all his life, for as long as he lived?

Well, the answer is no, he didn't. There were times when David strayed. There were times when David failed.

[31 : 02] There are times when David the psalmist fell. There was likely almost a year of silence in David's life as he strayed from the Lord after sinning with Bathsheba before that period of silence was broken by Psalm 32 and Psalm 51.

So there were periods when David, as a psalmist, was not praising the Lord like this. We can think about the disciples. We thought about them for a while this morning.

Those that Jesus chose to be with them. Did they praise the Lord constantly? Those who were closest to Jesus for the time that he was in this world? Well, we know that they didn't.

Do you look at their lives? They did not praise the Lord as they should have all their lives for as long as they lived, for as long as Jesus was with them. They often let Jesus down.

They often fail to praise the Lord as they should have. So although there's a commitment to praise here on the part of the psalmist, we know that no psalmist, whether David or any other one, and no disciple, whether those who were with Jesus in the time that he lived or those subsequent to that time, none of us can fully say that we are committed to living this out for the rest of our days.

[32 : 42] We just can't do it because we're sinners. It's not to say that we shouldn't strive to, but we know that we can't do it.

There's only one man whose life was a constant expression of love for and praise of and obedience to his Father, and that was Jesus.

Jesus is the only one who could turn up Psalm 146 and sing these opening two verses, knowing that he was and would live it out perfectly.

And yet as Jesus sang this psalm, he knew that a life of praise and obedience was not a life of fellowships and Christian conferences and hopping from one communion to another communion. He knew that this meant a life of struggle. Jesus knew that this commitment would take him to a cross for us.

[34 : 07] And yet he did it. So tonight as we sing this psalm, we read these verses and we realize how imperfect our praise life is.

And we confess that, don't we? But we also, as we sing this psalm and look at these opening verses, we look to Jesus.

We see Jesus, whose life was perfect, sinless in every way. His commitment to the Father's will, His commitment to our salvation was absolute.

It was perfect. It was solid. It is finished. So first of all, we see or we hear through the psalmist a commitment to praise the Lord.

The second thing we see here is that there's a caution. And there's a caution from verse 3 into verse 4 that we're not to trust in people.

[35 : 29] There's a commitment to praise the Lord, verses 1 and 2. And secondly, there's a caution not to trust in people, not to trust in princes and mortal men who cannot save.

And so again, as we think through this, let's start again with the psalmist, the one who penned this. Let's think about this, first of all, from the perspective of the writer of the psalm.

Again, we don't know who the psalmist was specifically, but if we scan through the Psalter, as we have done over these years, we can see that the psalms are so full of struggle.

If you take five minutes tonight and just flick through the psalms, it won't take you five minutes to find so many expressions of struggle, we find in the psalms trouble, we find difficulty, we hear a psalmist or different psalmist whose hearts at times are breaking.

They're coming to God with hearts that are breaking. Now, why is that? Well, very often, the reason the psalmists are struggling in difficulty dealing with heartbreak is because the people, the mortal men who are around them, they've proved not to be trustworthy.

[36 : 57] So again, take David as an example of a psalmist. Think about who could David trust in his life.

Think about the king that he was under for a period, King Saul. It all started so well with Saul in terms of his reign, it all started so well in terms of his relationship with David as well.

There's Goliath and David overcomes Goliath and Saul is there with David in the opening scene of that but as Goliath falls, David's reputation rises.

And as David becomes popular, Saul becomes jealous and before you know it, Saul is in pursuit of David. He wants to kill him. David's on the run and David for year after year knew that Saul could not be trusted.

He may be king over him but he couldn't be trusted. Think about David's own family. Think about his own son, Absalom. His son whom he loved and yet he couldn't trust him because his son even turned against him.

[38 : 16] His son is in pursuit of him. His son wants to kill him. So David, as he looked at his son, his heart was breaking but he knew that he couldn't trust him.

And then David, the psalmist, as he looked in the mirror, he saw himself and yes, he may be recognized in himself that he had gifts but he also recognized that he was a sinner. he was an adulterer. He was a murderer. He was a deceiver. And so David could look in the mirror and see a mortal man who could not be trusted.

And so God says to us through the psalmist, do not put your trust in princes. That doesn't mean princes in terms of our definition of the word prince in the royal sense.

It's just the people in this world who have power. We've been told through this psalm, don't put your trust in princes. Don't put your trust in the people of this world who seem to have power and yet they can't save.

[39 : 41] They may make plans but their plans so often, verse 4, come to nothing. Now let's just change focus for a moment.

And let's think again about Jesus as he sang this psalm. As he read through the verses of Psalm 146, who could he trust in this world?

Could he trust his family? Well, if we look at the early part of Jesus' ministry, we can see that his family don't believe in him. In fact, they think that he's starting to lose his mind at one point. He couldn't trust his family. Could he trust his disciples? Well, they proved themselves to be untrustworthy time after time.

