

OH LORD, YOU HAVE MADE ME GLAD

Psalm 92: 1-15, John 8: 1-15, and John 15: 7 Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Have you ever seen the Amish banner about old age? You can find it on Amish aprons, a whistling tea pot, or even on a cast iron wall trivet on almost anything really. What is this Pennsylvania Dutch saying? "Ve grow too soon oldt undt too late schmardt." We don't like to admit our weaknesses and our foolishness, for fear someone will mock us or laugh at us, but we all are rather ignorant at times, at least, speaking for myself, I am often just uninformed. I am teachable and desirous of learning, but I wouldn't want any of you to have to put up with my naivete on a lot of things. Wednesday morning, I woke up at 4 AM to drive to Salt Lake City to fly out to Houston at 10:55 AM. As I woke up, Jinny reminded me it was a full moon and a waning gibbous. I looked for the moon, and to the west I started to see a bit of a tiny sliver of moon. I watched an apparently persistent cloud slowly fade in the darkness, until I turned on the news to hear about the lunar eclipse, the earth getting in the way of the sun's shining on the moon. I had a funny "aha" moment realizing that for 100 miles I had been watching a lunar eclipse. It would have been far more enjoyable had I known it was an eclipse and not a slowly disappearing cloud. Think what you will; it happened to your pastor this past Wednesday morning as I sailed down I-80 at 75 miles an hour.

As I worked at preparing this message in Houston, my experience reminded me of a young twelve year old boy back in the 1800nds. He had never seen a circus, but at school he heard one was coming to the nearest town from where he lived on the farm. When he got home, he told his dad about the circus coming to town and begged his dad for a dollar to go to it on Saturday. A dollar was a lot of money in those days, but his dad saw the anticipation in his son, so he said if he did his Saturday chores early, he could have a dollar to go to the circus. Saturday arrived and the boy did his chores like a whirlwind and with more money in his pocket than he had ever carried, he took his dollar and headed for town.

Nearing the town, he could see the people lining Main Street, so the boy found a place up in the front of some folk as the circus parade started through town. The boy was riding on air as he watched the approaching spectacle. He had never witnessed a parade before, much less a circus parade. He saw all kinds of caged lions and tigers and leopards, snarling cats, huge elephants walking on Main Street, he watched the big band beating out a beautiful rhythm on the drums, he listened to the trumpets blasting, he saw the high rope walkers advertising their abilities, he watched the midget acrobats performing on the back of a hay wagon, and he saw all the flags and ribbons swirling and twirling above all the horse drawn wagons.

Finally, the boy saw last in line, the traditional clown bringing up the rear of the parade. He was wearing his floppy shoes, his baggy pants, and he smiled at the boy from behind his painted face. The boy smiled back. He was thrilled, so he reached into his pocket and took out his precious dollar bill. Handing the money to the clown, the boy smiled back at him and turned and walked home. What just happened? He thought he had seen the circus, when he had only seen the parade.

Beloved, when we view all the things that God gives us down here, we are all too eager to lay down our dollar bill and go home, forgetting this life is only the parade, the rehearsal for eternity, and not the eternal wedding and eternal union with Christ in glory. We don't realize that the struggles of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory yet to be revealed in us. Perhaps like me, some of you have mistakenly thought for a time that this life was God's best thing of all, when He has only been whetting our appetites for eternity--being with Him forever. Perhaps all of us ought to go on line and order our own sign, "Ve grow too soon oldt undt too late schmardt,"

If there is anything God would want us to learn about this Psalm for the Sabbath, this psalm for worship, it is that worship is not boring, not bland, not a bane or a bother, not babbling in vain, or bondage for the believer. Worshipping the Lord is one of the most beautiful experiences known in this life for the true believer. It is a foretaste of heaven. We can come to church every time the doors are open for services, praying, "One more time, please Lord Jesus, make me glad in You. Make me sing to You for joy. Make me give thanks to You, my Rock." Beloved, on the way back home from the wedding in Houston, I sat beside a Philippine woman, a wife and mother of two children on her 12th anniversary. Sheila Celerio was on her way to her 12th assignment of being a godmother—this time for a baby in California. As I spoke with her about being born again, Sheila prayed with me to receive Jesus. What a joy! It is the work of my Lord's hands, and He has made me glad. Today I sing for joy.

