

King Jesus the Valiant

Psalm 60:1-12

Halifax: April 12, 2009

Introduction

Again and again, all throughout history, it has been necessary for the LORD to humble His covenant people.

- Over and over again, they have become self-sufficient and self-reliant...
- And over and over again, He has brought them into desperate straits so that they will learn to trust in Him again.
 - This was the pattern under the Old Covenant, and this has been the pattern under the New.

As we move into the next chapters of Isaiah in our regular sermon series,

- we are going to see this very thing...
 - Isaiah is given the task of declaring to the people that God has brought hardships upon them because they have ceased to rely on Him.
 - In chapter 6, we are told that Israel will be reduced to a stump...
 - In chapter 7, Ahab is seen trembling in desperation before his enemies...
 - In chapter 8, 9, and 10, we are told that God is going to send Assyria against His people to chasten them...
 - But in the midst of all this distress, the LORD presents some of the sweetest prophecies concerning the Messiah that are ever to be found!
 - Out of the ruin and the chaos, salvation will come forth most gloriously—and Christ will be given dominion over all... just as God has promised Him.
 - In chapter 6, He is seen gloriously upon His throne, in chapter 7,
 - In chapter 7, He is the one who comes forth of a virgin and is named Emanuel
 - In chapter 9, He is the One who is the child born and son given who will have the government upon His shoulder and will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace...
 - In chapter 11, He is the one who comes anointed with the Spirit and clothed with righteousness...
 - We who trust in Him will be given grace to ride forth in victory, conquering sin, conquering the world, even conquering death!
 - His enemies will all be brought under His feet in desperate humiliation.

- King Jesus is set forth as the only hope of the covenant people...
 - He was their only hope then...
 - He is our only hope today...
 - What folly it is to trust in what cannot save.

But before we actually begin this new section of Isaiah's prophecies,

- I thought it would be good for us to learn a new Psalm of Focus...
 - For you who may not know,
 - our Psalm of Focus is a Psalm that is chosen because it somehow relates to our regular sermon series.
 - It is a Psalm that we sing every week in morning worship to complement our regular sermon series.
- The Psalm I have chosen for this portion of Isaiah that shows us our hope in Christ when we have fallen under God's chastening hand is Psalm 60.
 - It is not a very well known Psalm,
 - but it contains a very powerful message to us when we look around and find the church impotent and powerless in the midst of our enemies.
 - As I hope you will see, it turns our eyes away from ourselves and upon the LORD Jesus as the only hope of our salvation.

This morning we will look at three things that we are given to sing about...

- First, in verses 1-3, we will see that we are to sing about our lowly condition under God's chastening hand...
- Second, in verses 4-8, we are given to sing of the encouragements that the LORD has given us to assure us of His help...
- Third, in verses 9-12, we are to sing of our trust in the LORD our God...

But before we look at these three points, I want to point out something in general about this Psalm...

- You can see from the title that it is a Psalm of David.
 - From the historical inscription,
 - we learn that it was written in the early days of his reign when he had been given victory over several enemies including the Syrians and the Edomites.
- As we explore this Psalm, I want you to remember that David is a type of Christ
 - It is a time when David had been established upon his throne and when certain victories had been won...

- Yet it was a time when there was much more yet to be done...
 - There was more to be done to unite the people under his rule and there was more to be done to subdue their enemies.
- We live in very similar times today under our King Jesus.
 - He has been established on His throne and has accomplished great victories already...
 - He is seated at God's right hand and has accomplished our redemption and has been raised from the dead with salvation for His people.
 - Great things have been done,
 - Yet, when we look at the condition of the church and of the world, we can see that there is still much more to be done.
 - We see Jesus exalted, but we do not see all things brought under His feet.
- When you sing this Psalm, remember that for you who live in these times, it is not so much about David as it is about Christ.

