

## Psa 126      DREAMING, PAST & PRESENT

PRELIMS. As we hope to give out leaflets next week, so I put this Psalm into my computer some time ago, as I thought there were some relevant points in it which would encourage us. This Psalm is one of the Songs of Ascents which Israel sang when they went up to worship God in the temple - they're joyful songs of praise!

**APP** Well, first, do **you** sing going to worship God? Are **you joyful** in going to worship God? Has God **done** anything in your life that makes you feel He is **worthy** of your praise?

### A PAST DREAM

Here, we have the Psalmist **recalling** the past – he is **enjoying** a past **memory!** Of 'days gone bye'! Memory is a wonderful thing – it can affect our emotions and cause us to 'dream' and recall! Very often it can lead to depression at lost opportunities – but **not** for God's people – here they are **rejoicing** at the past!

Its a memory of God's **goodness** to him “*When the Lord brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men who dreamed*”[1]. He is referring to the time when **God** released Israel who were captives in Babylon. Israel had been sent, by God, to Babylon in judgment for their disobedience and their covenant breaking.

It was a wonderful experience – a most exciting and enjoyable time “*we were like men who dreamed*”, it was so good it was like a dream. We use that language to express its surreality!

**APP** It is Biblical to **enjoy to the full**, the blessings of God! “*Our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with songs of joy*”[1] Do you know we were create **for joy**? God is a joyful God and He created us to enjoy that joy too. He wanted to **share** that joy with us! (Edwards 'God created man for nothing else but happiness. He created him only that He might communicate happiness to him'! We were not created for boredom!) The sole **purpose** of God creating us is to impart His joy to us. He **grieves** that we have gone our own way in seeking joy! In places where we will never find it! God sent His Son – **why?** - to **restore** to us the

joy we lost through sin! It was the joy of salvation that David lost when he sinned - and therefore in repenting, he prayed “*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation*” [51:12]. He knew it was **only** at God's right hand there were pleasures for **evermore!**

The **world is seeking** pleasure – real lasting pleasure. That is why we, as Xns, have a wonderful **opportunity** to 'catch' their attention, **when** we show the **joy** of being 'in Christ', that we are happy 'in X'!

Look at what happens when we demonstrate the joy of the Lord in a **public** way: it makes them **realise** that the Lord is truly the Lord “*then it was said among the nations..*” ie the **pagan** uncovenanted nations who knew not the Lord, they said “*the Lord has done great things for them*”[2]. I read recently that **no nation** has been known to have **returned** to its homeland after being 'carried off' captive except Israel. This is what was great about **their** God!

That is a **tremendous testimony** - for outsiders, to actually **say** that the Lord has done **great** things for us believers!! **APP** So, when has an unbeliever last said to **you** 'My, your God certainly blesses you! He looks after you'? When?

One of the **most important** aspects of our faith, is that we **live lives** that are **challenging** to our communities, and are a testimony to the one living and true God! Unless we are doing that we are **failing** in the one purpose of our being born! We are here to glorify God – nothing else! No matter what else we achieve, if we fail to glorify God, we have failed in everything for which we were born!

When the world say that God is with us, and has blessed us, we are to **confirm** that that **is indeed** the case as the church did here “*The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy*”[3]. We must **never deny** the work of God in our lives. If people think God has been in your life, don't turn round and say 'Oh, no He hasn't'! As we said in the morning, people see what we ourselves don't recognise. However weak, poor, sinful you may feel – God must be given His place of honour. We must confirm God's grace.

To **fail** to give God His place as the **Governor, the Controller, the**

**Architect** of every event in the universe, is a great sin. We Xns must ensure that God's **hand** is **recognised** in all that takes place in the world. The world is **God's world** and people today need to realise that. People talk as if the world **belonged** to human Governments or the UN or the EU! God is the Ruler of the nations!

The people who are worried about **Climate Change**, are people who have no God – at least no God that has a wonderful plan for mankind before it is destroyed. It is **God** that will destroy it, not man! They are **panicking** because their **trust** is in humanity! Well, no wonder they are panicking! God has indeed **entrusted** the human race with responsibility, but the **ultimate destiny** of the earth and all life has been **determined** by God – not man!!

Well, the Psalmist here enjoys a happy memory of God **turning** the 'fortunes' of His people from captivity to freedom.

### A DREAM of the FUTURE

And this memory **inspires** him to dream of the future “*Restore our fortunes, O Lord*”[4] (for Israel are once again in trouble for their disobedience and the Psalmist longs for God's deliverance again – which has been **promised** on repentance!) **APP** Meditating on past blessings brings **encouragement** for the future. Many of the Psalms starts off in complaint and ends up in joy/hope!

Notice how he attributes the past blessing to the **Lord** – not to King **Cyrus** who was only the **means** God used to deliver Israel. Cyrus is in God's hand and was God's **servant** “*This is what the Lord says to his **anointed**, to **Cyrus**, whose right **hand** I take **hold** of to **subdue nations** before him and to strip kings of their armour, to **open doors** before him so that gates will not be shut*”[Isa 45:1]

It is the **same theme** in **Habakkuk**: God assures Hab that **He** is in charge – justice **will** be done, the wicked Ninevites **will** be destroyed (albeit by the Al Quaida of their age) and the fig tree **will** blossom again and the stalls **will** be filled with cattle! **Because** God is in charge of **all** the nations – not just some of them!

The Psalmist's dream is: seeing rivers running in the middle of the

desert “*like streams in the Negev*”[4]!! Can there be a **bigger contrast**? Yet that is the picture he gives us. Seems so **stupid**, but the Psalmist has seen it all before and knows God can do it again!

Now it is in **connection** with God's **promise** about the future that the NT evangelists went out preaching the Word to the ends of the earth. There was not only the **command** of Jesus, but the **promise** that **all nations** will bow before Him and that “*They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God*”[Luke 13:29]. For every culture and every nation shall bring their glory into heaven.

**That** should inspire us – us here in Dundee to **spread** the **Word** as much as we can in our own day and our community! For we have all cultures around us – so let us pray that the leaflets we put out next week will find hearts that God has prepared for His Word!

We must **sow** - even in tears, and shame on us if we do not have tears for the lost souls around us. In our 'Selwyn Reading' we saw last week how **Nehemiah wept** at hearing of the plight of his people – it was **compassion** that really started it all. It is not 'He who goes out that will be blessed', but he who goes out “*weeping*” - it a matter of having the right **heart** a “*willing mind*”[2Cor 8:12] **APP** We need to pray for the right heart and compassion for souls!

The Psalmist was confident that those who sowed would have a **harvest** – they would bring back sheaves, the fruit of their labours. We know, do we not, that Christ will see the **fruit** of His sufferings. As Isaiah prophesied “*After the suffering of His soul, He will see the **light of life** and be **satisfied***”[Isa 53:11]

What about **motivation**: among other things, surely the **promise** and the **rewards** of sowing seed “*He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow will return with songs of **joy** carrying sheaves with him*”[6]! **APP** A drop of cold water given in the name of a disciple will not lose its reward [Mat 10:42]! Those who **turn many** to righteousness will **shine** as the **stars** for ever and ever [Dan 12:3]. Pushing a leaflet through the door can be the beginning of someone turning to Christ and living a righteous life!