

“A Song for the Sabbath”
Psalm 92
(Preached at Trinity, January 15, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In general Reformed Christians agree on the importance of doctrine because doctrine defines how we think about God; how we approach God; how we worship God. And there are many areas of theology that Reformed Christians share – doctrines that are important in understanding the nature of God’s eternal plan of redemption for His people.
2. But there are some doctrines over which we remain divided. One of these involves the understanding of the proper observance of the Sabbath in the New Covenant. There are basically two positions, with of course many variations:
 - A. There are those who hold that Sunday is the Christian Sabbath - the principle of rest ordained at creation, repeated on Mount Sinai as the Fourth Commandment, and observed in the New Covenant with the change of day to the first day of the week in celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. They hold that the day should be observed by a day of rest from work and recreation except in the duties of necessity and mercy. This is called the Puritan view. It is the view supported by the LBC & WCF
 - B. The other position, while seeing the benefit of a day for Christian worship, does not believe that a day of rest from work and recreation is still valid for the New Covenant Christian. This is often referred to as the Continental view of the Sabbath.
2. As we come to the **Ninety-Second Psalm** there is one thing for certain. The Sabbath was surely important to God’s people in the Old Testament. Not only a day of rest but also a day of worship, a principle that we should still seek to maintain today. This psalm has been given the title:
"A Song for the sabbath day."
These titles or superscriptions are a part of the original text – they are inspired
Derek Kidner writes: “This Song for the Sabbath is proof enough, if such were needed, that the Old Testament sabbath was a day not only for rest but for corporate worship, and intended to be a delight rather than a burden.”
3. Being among those who still hold high God’s Sabbath, the **92nd Psalm** draws our hearts upward to the One who is worthy of all praise. It is a difficult psalm to outline. Commentaries lack little agreement as to how to divide this psalm. I’ll set this psalm forth under these three heads:
 - I. The Correctness of Praising God – **Verses 1-3**
 - II. The Causes of Praising God – **Verses 4-11**
 - III. The Consequences of Praising God – **Verses 12-15**

I. The Correctness of Praising God – **Verses 1-3**

A. The psalm opens with a simple statement:

Psalm 92:1 KJV - "*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD*"

1. Why is it good to praise God? Because God declares it to be good. But more than this. It is self-evident that it is good to praise God. He is worthy of all praise.

Revelation 4:11 KJV - "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

The word for “good” is the same word spoken of God as He looked upon His creative work – “It is good.”

It is that which is excellent and pleasing in His sight. It is something that God values.

2. The Hebrew word for “thanks” can be translated “praise”

Psalm 92:1 NIV - "It is good to praise the LORD"

Literally **Verse 1** could be read,

“It is good to give praise and to sing praise.”

3. It is interesting how connected praise and thanksgiving is. A heart void of gratitude will not praise God. Likewise, a heart full of thanksgiving overflows with praise.
4. Our problem with weak praise is:
We don’t understand sin. We don’t value the cross
This should always cause us to examine our heart—and our worship
5. Our Sabbaths should be filled with praise
Spurgeon – “Devout praise is always good, it is never out of season, never superfluous, but it is especially suitable to the Sabbath; a Sabbath without thanksgiving is a Sabbath profaned.”

B. The psalmist says it is a good thing to sing forth God’s praises

1. It is good to live with a constant expression of gratitude

Psalm 92:2 KJV - "To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,"

- a. **Verse 2** really points to the constancy of our praise
- b. lovingkindness - **רַחֲמֵי** - unwavering, covenant love
faithfulness – steadfastness, steadiness, unwavering
- c. Day and night, morning and evening

2. It is good to live in such a way that worship is a continual expression of our life. In our thoughts, our words, our actions everything should magnify God. It should be the “experience” of the Christian.
It is both a duty but also a delight.

3. But there is something unique in the corporate worship of God. This is a psalm designated, “For the Sabbath.”

- a. **Verse 1** speaks of singing praises

- b. Notice **Verse 3**

Psalm 92:3 KJV - "Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound."

