

**Psalm 118; 19-24; “Christ’s Resurrection; Marvelous in our Eyes”, A
Sermon for Easter Sunday Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
April 24th, 2011, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Who was this Psalm written by? Most commentators say David, and I agree with them. This Psalm was most definitely written in the prophetic language of David, the king of Israel, and yet the way that some of the lines are written, they cannot ultimately refer to David except in relation to a greater King than Himself. David, as a king over the nation of Israel, was a type of our King Jesus as the greater spiritual King of Israel. David won many great battles for the nation of Israel against her enemies which had surrounded her. But his battles were only a type of the greater battles which our Lord Jesus Christ has won on behalf of all of God’s people. He did battle against the greatest spiritual enemies of our souls and has gained the victory. He overcame our sin, the Devil, and the world at the cross. The proof of this is His rising from the dead. Great promises were given to David concerning God’s establishing his house and his kingdom forever through one of his descendants. (2 Samuel 7: 12-16) That descendant was our Lord Jesus Christ. But there have also been more great promises which have been given to us by Christ Himself; promises which flowed out of that great promise; promises which are found in the New Testament, promises for the salvation of both Jew and Gentile, and the building of the New Testament Church. It is on the basis of these promises that we who believe in Jesus are also a part of this everlasting kingdom, and this spiritual house that Christ is building to the glory of God. The proof of this is also the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and our faith in Him. Romans Chapter 10, and verse 9 says, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Without the Lord Jesus Christ being raised from the dead by the Father, salvation would not have come to God’s people, and the eternal and everlasting kingdom could not have been brought in. Furthermore the Church could not be built to completion by Christ, to the glory of God, if He had not been raised from the dead. But since Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead to the glory of God the Father, we therefore have a sure foundation and sure hope of eternal life, being part of His everlasting kingdom. Our salvation, and the building of Christ’s Church, is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. Christ’s resurrection is marvelous in our eyes for 3 reasons. First, because of His resurrection, Christ became the gate of righteousness. Second, because of His resurrection Christ became the chief cornerstone of a great spiritual house which He is building. And then finally, because of Christ’s resurrection God made a new and special Day for His people.

1st of all - Christ’s Resurrection is marvelous in our eyes because through it Christ became the gate of righteousness.

“Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord.” “This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter.”

There are some commentators who tell us that these are the gates of the temple which David desired to come into and go through in order to worship God, after his victorious battles against His enemies. And certainly something can be said for this in an earthly sense; in the sense that David loved to go through those gates, in order to come and praise and worship the Lord. And particularly in regard to victories which the Lord had given to him. Turn with me over to Psalm 122. This is a Psalm of David; a Psalm of ascents. It says, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" "Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!" David loved to be able to go up to the house of the Lord and to be His worshipper. There was no greater earthly blessing than this; to be able to worship God in His house. Jerusalem was the City of the great King, who was God in the midst of His people. Turn with me over to Psalm 48 and verse 1. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain." "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." "God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge." Now look down at verse 9. "We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, in the midst of Your temple." "According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness." You can see from these sentences that the temple in Mount Zion was to be the place where Old Testament worship was to be conducted. There God dwelt in His special presence in the midst of His people. There He was praised regularly, and that praise of God was to go out from there to the ends of the earth. Israel, alone, of all the peoples of the earth, had the true worship of God in their temple at Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The worship of God in that place was intended to be, to God's people, "the joy of the whole earth". This was God's intent. And His purpose and plan, to bring the joy of true worship to the ends of the earth, David is saying here, would be brought about by "His right hand being full of righteousness".

Both David's worship in the Old testament temple, and our worship as a part of Christ's Church in the New Testament spiritual temple, are based upon "God's right hand being full of righteousness". God's "right hand" is a word picture for our Lord Jesus Christ. There are two passages of Scripture that I would like to turn you to now, to prove this to you. The first is Psalm 98, verses 1-3. "Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!" "For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory." "The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations." "He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel." Now I assert to you this morning that when David says, "His right hand and His holy arm", He is speaking about our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the right hand of the Father. He is His holy arm. God is a right-handed God. He does everything with His right hand. He does everything for us in our salvation by using Christ, His righteous right hand, to accomplish it. Christ is God's power and wisdom and faithfulness displayed. Christ is the fulfillment of the law. He is the One who has filled it up with His righteous and perfect obedience. It is God the Father's right hand which has gained the victory for

Him. He has gained the victory for God to satisfy God's justice. Jesus Christ was perfectly righteous in everything that He said, and everything that He did for God and in relation to men. God's right hand is full of righteousness." Christ is the righteousness of God.