Could he trust the government? No, he couldn't. They were against him. Could he trust the religious leaders? Well, no, he couldn't because they were more against him than the government were. In John chapter 2, verses 24 and 25, this is a point when many people were so for Jesus.

[41 : 04] They seemed to be believing in Jesus. They were celebrating Jesus. His popularity was on the up. The crowds are shouting his name almost.

But it says in John 2, 24, Jesus would not entrust himself to them, to the crowds, for he knew all people.

He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person. And what was in each person?

Well, we just need to think back to my garden and the mud and the muck. It's a picture of our hearts. What's in us?

Well, sin is in us. And sin ultimately makes us untrustworthy. So we have this word of caution not to trust in people.

[42 : 17] Now, if we pause here for a moment and let this sink in, I think there's a danger that this could make us very cynical and bitter.

There's a danger that if we get the wrong end of the stick here, we could go around looking at everyone and thinking ill of everyone and saying, I can trust no one. But that's not what we're being taught here.

That's not the emphasis. That's not the teaching. That's not the goal of this psalm. Actually, this psalm, I think, should have the opposite effect upon us.

Because this psalm enables us to realise that we are all sinners. Every one of us.

We are all sinners. Which means that none of us, not you, not me, not anyone, none of us are fully trustworthy.

[43 : 33] We will all let each other down at times. We will all at times disappoint each other because of the sin that's in us.

but that shouldn't cause us to be harsh and unforgiving. Rather, I think that should cause us when we know ourselves to be a bit more patient with each other and a bit more kind towards each other because we recognise our problem.

one of the trending subjects on social media over the last year has been that hashtag be kind.

we're called through these social media platforms to be kind. And I think actually that it's as we see that we are broken fallen people, all of us, that we are unable to be kind to each other.

Remember that very old quote? I don't know where it came from, but the quote goes the best of men are just men at best. I heard a story this week about a visiting preacher.

[45 : 04] He'd come from America and he was preaching somewhere in the highlands. I don't know which church it was, I don't know who the minister was either. But he was preaching this text on loving your neighbour and as he was shaking hands at the door with this small congregation there was an old lady who had been warmly listening and responding as the sermon had been going on and as she shook his hand at the door she smiled at him and she said you know pastor the older I grow the more I love the Lord's people.

And he smiled at her. He thought to himself what a lovely thing to say. But she wasn't finished. She said pastor the older I grow the more I love the Lord's people.

But the less I trust her. Now was that her being cynical? No it was quite the opposite. As she saw herself and as she saw the people around her she was more and more aware as she came closer to the Lord of her own sin and failure and of the sin and failure of the people around her and yet she still loved them.

when we think about her though she saw a lot in her years she saw so little compared to Jesus.

You ever think about what Jesus saw in this world? we only hear what we are unable to overhear.

[47 : 04] We might overhear a conversation about ourselves that might sting but it's a rare thing for us. We hear bits and pieces but Jesus every thing that was said he heard every bitter thought every grumble against him every bad motivation every rebellious act and thought he heard it he saw it he felt it.

And yet as we see Jesus in his humanity do we see cynicism and bitterness? No we see quite the opposite.

We see patience. We see kindness. We see gentleness. We see grace. there was no one in this world that was more hurt by people than Jesus was.

There was no one in this world who saw more clearly how broken people are than Jesus did. and yet there was no one who was ever kinder and more gentle and more loving and more gracious towards broken people than Jesus was.

And you know he's the only one we can fully trust. we can encourage each other and we must. We can help each other.

[48 : 51] And it's our calling and it's a privilege to do so. We can build each other up. We can sometimes bear with one another in love.

but in terms of our salvation the only one that we can trust to save us and keep us is Jesus.

So we have a commitment to praise point one. We have a caution not to trust in people sinful people ourselves first.

And finally we are giving here confidence in God. You know it's one thing to say praise the Lord. That's how the psalm begins.

It's how the psalm ends. And we should praise the Lord. It's what we're designed to do. It's what we love to do. It's where we find joy. But for praise to flow sincerely from our hearts we need to understand why we should praise the Lord.

[50 : 03] And so God through this psalm he doesn't simply instruct praise but he gives us many reasons why we should praise. And as we look at verses 5 through to the end to verse 9 we're given many many reasons for putting our confidence in God.

And as we think through them not only can we visualize Jesus saying this psalm but we see Jesus revealed through this psalm.

so I've got virtually no time so let's just scan through the last few verses. Verse 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Now I love that phrase the God of Jacob. And I wish you could take a second and ask the young ones tell me about Jacob what do you know about Jacob? But you can maybe go home and do a wee search up on Jacob.

Who was Jacob? Well in short he was a bit of a rogue. And he wasn't that lovable as a rogue either. He was a sinful man. He was a deceiver. He was a bit sneaky. He wasn't an attractive character.

[51 : 15] And yet God chose him. God sought him and God saved him and God changed him. And why did he do that? Because God is gracious.

that's his nature. And we see that grace most clearly in Jesus who came from heaven to earth to save Jacobs.