The writer and the occasion for Psalm 92 is not known, but words in the psalm give a suggestion that the psalm could well have been written in the days of Zerubbabel, when after 539 BC, the Jews were released from bondage in Babylon to go home to Israel. The Medo-Persians had defeated Belshazzar and God raised up King Cyrus to send the Jews home, led by Zerubbabel. The psalm is intensely Personal, filled with "me's" and "my's" which appear to be spoken by the psalmist as Israel's representative on behalf of the nation. The psalmist spoke for the nation in worship. The context of this psalm seems to possibly point to the deliverance of Israel from Babylonian bondage when Cyrus agreed to let the captive Israelites go

home after 70 long years spent in Babylon in captivity. The big idea of this psalm, the top of the circus tent of the psalm if we could see it from above, is "THERE IS NO GREATER JOY THAN THE JOY OF THE RIGHTEOUS IN WORSHIP TOGETHER." This circus tent is held up by three main poles, three awesome discoveries for us all as we study Psalm 92. They are (1) A BUBBLING HEART FILLED WITH GOD'S JOY IS THE FIRST AND BEST INSTRUMENT OF PRAISE TO DECLARE GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS. (2) A WICKED EVIL HEART FILLED WITH ENMITY AGAINST THE LORD CANNOT COMPREHEND GOD'S MAJESSTY AND IS DESTINED FOR DESTRUCTION. (3) A GOD-ANOINTED HEART GROWS STRONG AND BEARS FRUIT, FLOURISHING EVEN IN OLD AGE.

A BUBBLING HEART FILLED WITH GOD'S JOY IS THE FIRST AND BEST INSTRUMENT OF PRAISE TO DECLARE GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS. (I.) Notice with me Psalm 92: 1-4. "It is good to

give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your steadfast love in the morning, and Your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For You, O Lord, have made me glad by Your work; at the works of Your hands I sing for joy." First of all, notice the value of a bubbling heart filled with God's joy. The Psalmist says, "It is good." In most of our minds, "good" may seem a bit flat and bland and colorless. When Martin Luther came to this Hebrew word translated into German, he translated good as precious. I think Luther was spot on, because to tell the truth, one of the finest undertakings in all the world is to gladly praise the Lord. We were created for this purpose. One of my commentaries said, "It is seemly."

What do we testify about in our seemly, good and precious praise? In the morning, we testify to the steadfast love of the Lord, to His loving-kindness that is better than life itself, to His hesed, His mercies that are new every morning and every night, when evening comes, we reflect on God's goodness throughout the day. In the morning, we declare what God promises and in the evening, we testify what He has performed. In the morning, we declare God's protection and mercy throughout the night and in the evening, we declare the manifold situations that were met because of God's faithfulness through the day. I am reminded of Lam. 3: 22, 23 where Jeremiah said, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

Special instruments are mentioned here, not to limit the way we accompany music, but doubtless, to describe the instruments the psalmist used to praise the Lord. First

and best, the psalmist started verse 1 by singing praises with his voice and he accompanied his praise with the lute, the harp, and the melody of the lyre, literally with the meditative accompaniment of the lyre. What it boils down to is that these must have been this psalmist's three default instruments that he turned to, to praise the Lord. H. C Leupold, in 1959 wrote, about verse 4, said, "Our reason for glad praise is the contemplation of the works of God's hands." I like the song, "Love Him in the morning...when you see the sun arising." The object of all of praise is the Lord Himself--to You, O Lord, to Your Name, to You for the great work of Your hands. It's like the chorus, "Stop, and let me tell you what the Lord has done for me." It means we all need to ever be giving fresh testimonies to what the Lord has done for us, just as this psalmist appears to be describing getting back to Israel after 70 long years in captivity. The works of God's hands include His creation, but it also means our own fresh personal testimonies of what God has done for our soul. Friday afternoon, preparing this message at the motel, 10-15 people, mostly angry men, came to the motel manager demanding additional nights or demanded a room when they were full up. Finally, the manager came to me as I prepared this message with an open Bible. She asked me, "Would you pray for me?" I did, and it led to Tina (Christina Nicole San Miguel Loudan) coming to faith in Jesus. My, my, my, how God can give us fresh testimonies of His grace. Secondly,

