

## 19.6.22 pm

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Date: 19 June 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. We're going to begin our time of worship by saying to God's praise from Psalm 100 and the first two stanzas, the first three verses of Psalm 100 in Gaelic.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice. Know that the Lord is God indeed. Without our aid he did us make, we are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take. These two verses of Psalm 100 and then after we sang in Gaelic, John McSween will lead us in prayer please.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 1 : 20 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 3 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 6 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 8 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 11 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 14 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 17 : 27 ] Thank you.

If you could turn.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 19 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 22 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 24 : 57 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

We'll take you.

Thank you.

[ 27 : 27 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

We pray for the Thank you.

that there's a party going on. And as we come to the book of Esther for the final time tonight, we see, we hear that there's a party going on.

God's people are gathered together and it's God's people who are making all the noise. So the first point that we come to tonight as we look at these verses is rejoice.

[ 29 : 54 ] God's people, they're rejoicing. And if you scan from verse 17 down to verse 21, we get that theme, we get that repetition.

There's much in the way of joy and celebration amongst God's people. It says in verse 17, this happened on the 13th day of the month of Adar and on the 14th they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

So when we read about this thing that happened, it sends us back the way into the book of Esther. I'm not going to rehearse the story, but you remember the details of the story. On the day that was designed for God's people to be destroyed, they were delivered.

On the day that was appointed for the death of God's people, they were given life. On the day that was expected to be a day of incredible mourning and grief, they were now celebrating.

They were ecstatic with all that, they were looking back upon all the things that had happened. And so on this day, the 13th day of the month of Adar, for God's people, their sorrow was turned to joy.

[ 31 : 14 ] And so they expressed that joy. We're not very good at expressing joy. Some of you are very good at expressing joy. I've got one of these faces that doesn't express joy very well.

So sometimes when I'm very joyful, my face isn't showing it. But God's people here, they're expressing their joy. They feel joy in their hearts and they express joy with their countenance and the things that they're doing.

They're feasting, we're told in verse 18. They're giving presents to each other in verse 19. They're giving presents to the poor. It says that in verse 22.

So there is a huge sense of celebration amongst God's people. They're rejoicing. And even if you look through the verses 18 to 21, note just a repetition there again.

The Jews in Susa had assembled on the 13th and 14th and then on the 15th, they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. Verse 18. That's why those rural Jews, those living in the villages, observe the 14th of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting.

[ 32 : 26 ] Then in verse 21, we're told again that they celebrate annually. So the first point here is in light of all that's happened, in light of all that God has done for them, they rejoice.

rejoice. And it's good for us to rejoice. There's something wrong with us if, as God's people, we don't rejoice.

And it doesn't mean that we have to be walking around with a big fixed smile all the days. There's a difference between a fleeting happiness that we feel in our moment and a deep, steady sense of joy.

But as God's people, we have much to celebrate. We have much cause to rejoice. We actually have much more cause to rejoice than they did.

We can imagine the music thumping out of their houses. We have much more cause to be celebrating and making a racket as we think about the wonder of what God has done for us because our salvation is not temporal.

[ 33 : 37 ] It's eternal. Their salvation was salvation in a moment, in a situation, from a circumstance. But they didn't know what was up ahead.

Our salvation is not temporal. It's eternal. Our saviour is not Esther and Mordecai who would live for some years and then die.

Our saviour is Jesus. God the Son. Our victory. They tasted victory.

But our victory that Jesus has won for us on our behalf is irreversible. It can't be snatched away. No one and nothing can take the victory that we have in Christ from us because it's all done. It's been done. Jesus has paid it all.

[ 34 : 42 ] He's done it all. So our hope is sure and certain and we have much cause to rejoice. grace. I think I gave the quote a few weeks ago Billy Sunday. He says if there is not joy in your religion you've got a leak in your religion.

And so we're called as God's people are found rejoicing. We are a people that should be rejoicing and we should be rejoicing especially today because this is the Lord's day.

This is a special day. They rejoiced on that particular day the 14th day of the month of Adar but every Sunday every large day is a day where we remember that Jesus died for our sin to pay the price for our sin to procure our salvation and he rose from the dead to give us the absolute assurance that we are safe that we are saved that we are secure if we are in him.

So first thing is rejoice. The second point here as we think about the reasons for their joy we can come to the second point which is rest.

[ 36 : 11 ] And still if you glance at verse 17 and verse 18 twice in these verses we are told that God's people they rested.

They rested. They enjoyed rest. And sometimes we can go through seasons where we struggle to find rest.

Talking about that this morning with the children that are sometimes when we go to bed we can't sleep. The harder we try to sleep we can't sleep.

We try to relax and switch off but the brain is just buzzing. We can't switch off. And when we're in that state if we're in that state for any length of time before very long we're just we're exhausted. we can't go on because we need rest. God has made us to need rest.