This will help us very much to understand the importance of what it says in our text in Psalm 118, when it says, "Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them." Turn with me back to Psalm 118 again, and look with me at verse 14. David is proclaiming here, not only that His victory in the physical earthly battles of his kingdom was due to the Lord, but also that His personal spiritual and physical strength and salvation were from God. Listen to what he says here. "The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation." "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly." "The right of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly." "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death." "Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord." This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter." Now let's read this in terms of what I have explained to you. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the Christ of God does valiantly." "The Christ of God is exalted." "The Christ of the Lord does valiantly." "I shall not die but live and declare the works of God's grace in Christ for me." David then can go on to say some things about his salvation spiritually, as he understood it, being an Old Testament believer in the promised Messiah. "The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death." He understood himself to be a sinner at many points in relation to the keeping of God's law and His holy commandments. Righteousness was not found in even the best of his works. And as for His many sins; how could atone for them? Look at verse 19. "Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord." Open to me the gates of Christ's righteousness, which will be based upon His finished work upon the cross; and I will go through them. Let me, Lord, be continually found in your favor on the basis of the righteousness that He perform perfectly in Your sight, O God, he is saying. Open to me the gate of the forgiveness of sins. Open to me the gate which leads to the fountain flowing for sin and uncleanness which he shall purchase with His precious blood. Open to me the gate of Christ's righteousness imputed to me so that I will stand perfect and complete in your sight, O God; that you will look upon Him and not have to punish me. Open to me the gate of Christ's righteousness which is the basis of my coming to you, O God, for mercy and strength and the thousands of blessings which you will give to me over a lifetime which will finally bring me when I die to heaven, the place where you dwell and where Your glory dwells.

This was what David was saying, but he says in words which picture the Christ who was yet to come; the Christ who was yet to die on the cross and be raised from the dead. But still; he says it plain out in verse 20. "This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter." He is not here speaking about one of the

gates of the temple. He is speaking of Christ as the gate through which the righteous enter in to favor with God in this life, and eventually into heaven itself when they die. Christ is the gate of the Lord. We who have the New Testament Scriptures know of the fulfillment of this is Christ. "Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it." "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it," Jesus says in Matthew 7: 13 and 14. Christ and His teaching is the narrow gate. Jesus says in John 10: 7 and 8, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." "All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." "I am the door." "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." Jesus is the door to salvation. Jesus is the gate to green pastures of good spiritual food which is the sound doctrine that comes from His teaching and the teaching of the Apostles. The gates of righteousness are standing open in the preaching of the gospel and the word of God. Will you not come through them? Will you not praise God this day for Christ who is the gate of righteousness and through whom God opens to you all the gates of righteousness to, to the one who believes in Him? Christ's resurrection is the proof that all righteousness has been fulfilled in Him and that God is pleased with Him, and pleased to open the gate to you.

Then 2ndly - Because of His resurrection Christ became the chief cornerstone of a great spiritual house which He is building. (Verses 22 and 23)

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." "This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." This verse is quoted more times in the New Testament than any other verse in the Bible, which shows us its great importance. The "stone" which the builders rejected is Jesus Christ. The builders are the spiritual leaders of Israel in Jesus' day. They rejected Him because they did not believe that He was the Christ, their Messiah. They rejected their need to recognize Him because of the issue which I just mentioned to you in the first point of the sermon; righteousness. We are all building something with our lives. Those who are wise build their life upon Christ and His sayings; Christ and His righteousness. Those who are unwise may think that are wise in thinking that their own righteousness will merit favor in the eyes of God, and bring them to heaven. But it never will. When the Apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 3, and verse 10 that there is none righteous, no, not one; still, there are people who think that they are righteous anyway. They trust in their own evaluation of themselves more than they will believe in God's evaluation of them. What was the problem with the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day? Well turn with me to Romans Chapter 10, verse 1. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved." "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Here is the reason that