A WICKED EVIL HEART FILLED WITH ENMITY AGAINST THE LORD CANNOT COMPREHEND GOD'S MAJESTY AND IS DESTINED FOR DESTRUCTION. (II.) Notice verses 5-9. "How great are your works, O

Lord! Your thoughts are very deep! The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; but You, O Lord, are on high forever. For behold, Your enemies, O Lord, for behold, Your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered." Beloved, what we notice and see every day, the wicked are blind to. The god of this world, the enemy has blinded the hearts of the unbelieving to the work of God's hands, and to Himself in His majesty. (II Cor. 4: 4) The wicked can't see the majesty of God's work--the majesty of our Southwest Wyoming sunsets are just mother nature to them; the unbelieving never dream that it is God doing His painting again in the evening sky. Flying back home from Phoenix to Salt Lake City, I saw most people pulled down the shades at their window seats. I did not, The sunset painting the Grand Canyon red was beyond awesome. But beyond God's works are His thoughts--beyond the depths that man can plumb, leaving us only to gasp in awe. The unbelieving man, the psalmist brands as brutish, stupid, a fool who cannot understand. At the works and Word of God, the believer is gladdened and the unbeliever is bewildered. The believer understands, the unbeliever does not. The believer is capable of seeing and the

unbeliever is so blind. A person's ability to see clearly has everything to do with our relationship with Jesus. When we know Him, we can see, when we don't know Him, we can easily mock Him, because we see nothing. Our attitude to the Lord is our moral differentiation.

Look at our country beloved and notice that without a major miracle, not just the USA, but many countries are in the cross hairs of verse 7. We have sprouted like grass, as a nation. Being in Houston, a million + city and seeing the magnificence of it, it is flourishing, but every city in America, without repentance, is doomed, v. 7 to destruction forever. It is a sad plight, and even under judgment, most of America, has no idea what we are up against as our states succumb to political correctness and turn away from moral values. It is sad when the leadership and representatives of any nation forget God and become His enemies. Verse 9 is a promise of God, "For behold, Your enemies, O Lord, for behold, Your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered." Beloved, as long as we have breath, we must be faithful to preach and teach and stress that the ultimate outcome for any individual or any nation has to do with what we or we as a nation do with Jesus. Don't be fooled by the phenomenal success of the wicked before your eyes. What is so obviously successful today, will not be there in God's tomorrow. Sooner than we can imagine, it will be to late. All the flourishing is only to perish, to die, to burn, and to be destroyed. Wickedness and enmity against God are synonymous. When you see someone who is for abortion, same gender union, and euthanasia, be aware that whatever they say about God, they have turned against their Creator and Redeemer. No confederation against God will accomplish anything in the end. Man may seem to have the last word in some of our lives, as we may suffer greatly prior to God's final last word may not come in my lifetime or yours, but it is coming as certain as sunrise and sunset today. Thirdly,

A GOD-ANOINTED HEART GROWS STRONG AND BEARS FRUIT, FLOURISHING EVEN IN OLD AGE. (III.) Notice verses 10-15. "But You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; You have poured over me fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." Beloved, has the Lord poured the fresh oil of His anointing and blessing and joy on you? This past Friday night, as the wedding ended and Daniel and Isa Carlson went away in a 450 foot white limousine, I noticed Daniel's mother's older sister, Christina Lynn Lafary. We had talked a little. God directed me inside

to talk to her. Her sister Ann, Daniel's mom, my sister in law, has witnessed to her for nearly 40 years. Now Tina was finally ready. She willingly prayed with me to receive the Lord Jesus. Praise the Lord! Did you know that it doesn't take long to tell if a man or woman of God is anointed, if God has poured over him or her His fresh oil. To take this figure of speech out of the Hebrew, what this means is that God supplies gladness, joy, peace, unction and strength to those who fear Him.