With this in mind, let me show you first of all how:

I. We are taught to sing of our lowly condition under God's hand of chastisement.

- Look at verses 1-3:
 - Psalm 60:1-3: O God, You have cast us off; You have broken us down; You have been displeased; Oh, restore us again! You have made the earth tremble; You have broken it; Heal its breaches, for it is shaking. You have shown Your people hard things; You have made us drink the wine of confusion.
- A. You see how we describe our condition here...
 1. As those cast off and broken down...
 - a. The very earth is described as trembling and broken—perhaps referring to the divisions among God's people...
 - You will remember that with David it was some time before the tribes outside of Judah submitted to him as king—
 - and there were tensions even after formal unity was established...
 - And so it is with the church today...
 - We are meant to be unified in doctrine and practice under Christ,

- but instead we find that there are all sorts of heresies and deviant practices.
 - There are those promoting false doctrines
 - and those winking at corrupt living among the members of the covenant community.
 - We are in a deplorable condition!
- b. The language in verse 2 suggests that the condition is so serious that it is like the earth had been shaken in such a way that it is about to fall over—
- It is like a table with wobbly legs that is about to fall flat...
 - Do we not find it so in the church today?
 - Do we not find that we are defenceless against our enemies—unable to refute them or restrain them?
 - They do not fear God, but instead we fear them...
 - The gospel has very limited impact.
- c. In verse 3, we confess to having undergone hard things and to be given confusion for our drink—the wine of confusion or astonishment as the word is often translated.
- We are insecure and afraid when we ought to be bold and secure.
 - We are like those in a drunken state...
 - one time given over to irrational terrors...
 - at another time oblivious to the real dangers around us.
2. Interestingly, David said all this in a time when God had given him some marvellous victories...
- According to the historical superscription of the Psalm,
 - there had been the defeat of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Edom...
- a. Some have supposed that he must have been speaking of the days before when Saul was king and there was so much disorder—
- or even the entire period of the judges when God's people had fallen again and again under their enemies' dominion and had been so divided that they nearly destroyed each other by civil war.
 - I agree that the condition of which David speaks is the condition that has come about through all those years...

TRANS> But I do not think David is making a contrast between those times and the present times here...

- b. I rather think David is referring to the very time when he had lately come to the throne and had won these several military victories...
 - David was not comparing the condition of the nation to what it had been, but to what it ought to have been!
 - He was not exaggerating the difficulties at all because he was comparing the state of the nation to what God had called them to be.

- c. We are to do the same...
 - When we look at the state of church, we are to measure it by that standard of what it ought to be—what God has called us to be...
 - And when we do, we see how far off we are from the mark.
 - Certainly, I do not mean we are to be given over to complaining and whining—
 - that is what we do when we feel that God has dealt unfairly with us...
 - but when we are humbled, as in this Psalm, we will confess our lowly condition as God's covenant people!
 - Our worship, our unity, our love, our purity, our strength against our enemies—
 - all of these are far from the mark...
 - far from the standard to which we are called!

- B. And note well what is said to be the cause of this pitiful condition in which we find ourselves...
 - 1. It is clearly and unmistakably the LORD Himself!
 - a. He is the One who cast us off and broke us down because He has been displeased with us...
 - He is not displeased with us because He calls us to walk on water and we have not done it...
 - but He is displeased because He calls us to a simple trust in Him and a pursuit of Him and instead we have trusted in other things and run after idols.
 - The bread of God is held out to us, His word is given to us, His promises are ours...
 - and we keep feeding at the table of idols and at the table of the world and the table of self-reliance.
 - We are not coming to take what He has so graciously given us.

- b. He also said to be the one who has shown us hard things and cause us to drink confusion and astonishment as our wine.
 - It is all seen to be His chastisement!

- 2. Now I tell you that God has always been in the business of doing this when we turn away from reliance upon Him for our life...
 - a. It was God who drove Adam and Eve out of the garden when they had turned from His provision...
 - It was He who cursed the earth and sent thorns and death and sickness and trouble...
 - He did it to show them that they live and move and have their being in Him and cannot live without Him.

 - b. And now even more than in the Garden, we need to rely on Him because now, besides our natural need of Him, we need Him for redemption...
 - And so it was in Noah's day that He destroyed all but Noah for their apostasy...
 - And again at Babel, He brought hard things upon them to humble them when in their pride they tried to make life without Him.
 - That is the greatest wrong that a person can do—
 - try to make life—try to go on and be somehow successful without our creator...
 - to ignore the one who made us and sustains us and gives us all we have...
 - to ignore the fact that we have sinned against Him and that our greatest need is to be reconciled to Him!
 - What could be worse than to pretend like this is not a problem!
 - What obduracy!
 - What blindness!
 - What wickedness!

