

Our Christian Psalms ~ 95

Worshipping in the Wilderness.

Psalm 95 is a joyous call to worship!

Verse 1, "O Come, let us sing unto the LORD .. the rock of our Salvation." Verse 2, "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving..." Then again in verse 6, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker..."

Those calls to worship come to us in the context of our trials and wilderness like experiences, as verses 8 through 11 show. We are called to worship with singing and thanksgiving and joy ... amidst trials and at times extreme distress. How is that possible? Only by looking well to the reasons attached to these calls, is it possible. Worship looks up. Worship fixes upon "the LORD."

Verses 1 and 2 call for singing and rejoicing, because "the LORD is a GREAT GOD, and a GREAT King above all gods..." Worship - because this glorious King whose sovereignty, and power is so absolute over all things in earth or sea - is your God! Not one hair can fall from your head, except it is well known to him - nothing can so much as move in his universal dominion of providence unless it serves your eternal salvation! (See the Heidelberg Catechisms #1 and 27-28). Come, bow down and worship - for HE is worthy! Is He not the Rock of our salvation? - the basis for all your hope and comfort both in life and in death? Indeed he is! Come, therefore, let us sing....

Then, the call of verse 6 draws you even closer to Him as a worshiper. Now the reason, indeed the encouragement and incentive, is: "For he is our God: and we are the people of his pasture, the sheep of his hand..." Yes, worship your Maker for his power and dominion - but draw nearer, worship and bow down before the very face of your faithful Saviour - for this LORD is our Shepherd. He has gathered you into his hand through the precious blood of his own dearly beloved Son, the good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep - and nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39).

You may, therefore, worship as one whose whole life is unfolding within this blessed relationship. You have been gathered by the pure sovereignty of grace into a saving relationship with Jehovah God in and through Jesus Christ! You are near, very near unto Jehovah - look up into the face of your heavenly Father; behold his love, and grace and mercy, and compassion, and faithfulness to you in Jesus Christ - soak his perfections into your mind and you will find ample reason for worship, and sing and rejoice! Everything your great Jehovah, Maker, King, Rock of Salvation is in and of himself, he is for you as the Rock of your Salvation and the Shepherd of your soul. He knows what he is doing. He is leading you as a shepherd leads his sheep. Look up! Love him. Trust him. Yes, bow down and worship him - for he is worthy.

And be encouraged also by the fact that you are not alone. "O Come, let us..." One is calling many, who in turn encourage one another. You stand among those that the good Shepherd called by name, who hear his voice and follow him into the kingdom of heaven, and up into the very presence of Jehovah, the "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6). You follow the Shepherd who bound himself by oath to bring you safe home to heaven - "I give unto you eternal life; and you shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck you out of my hand (John 10:11-16, 26-30).

Now he calls you to worship with Him and his flock: "Come, let us..." He leads our worship: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12). By his indwelling Spirit, he inspires and inhabits the praises of Israel ... and sings in the great congregation (Psalm 22:3 and 25).

What songs does he give? "O Come, let us make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms" (v:2, James 5:13). These are HIS songs. They are divine songs. They are infallibly inspired songs. He has perfectly adapted them to our needs in the wilderness - "I know that the LORD, he is God: it is he that made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture..." (Psalm 100). "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want... though I walk through the valley of death, I shall fear no evil, for thou are with me... surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD - forever" (Psalm 23). Sing His songs with him.

How incongruous - discordant - it would be for redeemed saints, standing in such a relationship and position, with the

glory of such a Maker, King and Saviour's filling our personal universe and drawing us heavenward, with Jesus Christ going before us, providing all our needs, and leading the singing every step of the way - to harden the heart as did the unbelieving Israelites when they were tried and proved in the wilderness. Therefore, He wisely warns us: "harden not your heart" (verses 8-11).

How good and timely is that solemn warning! Do remember that Jesus Christ always leads his sheep via the wilderness into Canaan. Heaven lies beyond - through these waste howling experiences in a fallen world - and you must follow in the footsteps of Jesus. In this Psalm he shows you how to worship with him - in the wilderness. Humble yourself and bow down and worship, as did he when tried. Then, look up as did he in hope and faith! Hear Him speaking from heaven in this Psalm, and follow hard after him. Learn from Him the first sweet words of your "new song" - for it will not be long ere you be singing it with him in glory (see Psalm 96:1-2 and Revelation 5: 8-14).

"O Come", sweet call, "let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation ... let us worship and bow down: let us bow before the LORD our Maker..."

Pastor Connors

Psalm 95

- 1 O come , let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
- 3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.
- 5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 O come , let us worship and bow down : let us kneel before the LORD our maker .
- 7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,
- 8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
- 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.
- 10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said , It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:
- 11 Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Question 1. What is thy only comfort in life and death?

Answer: That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

Question 27. What dost thou mean by the providence of God?

Answer: The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but be his fatherly hand.

Question 28. What advantage is it to us to know that God has created, and by his providence does still uphold all things?

Answer: That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from his love; since all creatures are so in his hand, that without his will they cannot so much as move.

Romans 8:38-39

38For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
39Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 4:6

6One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

John 10:11-16, 26-30

11I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

26But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30I and my Father are one.

Hebrews 2:12

12Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Psalms 22:3,25

3But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

25My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

James 5:13

13Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Psalms 96:1-2

1O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

2Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

Revelation 5:8-14

8And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.