This fresh anointing of the Lord is defined by the psalmist as being planted by the Lord, as our eyes see the downfall of our enemies, who are God's enemies, and our ears hear the doom of our assailants. Those who are rooted in God's sanctuary, who are rooted in faithful worship of God, flourish in the nearness of God. Character counts with God. When we want to be with Him, He pours out His blessing like the anointing oil that fell on David's head from the flask of Samuel. And believe it, beloved, our character is defined and determined by our relationship with God. The strong faith that God supplies produces fruit in our lives for Him.

Long story short, there is spiritual resilience in the life of those God fills with sap of His spiritual strength. We become like the palm tree, and the cedar tree. We have the evergreen trees around here and this week, I had palm trees all around me in Houston right outside my motel window. The greenness and verdure and strength and sap of our lives spiritually is that we are founded on the Rock. 15 We declare, "He is my Rock." Our lives are planted by the Lord. We flourish like a palm tree in the presence or in the house or the courts of the Lord. We grow like one of the mighty cedars of Lebanon. We are exalted in strength like the horn of a wild ox. One of the meanings of the wild ox figure means strength to meet emergencies. This horned ox is said by some commentators to be a rhinoceros. The figure of either wild animal is that of an animal no one wants to try to stand up against because we have been anointed by God. The figure of being poured over with fresh oil is amazing. It means literally to be mingled or stirred in with. Some commentators take it for freshening up dry batter like adding fresh flour and water to a sough dough sponge. The same figure appears in the 23rd psalm where we read, "He anointeth my head with oil, my cup runneth over." it means that when God pours into us, we can never be the same.

Beloved, the most incredible discovery of this psalm for me was when I learned the meaning of "Your enemies shall perish." v. 9. You know this word in the Greek even appears in John 3:16. But in the Hebrew, the word **abad** has a profound meaning, "to disintegrate from within." It means that unbelievers do themselves in. Hosea uses the same word in Hosea 13: 9 to speak of Ephraim or Israel, saying,

"He destroys you, O Israel, for you are against Me, against Your Helper." As I read the USA Today on Saturday, the headline news was that every 13 minutes, another person commits suicide in America. That explains this old age thing that the Psalmist speaks about. How do we as believers stay strong and produce for God in old age. It's like the old commercial—"the quality goes in before the name goes on." When God pours into us His sap, His eternal life so we flourish even in old age like the palm tree or cedar tree, it halts the normal spiritual disintegration from within, and God replaces that spiritual beetle kill with His living water in our innermost being. Now until He calls us home, we are remarkably bearing fruit in old age, still full of sap and green. At my nephew, Daniel Carlson's wedding on October 10, 2014, did you know who the pastor was who tied the knot? It was Diana Sotolongo, (Isa's) childhood pastor, Pastor Loreto Dicesare, from Argentina. He is the senior pastor of the Spanish Church on the Rock in Houston. He and his wife, Nora, have been in ministry for many years. Yes, he will be 80 years old next July. Lord, make us all bear fruit for you in old age! Do you want to still be bearing fruit for God, much fruit in your eighties?

What is the answer? I call us, church, to get under the faucet, to get beneath the spigot of God's poured out anointing. In essence, where is the place of God's anointing? It is in His Word, in prayer, in obedience to His will, to His way, to His promptings, and to stand to declare, v. 15, that "there is no unrighteousness in our God, our Rock, none in Him." I call us all to come to the Fountain, to drink, to come to the nearness of God and let Him renew your youth like the eagles, and let you serve Him for the rest of your life, even to old age. Amen.