TRANS> I tell you, God has very good reason for visiting us with hard things! for casting us off and for giving us the wine of confusion!

- The world is as it is because He is displeased with us.
 - The Bible makes it very clear that God is the author of all these troubles!

- c. But I tell you, the ones that God is the most zealous to visit with difficulties are those who ought to know better—His covenant people!
 - 1) He often overlooks the self-reliance and idolatry of the world because He has appointed a day in which He will judge them in righteousness...

- But His judgement begins with the household of faith!
 - It begins with those who are set apart to Him by covenant—
 - those who have His Word and His promises and His special care!
- 2) He will humble all men soon enough, but He humbles His people now...
- When they begin to turn from Him and from His provision and His ways,
 - He chastens them...
 - He chastens them to humble them so they will turn back to Him.
 - It is a sad day when He removes His chastisement from a people, for that is to leave them to destruction with the world!
 - Yes brothers and sisters, be thankful if you have seen hard things!
 - Be thankful that He is strengthening our enemies and causing great confusion among us as His people...
 - I don't mean that you should be content with such a state of affairs,
 - but I mean that you should let it humble you and show you your need of Him!
 - He has sent these troubles to show you your weakness so you will turn back to him as your only reliance...
 - So turn back—
 - Take notice of your condition and turn to Him for help!
- 3) Look at how there are cries of deliverance mingled through this confession of God's casting us off!
- Verse 1 ends with the words, "Restore us again..."
 - Verse 2 asks Him to heal the breaches—the tearing—that he has caused.
 - Verse 5 asks Him to save with His right hand...
 - This is what we ought to do as we confess the lowly state into which He has brought us...
 - We were brought into it because of our failure to trust in Him...
 - What is better for us to do than to turn to Him in our troubles for deliverance?
 - That is what He wants us to do!
 - That is what He sent the troubles to cause us to do!

TRANS> As the Psalm moves on, you see how we are led to:

II. Look to the encouragements the LORD has given us to assure us of His help.

- Yes, we are to sing of two encouragements He has given us...

A. First, we sing of the banner He has given us.

- Verse 4 says,
 - “You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of truth.”
- A banner is an ensign.
 - It is something to rally around like a flag or a standard.
 - It is set up to remind us what we are fighting for and to bring us together in the cause.

1. Perhaps the banner referred to here was David himself, at last raised to the throne over both Judah and Israel...

- a. You will remember how David had been through many hardships before he was at last brought to the throne...

1) Saul had pursued him for years and tried to kill him.

- In those years, David had been as good as dead—
 - cut off from the land by the malice of Saul.

2) You will also remember also how Israel had been divided after Saul's death with Judah and Benjamin acknowledging David as King and the northern tribes following Ishbosheth, Saul's son.

- Only recently had God brought the northern tribes to acknowledge David,
 - and now, united under David, Israel had obtained a victory over Syria and Edom.
 - By this, David had been all the more confirmed as the Lord's anointed.

TRANS> So David himself, the king, had become a rallying point for the tribes of Israel under whose banner they were all prepared to fight.

- b. Of course there were still those who were not happy with David,

- but among those who feared the LORD (as our text says), he was a banner.

1) The ones who feared the LORD were those who were mindful of the fact that the LORD Himself had put David on the throne and blessed him...

- They were glad because they could see that he was indeed the Lord's anointed and that God's kingdom would advance under his leadership.
 - They were prepared to submit to him as the one God had chosen for Israel.
- 2) This banner was not for those in Israel who did not fear God...
- They were not seeking their blessing from God and from the king He had provided—
 - They were looking somewhere else for their blessing.
 - But for those who feared the LORD, there was this banner, now unfurled or displayed because of truth (or faithfulness).
 - God in faithfulness and truth had given them a king, even a man after His own heart to lead them according to His will.