To save sinners like us. Jesus, remember he said I haven't come for the healthy, I haven't come for the righteous, I've come for the Jacobs.

I've come for the sinners. that's good news for us if we know ourselves at all. It's one reason that we can have confidence in God.

It's one reason why we should praise the Lord. Another reason we can have confidence in God and praise the Lord is because he is, verse 6, the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them.

[52 : 23] He's the Lord who remains faithful. And as we think about Jesus we see that he is the one who is an authority over all creation.

Think back to Luke chapter 8, we see a storm being stilled with a word. We ask the question, how is that possible for Jesus to still the storm with a word? And the answer is because he is the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them.

So when he spoke it was created. when he speaks again the storm becomes calm. How is he able to direct the fish in the lake of Galilee into the disciples' net in an instant on the day that he calls them to follow him?

Because he is the maker of heaven and earth. He's the one who has authority over the sea and everything in them. So as we think about who God is, we see Jesus, we see his work in the gospels, and we are cause to praise him.

Verse 7, he upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. Another reason for us to have confidence in God to praise the Lord, and as we think about that phrase, he gives food to the hungry, where do our minds go?

[53 : 47] Well, our minds probably go to Luke chapter 9, which we read in the morning. who gives food to the hungry, who is able to satisfy the souls of the people that he has made, who is the one who doesn't cast aside, but who ministers to the oppressed and to the marginalized.

Jesus does. We see Jesus. The Lord sets prisoners free. Our minds maybe go to legion.

In Luke chapter 8, verse 26 and following, he is in a state of absolute imprisonment. He's under demonic control. Nobody can get near him.

Nobody can free him. Nobody can touch him. Jesus comes along, and with a word, he's changed. He is free for the first time in his life, because the Lord spoke, and the Lord is the one who sets prisoners free.

He gives sight to the blind, verse 8. Our minds go to Bartimaeus, Mark chapter 10. He calls out, Son of David, have mercy on me, and the blind man has sight.

[55 : 04] We see Jesus. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. We maybe think about Luke chapter 7, the woman who comes into the Pharisee's house, and her reputation is terrible.

Everybody knows her as a woman of doubtful character, and yet she bows low before Jesus, and he forgives her.

He lifts her up. The Lord loves the righteous, and how do the righteous become righteous? Not through our own efforts, not through our own good works, but through him, his grace, his finished work.

He loved us enough to make us righteous, and we become righteous as we simply call out to him. Think about the tax collector, is it in Luke 19?

Remember his cry as he beats his chest, God, be mercy, fool to me, a sinner. And Jesus says, I tell you, that man, not the man with the long prayer, not the man with the clerical robes, but that man who can't lift his head up, but who beats his chest and says, have mercy on me, a sinner, he's the one that walks out righteous, because he's trusting in me.

[56 : 33] And so it goes on, we haven't got time, I made a promise. the Lord watches over the alien, he sustains the fatherless, the widow, he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

We can scan through this stanza, we can go deeper later on in our own homes, but as we look at this, we see in these verses a summary of Jesus, who he is, and all that he did.

He is the image of the invisible God. And as we cry out to him for help and salvation, he hears us and he answers.

As we come to him for hope and eternal life, he gives us graciously. As we look to him, we are given such great confidence in God.

and so many reasons to praise him. So tonight, if we're struggling to praise the Lord, I think a sermon where we're beaten over the head because of our poverty of praise is not going to help. [57 : 55] A long hard look at our failures probably won't help too much. But what will help is if we look to Jesus, the one whose life was a constant flow of praise from son to father and spirit.

We're encouraged here to look to Jesus, not to look to princes, not to look to this world's power brokers, whose powers are so limited and whose lives are so short.

But we're to look to Jesus. The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord. We'll pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord, we pray that as we look at ourselves, you would help us.

We do examine ourselves as we open scripture and we see very quickly how far short we fall of your standard. Lord, but we thank you that you do not leave us in despair.

[59 : 26] As we see our sin, as we bow before you, we are caused to look up and see the Savior. So help us, Lord, as we go from this place this evening to go with our eyes fixed upon Jesus, the one who lived out perfectly all that we could not do.

He is the one whose life was that constant perfect expression of praise and obedience. He is the one who can and could always be trusted.

And He is the one who promises that He will save us when we say that He is our God and we are looking to Him.

to help us to do so we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll hear the hymn sung to conclude.

469 in Mission Praise. My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour divine. Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour Saviour divine.

[61 : 05] Now hear me while I pray. Take all my guilt away. Oh, let me from this day be holy Thine.

May Thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart my zeal inspire as Thou hast died for me.

Oh, may my love to Thee pure warm and changeless be a living fire While thy stark maze I tread and grief surround me spread Be thou my guide Bid darkness turn today Wipe sorrows tears away No let me ever stray from thee aside When ends thy transient dream When death's cold sullen stream

Shall o'er me row Blessed Savior than in love Fear and distrust remove Oh, bear me safe above a ransomed soul And now 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 forever more.

Amen. Amen.