[ 37 : 18 ] And for God's people as we think about the plot in the book of Esther for so long in this book God's people they had no rest. Even from the very beginning of the book they're in an empire which is godless.

they're in a place where there's hostility towards God's people and then as you move from chapter 1 into chapter 2 and chapter 3 we see this clash between Mordecai and Haman the prime minister and things escalate and God's people go from having their heads down and being in a precarious situation to this edict of annihilation of holocaust and so for much of the book they have this edict that's hanging over them there's this date that's set in their calendars which has been marked for their destruction for their annihilation and for 11 months God's people they have this day over them all this is looming and they have no rest.

We can imagine it sometimes in a much lesser sense we can have a date up ahead of us and something is in our calendar and we're fearful of it and we can occupy ourselves with this thing and that thing but we've always got that sense that up ahead there's this dark cloud and for 11 months God's people they know the date they know the time they know the the horror of what has been passed in law as the edict went through but now at this point that date has passed and the edict no longer stands it's passed by time it's finished and so now God's people who have not only survived us but who have had such overwhelming victory on the other side of all that they feared and now they can enjoy rest for so long they were a condemned people and now they can they can say no no condemnation now we dread so no wonder they they rejoiced and how precious that rest must have been and yet all this just gives us a preview of a much greater rest that was coming to God's people because all of us we are born under a cloud of sin and we're told in Psalm 51 from the time of our birth even before that we are sinners this virus this cloud hangs over us and sin condemns us

the wages of sin are our death we're told that's the bad news but the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news and so we can go to Romans chapter 8 and we read this therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus so if you're in Christ Jesus tonight if you're a Christian if you've trusted Jesus ask for forgiveness of your sin ask him to come into your life take these words to heart there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death so if we're in Christ we have rest if we are believing in Jesus if he is our personal savior if to use the words of the hymn writer we have an interest if we have faith in the blood that was shed on the cross for our sin we can say and we can sing from our hearts no condemnation now I dread even though the devil will come at us time after time pointing his long finger and even though there may be people around us who will do everything to try to tell us that we are still condemned and we should still have the weight of the world on our shoulders we open the bible and we listen to what god says in the gospel and we're able to walk away saying no condemnation now I dread because of

Jesus and all that he's done for me he has taken our condemnation upon himself into himself on the cross so if we are in Jesus we we have rest we have peace a peace that is not of this world and a peace that this world cannot take away and again this day the Lord's day is a day that's been set aside for us just to taste that again enjoy that again we're told on this day stop working I know there are exceptions to that but stop your work and find rest enjoy rest in Jesus and yet what we taste just for a day is something that's just a taste of what we will know eternally if we are in

[ 43 : 21 ] Christ there's eternal joy there's eternal rest so rejoice so we find them doing and they're enjoying rest and the third thing here is they're enjoying relief we're told in verse 22 about the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration but the word to underline there is the word relief and again thinking about the whole span of the book it's very very clear from the beginning of the book and throughout the book that God's people they had enemies and you can go beyond the book and before the book and as we go through the whole of the history of God's people from the beginning all the way through they're never having to look far to see enemies and so in the book of

Esther we can see from the beginning and throughout that God's people they have enemies and the main enemy figure is the figure of Haman who is representative of a whole race of people the Amalekites who were against the Jews and so for hundreds of years there's attack after attack there's waves of aggression as they come against God's people there have been generations of trouble there have been generations of conflict but now at this point they have relief from their enemies God had given them relief verse 22 from their enemies and relief brings that great joy the pressure is gone the attacks are finished there's relief remember

Kenny Gunn telling me he's not here tonight so I can tell you I remember him telling me one day that he was struggling with tooth thick he was always getting bouts of tooth thick and he says there was one time when his whole side of his face was swelling up and he had this tooth thick and it was just day and night he was getting played with this tooth thick and he couldn't get an appointment and eventually he got an appointment and he went to the dentist and the dentist he did this and he did that and he pulled out the tooth and he says see when he pulled it out what relief I felt he says I could have kissed him I'm sure the dentist was glad he didn't but we understand the great relief there is when there's been this constant pain and then it's taken away constant pressure and it's relieved and it causes us to rejoice and so in the spiritual sense as we think about our own situation Jesus brings us relief and to be even more precise we could say the cross is the place where Jesus went to war with the enemy of sin and the enemy of Satan and the enemy of death and he overcame the cross is the place where our sorrow the sorrow that we feel over our sin is turned into joy as we see Jesus securing our salvation so through Jesus we have relief we have relief from the penalty of sin because Jesus has paid it we have relief from the power of sin because Jesus has broken it but we don't yet have relief from the presence of sin not yet still we battle still we're in that Roman seven territory that I mentioned this morning where we feel the struggle of sin and the reality of temptation and the battle that there is in the spiritual realm still we experience that in this world but one day there will be full relief for those who are