TRANS> Now brothers and sisters,

2. You know that we now have an even greater banner in King Jesus, our David!
- a. He also went through many hardships before He took His throne at the right hand of the majesty on high...
- He was despised and rejected of men, He was pursued, He was even crucified...
 - But God raised Him up!
 - Indeed, hard things had been given to God's people represented by King Jesus...
 - Our sin brought God's wrath upon Him and took Him to the cross.
 - Our sin was the reason He came into the world in such lowliness...
 - But even as God raised up David, so He has now raised up Jesus to take His throne and has exalted Him as head over all!
- b. The reigning Jesus is our ensign—
- He is our banner who, having purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high!
 - And who is it that gathers around Him to follow Him as God's anointed?
 - It is those who fear God.
 - Those who do not fear God will not acknowledge Him as the one God sent to save us...
 - They do not look for God's salvation and blessing through Him, but are looking to find their blessing from somewhere else.

- c. What an excellent banner the risen Jesus is my brothers and sisters!
 - He is the one who has conquered sin and death.
 - All who come to rally around Him find blessing in Him.
 - It is He who gives eternal life to His people and leads them all the way to paradise to share at last in His glory.
 - He is the way, the truth, and the life,
 - He is given to bless us by delivering us from sin and death...
 - Having offered Himself for us and now having been raised up, we glory in Him alone as our banner.

TRANS> A Selah (a pause) follows...

- This is something to stop and think about—
 - We now have Christ exalted on the throne to be a prince a saviour!
 - Let all the earth be silent before Him!
 - Let us all pause and consider the implications!
 - To reject the Lord's anointed is to bring down judgement on your head.
 - To receive Him is to participate in His salvation and glorious kingdom.
 - Why would you ever resist Him?
 - Oh no, come to Him and be delivered!
3. Having Him as our banner encourages us to seek God's blessing from Him...
- a. He is raised up as Lord and Christ in order that all God's beloved ones may be delivered...
 - That is what we are told in verse 5...
 - God has unfurled a banner for those who fear Him that His beloved may be delivered...
 - His beloved bride, His beloved Church, His beloved Son whose body we now are.
 - brought from eternal death to life everlasting.
 - b. We are therefore led to pray for deliverance by Him—
 - As also in verse 5, we cry out with desperate earnestness...
 - "Save with Your right hand [signifying His strength], and hear me."
 - We join our prayers to the intercessions of our exalted Saviour and are assured that God will indeed hear us...

- We have boldness through Him whom God has accepted into His courts in His office of Saviour and Mediator.
- Because He has been accepted, we come boldly expecting that God will also hear us and save us when we call out to Him.

TRANS> So this banner is God's first great encouragement for us in our humiliation—our encouragement that we have His help—for He has given us a prince.

- How many times we will see this coming prince as we move through the prophecies of Isaiah in the next several weeks...
 - Let us sing joyfully of Him!
- But there is also this second great encouragement that God gives us to sing about...
 - As second encouragement to assure us of His help.

B. He gives us the encouragement of His promise...

1. In verse 6 it says "God has spoken by His holiness."
 - a. It is absolutely certain that the kingdom will be given to Jesus because God has promised it to Him.
 - In 2 Samuel 7, the LORD came to David and established His covenant with Him in which He promised that David's son would reign forever and ever.
 - He promised to Him a glorious kingdom in which salvation would be brought to all who were subject to Him.
 - An everlasting reign for the man after God's own heart...
 - the reign of the one who would lead us to follow God's commandments with joyfulness...
 - to live in glad obedience to Him as those who cannot get enough of Him and His ways.

TRANS> We just spoke about the banner...

- b. The banner is a glorious thing, but the promise is an even more certain thing.
 - 1) In God's providence He raised up Christ and seated Him on the throne,
 - that is the banner...
 - but it is in His promise that He tells us that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.
 - It is in the promise that He tells Him that He will reign forever and tell us that we will reign with Him in a kingdom that will overcome death and the devil.
 - 2) The promise is sure because God has spoken by His holiness...

- He is not like us—wavering and unsure... He is holy!
 - The language here suggests that He has even sworn by His holiness...
 - not because His word is not sure without an oath,
 - but in order to make it all the more sure to us in our weakness.
 - It is hard to believe that God should give such a glorious salvation to sinners like us...
 - and so to make it all the more sure, He swears to us...
 - And because there is nothing greater for Him to swear by than Himself, He swears by His own holiness.

TRANS> It is a promise on which you can absolutely rely!