- c. This is the nature of the Sabbath day – it is both a duty and a delight
Isaiah 58:13-14 KJV - "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: ¹⁴ Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD"
- d. It should be noted that the use of these instruments were designed for the Old Covenant Temple worship. NT worship is more mature with a focus on matters of the heart.
 John Calvin: "The Jews, who were yet under age, were restricted to the use of such childish elements. The intention of them was to stimulate the worshippers, and stir them up more actively to the celebration of the praise of God with the heart. We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people, as yet weak and rude in knowledge, in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the Gospel, should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation."
- e. This doesn't mean that we should be content with cold, dead, worship void of expressions of praise and adoration.

II. The Causes of Praising God – **Verses 4-11** – we have considered the effect of gratitude. But there are other causes for praising God.

- A. **Verses 4-5** – a contemplation of God's mighty works
1. In **Verse 4** the psalmist shouts for joy over the mighty works of God's hands.
 2. On one hand he ponders God's creation in general – amazing, majestic
Psalm 8:3-4 KJV - "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; ⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
Psalm 19:1 KJV - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
 3. Particular attention is given to God's saving hand in delivering Israel from her enemies.
Psalm 92:11 KJV - "Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies"

4. Hasn't God also demonstrated the mighty work of His hands in our salvation?
It has all been God's work. If we had any part we might be able to glory in our work but there is none.

Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast."

- B. **Verses 6-7** – In contrast the psalmist describes the behavior of the lost man
1. He describes him as a “brutish” man – the word means foolish or stupid. He is completely oblivious to the wonder and awe of God. We tried to give a tract to one student at LSU and he immediately responded, “Absolutely not!”
How brutish, how stupid, how foolish – to reject God's offer of grace.
 2. There are so many of them! The sprout up like grass. How sad that so few have understanding. They will be utterly destroyed.
- C. The word “but” is often a wonderful jewel in the Scriptures.
1. It would seem that the whole world has risen up against God. It would seem that God has lost control.
 2. But what foolish thinking.
Psalms 92:8 KJV - "But thou, LORD, *art most high for evermore.*"
 3. God will receive praise of all. He will be honored by all. Every knee shall bow before His majesty and dominion.
 4. The truth is God is ruling with a rod of iron. No molecule is outside His dominion.
- C. **Verses 8-9** – There is another dimension of these verses.
We can see the great contrast of those that believe and those who do not.
Psalms 92:8 KJV - "But thou, LORD, *art most high for evermore.*"
1. While the wicked, brutish men shun the marvels of God the righteous are overcome with praise and worship.
 2. The wicked will perish in their sin
Psalms 92:9 KJV - "For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered."

III. The Consequences of Praising God – **Verses 10-15**

- A. The righteous worshipper will flourish under the rich provision of God
1. He is continually renewed in strength
Psalms 92:10 KJV - "But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of an unicorn (wild ox)*: I shall be anointed with fresh oil."
Psalms 23:1 KJV - "thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."
 2. God continues to provide him with richness so that he prospers in his soul
Psalms 92:12 KJV - "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."
Psalms 1:3 KJV - "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."
Psalms 92:13 KJV - "Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God."

3. They continue to flourish even into old age
Psalm 92:14 KJV - "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;"
Psalm 92:14 NAS - "They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green,"
 - a. The true believer never loses his spiritual vitality. Instead he grows more and more healthy and vibrant
 - b. God often sustains His people physically into old age. This was surely the testimony of Moses:
Deuteronomy 34:7 KJV - "And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."
 - c. But these verses are speaking primarily of great spiritual strength and vitality
2 Corinthians 4:16-17 KJV - "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;"
- B. Listen to the final praises of the psalmist
Psalm 92:15-1 KJV - "To shew that the LORD *is* upright: *he is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him. "
1. Notice he has a desire to proclaim the greatness of God – "To show" "To declare," "To proclaim"
 2. To declare that "God is upright, there is no unrighteousness in Him" – that everything He does is good. Rather than complaining about life's difficulties we worship and praise God demonstrating to the world that God is good!
 3. To declare that "God is my rock" – let all others fear. Let all others murmur and complain, but God is my Rock! I will worship and praise Him!

Conclusion:

1. There should be no doubt who you worship and serve. Let all men see that we serve love and adore Christ.
2. Let them marvel that we are the people of God.
See Psalm 91:14-15
3. And this is a Song for the Sabbath.
 Your neighbors should be able to witness who your God is. When they see you leave the house faithfully Sunday morning and evening they should know that you are living consistently with what you profess.