God's people eternal joy in that place called heaven where there is no sin and no Satan no attacks no pressure to pull us away from the Lord but just that constancy of God's presence so there's relief to third thing the fourth point to note here is that we see the people of God remember they

determine that they will remember what God has done for them and if you scan down from verse 23 to verse 32 we've got the details of that we're given the decree and we're given that resolve amongst God's people that they will not forget but they will remember but if we just focus on verse 28 to give us the flavour of it it says there that these days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family in every province in every city and these days of

[ 49 : 14 ] Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants and so God's people here they resolve to remember what God has done for them and that's a necessary thing because as a people we are very quick to forget especially when good things have been done for us we can be very quick to take them for granted and forget why have we got a war memorial in the middle of Tarburg why is there a war memorial on the main street in such a clear and obvious place with a flag flying overhead it's because we need to be reminded of what's been done for us in the past we go into that place we see the memorial we see the names they speak to us about lives that were laid down so that we can have freedom and on the 11th day of the 11th month every year we stop we are silent and we remember what was done for us and that's what happens here in

Esther the Jews they agreed to remember and not just on that one year on the 14th day of the month of Adar but every year they remembered what God had done for them and who God was to remember that God was the sovereign God they call the festival this festival verse 26 of Purim or Purim these days were called Purim from the word poor and the poor was the lot which takes us back to that point in the book of Esther where Haman he's having the lot cast to use our modern terminology he's rolling the dice trying to figure out when's the optimal day to wipe out these Jews and so he throws the dice he casts the lot he consults his gods he looks to fate he thought he was in control he thought his gods were in control but what becomes evident as we go through the book of Esther is that the God who's in control is the

God of Israel he is sovereign so we read in Proverbs 16 33 the lot is cast into the lap but it's every decision is from the Lord he is sovereign he is ruling he is overseeing he is ordering and they remember that that's what they called the festival Purim there's irony in it they're looking to the lot but they're looking beyond the lot to the God who controls all things and they remember not just the fact that God is sovereign but they remember that God is God is savior and that's the message of the whole bible but it's very clearly the message of this book God saves he saved Mordecai and it looked like it was impossible he saved

Esther and she's taken into the danger of the inner court of the palace this madman king and he saves all of the line of Esther and Mordecai the line of the Jews from which Jesus would come who would be the savior of our souls so the salvation of God was remembered and it was celebrated in these days of Purim to these truths that were remembered back in that day are truths that we need to constantly remember in your life as I experience things in my life we need that constant reminder that God is sovereign we may not hear his name in our country anymore hardly his word may be removed from all the places that his word used to be in there may not be a sense of the fear of the Lord just as there was in that person empire but still God is sovereign still God is in control still he is working all things together for the good of his people and for the glory of his name even when we can't see that even when we can't understand that it's true and we need to remember it and we need they have this feast to mark the fact that God is saviour they feasted they ate they drank to remember that God is saviour and that takes us forward isn't it to the institution of Jesus remember he said to his disciples he says to us I have a feast that I want you to partake in I want you to eat bread I want you to drink wine I want you to remember the fact when you come together as my people that

[ 54 : 55 ] I am your saviour my body was broken for you my blood was shed for you I am your saviour so they remember we are to remember and the final thing here just a word is the word redeemer and the book it almost finishes in a sense of anti climax because as the book finishes in chapter 10 you can scan verses 1 to 3 of chapter 10 it's true that things look a lot better now than they had done things look much brighter than they did as the book began Esther is still queen although she's not mentioned here in the last chapter Mordecai is second in command he has a hugely powerful role in that society but the sad truth the fly in the ointment you could say is the fact that

King Xerxes is still first in command and King Xerxes the selfish tyrant king what we find him doing in verse 1 is he's imposing taxes he wants more cash he wants his treasury built up and so we're

given that reminder as we finish that God's people they're still not free not completely free they're still under the tyranny of this godless king and so as the book of Esther closes we are found straining our eyes to look ahead for a king that is far better than Xerxes as the book of Esther closes we're looking for a greater loving just and righteous king we're looking for one who will be the true redeemer of his people the one who will set his people eternally free the one who will give them absolute sure and certain full salvation and who would that be who is

Esther pointing us forward to as the book closes well the answer is Jesus there is a redeemer Jesus God's own son the precious lamb of God the Messiah the holy one and so Esther's still looking forward for him in faith we look back in thanksgiving and we rejoice we find rest we find relief we remember that Jesus is our redeemer and we'll sing to finish that there is a redeemer Jesus God's own son he is our redeemer

Jesus God's own son precious precious lamb of God Messiah holy one thank you oh my father for giving us your son Lord mo■ name oh my saying is precious man of God Messiah hope for ever say.

Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your son. I'm leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done. [ 59 : 44 ] When I stand in glory, I will see his face. And then I'll serve my king forever in that holy place.

Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your son. And leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

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 now and forevermore. Amen. heaven's friend...

taking me free ee...

th