- 3) In these times of our humiliation when God has chastened us and brought us low,
 - there is nothing better to cheer us and assure us than God's promise.
 - When the church is brought to its lowest point by our unfaithfulness,
 - let us remember that Christ still reigns and that God has promised us deliverance through Him.
 - As Charles Spurgeon said,
 - "Faith is never happier than when it can fall back upon the promise of God. She sets this over against all discouraging circumstances; let outward providences say what they will, the voice of a faithful God drowns every sound of fear."

2. Now look at the remainder of verse 6 together with verses 7 and 8...

- Psalm 60:6-8: God has spoken in His holiness: "I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem And measure out the Valley of Succoth. Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; Judah is My lawgiver. Moab is My washpot; Over Edom I will cast My shoe; Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me."
- a. This is the content of God's promise...
 - Essentially it is saying that the LORD will gather His elect into His kingdom and bring His enemies into subservience.
 - 1) Those lands in Israel that at first rejected David are mentioned first as those that will be parcelled out by lot according to God's will...
 - He will divide Shechem and measure out the Valley of Succoth, showing His possession of these...

- He goes on to say expressly that Gilead is His possession, Manasseh is His possession, and that Ephraim is His helmet—the one who protects His kingdom to the North...
 - And that Judah is his lawgiver—the one to whom He had promised through Jacob who would be given His sceptre to rule...
 - His people will all be given their respective places in His kingdom.
- 2) And of His enemies, we are told that they will be brought under His feet...
- Moab will become His wash pot...
 - This was the task of the most lowly of servants—managing the bowl that was used for washing feet and perhaps even for a toilet.
 - And Edom is seen as the place to which he tosses His shoe—perhaps for cleaning...
 - And Philistia is called upon to shout in acclamation of His victory—
 - perhaps this refers to the forced bowing and confessing of enemies before the majesty of David.
- b. And of course this gathering of all things to David is only a type and shadow of the greater gathering of all things unto Christ...
- We are told that to Him will be gathered all the elect from the nations of the earth—
 - He will gather them all together as one,
 - and they will serve Him with gladness and rejoicing as their Lord and Saviour and will be brought into perfect submission to Him for all eternity.
 - And we are told that all of His enemies—even death—even Satan—will be brought under His feet and forced to confess that He is Lord.
 - To Him it has been given to judge them all.
 - God has promised!

TRANS> Yes brothers and sisters,

- We have a banner, even a risen exalted Saviour...
- And we have a promise—that this risen exalted Saviour will establish God's kingdom and will reign until all His enemies are brought under His feet.
- What an encouragement there is for us in this banner and this promise from our God.

III. Let these encouragements cause you to trust in the LORD your God!

- **The third thing you are given to sing of in this Psalm is your trust in Him.**

A. Sing of your encouragement to go forth to do His will...

1. Remember that when David wrote this,
 - a. He had been given great encouragement in two particular ways...
 - 1) First, that He had been officially acknowledged by all Israel as the Lord's anointed...
 - 2) And secondly, that he had been given victory in battle against Syria and against Edom in the field...
 - b. But there were greater things that needed to be done...
 - 1) Though he was officially recognised as King, there were still many who resented His reign and would have overthrown him if they could
 - 2) And though he had won victories in the field, he had before him the challenge of going to Edom to subdue them in their incredibly fortified cities—
 - This was a very formidable task for Him to undertake!
 - This is on his mind at the time of the composition of this Psalm...
 - and that is why he asks in verse 9...
 - "Who will bring me to the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom?"

TRANS> David was certain that subduing Edom was something he could not do in his own strength...

- But he is prepared to go forward if God will go with him...

2. And I must ask you! What is it that hard thing you must do for the LORD?

- a. My brothers and sisters, we are climbing out of the pit of sin into which we have fallen over the years...
 - The LORD has humbled us because we have not trusted in Him as we should...
 - He has shown us that we cannot bless ourselves...
 - As it was with David, so it is with Christ now...
 - We are not a people who are where we might have been if we had followed the LORD through all our generations...
 - There are many things we must do to get where we need to be...
 - There are those crosses that we must take up to correct what is wrong!
 - There are those Edoms that we must conquer!

- b. And I say to you, what are your Edoms?
 - Is it the mastery of the tongue?
 - Is it dealing with covetousness?
 - Is it crucifying a petty spirit of complaining and ingratitude?
 - Is it the cultivation of a life of faithful prayer?
 - Is it engaging in sincere, heartfelt worship of God?
 - Is it learning patience in your trials?
 - Is it developing boldness in your witness to unbelievers?
 - Is it learning to work hard?
 - Is it going to deal with problems instead of running away from them?

- c. And what are the Edoms that Christ, our David is going forth to conquer, with us at His side as His visible church?
 - Is it not the reformation of the church so that we are fully subservient to Him?
 - Is it not the calling in of all the elect into His house?
 - Is it not the ousting of heretics and perverts from His kingdom?
 - Is it not the establishment of His people as a people to be feared?

TRANS> We have our formidable tasks before us...we have our strong cities to conquer in Christ's name...

- And it is for us to say,
 - "Who will bring me to the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom that I may take it for the LORD?"
 - Asking such a question shows that you are ready to go forth!
 - It shows that you are like Caleb and Joshua.

B. And of course, your only hope **is** to go forth with God...

1. God had stopped going forth with His people because they had stopped trusting in Him...
 - a. Therefore, He did not continue to go forth with their armies...
 - The worst thing for them would have been to give them success against their enemies when they were not deliberately, consciously, looking to Him.
 - And so the confession is made in verse 10 that God, the one they need to go with them for success,
 - has cast them off and has not gone forth with their armies...

- You remember what a pitiful spectacle Saul had been cowering before the Philistines...
 - and how Israel had been torn apart by civil strife under Saul's reign.
 - God had caused them to fail because they had ceased to trust in Him.

- b. And then there we are today,
 - trusting in our wealth, trusting in our techniques, trusting our own supposed goodness, trusting in our own wisdom...
 - And the church is falling apart as a result!
 - Our whole society came to believe that we could bless ourselves in the enlightenment...
 - and now all our hopes and dreams are falling apart...
 - Having cast off the LORD, we are now reaping the consequences.
 - God has removed our blessing...
 - He has stopped going forth with our armies...

- 2. But brothers and sisters, He is the one whose help you need!
 - You cannot go on in your own strength!
 - He must go with you to conquer the strong city!

- a. When we sing verse 11, we ask Him to go with us to help us!
 - We say,
 - v. 11: Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless!
 - We know that it is useless because we have been relying on it and it has failed us...
 - We do not need man whose breath is in his nostrils, but the LORD who gives life and breath to all...
 - My friends, this is to be your song—calling upon God to help you...
 - You are a creature and you were created to be actively dependent on God—to actively look to Him for your blessings.
 - Independence from God was Satan's idea...
 - It is completely wrong for us as creatures—and as the kind of creatures we are...

- Intelligent creatures who were made to know God and to know that our life and a breath and all that we have comes from Him.
 - This was all true even before the fall,
 - but how much more now that we are fallen...
 - Truly, without Him we can do nothing!
 - Don't you realise that by now?
 - That is what you confess when you sing verse 11...
- b. And then in verse 12, you sing of what happens when He does go with you...
 - v. 12: Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies.
 - Without Him, we can do nothing, but with Him, we can do all that He calls us to do!
 - Together let us move forward by His grace to advance His kingdom...
 - As families, let us move forward by His grace to see multi-generational faithfulness...
 - As individuals, let us move forward by His grace to die to sin and live to righteousness—to bear much fruit for the LORD.
 - For too long, we have relied on our own wisdom and strength!
 - Remember that we have an exalted reigning saviour who has purged our sin and who will reign until
 - all His sheep are gathered in
 - and all His enemies are brought under His feet...
 - Let us go forth in the name of our anointed King until we have obtained every last one of God's promises.
 - There is so much you can do for Him!
 - Do not think you are at a dead end—
 - go forth from victory to victory as the servant of Christ.
 - Be valiant in Him.

Conclusion: The LORD has brought us to a marvellous place—

- It is a lowly place because of our sin and our slackness...
- But it is a place of hope because Christ our King has been exalted to sit on God's right hand and has been given the name that is above every name...
- And now He is going forth with His church until all things are brought under His feet.