the builders rejected Christ. They clung to their own understanding of their own righteousness and not only rejected Christ, but persecuted Him, and they had him put Him to death. They were seeking to establish their own righteousness. They had zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge. They would kill God's righteousness (Christ) in order to establish their own. God's righteousness is set forth in His holy law. This is God's righteousness; it is Christ set forth as the fulfiller of the law on behalf of sinners, and the propitiation made for our sins. He became a wrath-removing sacrifice unto God, so that we who believe would not be punished for our sins. Christ's righteousness becomes a spiritual garment that we are clothed with, in the sight of God, so that in regard to our own righteousness, we submit it to God. This is called, "having a wedding garment on" in Matthew 22, verse 11. If we are not clothed in this wedding garment" we are not acceptable to God. Those works of ours which are good and right, which we do to please God; they merit no favor with Him. The best of them has sin attendant to them. Our good works are all done "in Christ". They are dipped in the blood of Christ and thereby are acceptable to God on that basis.

But no one fulfills the law except Jesus Christ. Christ not only fulfilled it in terms of God's righteous commandments. He fulfilled all the prophecies concerning Himself and spoke prophetically of His rejection to the very ones rejecting Him. This truth was shown to the chief priests and the elders of Israel very clearly by Christ Himself. Turn to Matthew 21: 33. "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower." "And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country." "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit." "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another." "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them." "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'" "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'this is the heir.'" "Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance." "So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him." "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" "They said to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.'" "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.'" "This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes?" "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." "Now when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them." "But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet."

Jesus was the "stone" whom they had rejected and would fall upon in condemning Him and having Him put to death, but God raised Him from the dead

and has crowned Him with glory and honor. The risen Christ, sitting at the right hand of the Father, would fall in judgment upon them later on in 70 A.D., they would be “ground to powder. Their whole temple and works would be utterly destroyed and those who would not repent would perish forever because of it. “Not one stone would be left upon another” of their temple. Jesus says in Matthew 24, verse 2. Jesus however, in and through His sufferings and death, and His resurrection from the dead, would become the chief cornerstone. Turn with me over to 1 Peter 2: 4. Here we find Peter tells those whom he is writing to what God is doing with those who have believed in Jesus. He is making them into a spiritual house by His resurrection power. “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.” “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’ “Therefore to you who believe He is precious, but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’” This is what our God and our Christ are doing. Christ is building His Church and some unbelieving and sinful men opposed it, and they were destroyed. Some people are believing in Christ and they are being saved and added as stones to the building founded by Christ, the chief cornerstone.

Turn with me to Ephesians Chapter 2, and verse 19. Here we see that even we, as Gentiles are being added to this building which is built by God upon the foundation of Christ. “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Is not what Jesus Christ has done by His death, and is doing by His resurrection power, the most marvelous thing that you have ever heard of? We who believe in Jesus, have walked through the gate of righteousness into the favor of God; we are praising Him for this great salvation and are offering up spiritual sacrifices in the church which we are members of, and we are still part of a bigger building; this temple; this house that He is building, where we all grow up into Him. In Him we are being built into a spiritual house for God to dwell in. The whole building’s weight rests upon the cornerstone of Christ. The verse makes it appear that Christ work rests partly on the Apostle’s work. It is not so. For no other foundation can a man lay than that which is laid in Christ. But the apostles and New Testament prophets built upon this foundation. And here Christ is called the chief cornerstone because all of the rest of the building is going up dependent upon His position, His strength and His work in uniting it all. All of the building rests upon the cornerstone. It is laid first and all the walls connect together and form around its position and its strength. That is what is being communicated here. The application

ought to be obvious. Are you a part of this building? Are you one of the living stones resting upon Him and connected to Him in a living way, by faith in His finished work? Do you depend upon His righteousness and His strength to build your life upon; to the glory of God, and in obedience to His word? That is the foundation which was laid by Christ and written of by the Apostles. All of this is very important if you would bring forth fruit to God. His death and resurrection has secured these blessings to you, and by faith you build with Him.

The Apostle Peter knew this truth well. He had denied His Lord before, as He went to the cross. He was, however, restored by the Lord's grace and intercession on his behalf to the Father. And so later in the book of Acts, we read this of him after he was arrested for teaching the people and preaching in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Verse 8 of Acts Chapter 4: "Then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.'" "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone." "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." O the work and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ are so very marvelous that people are saved and healed and they are being built into this great temple of worship and service to Christ their King, and God His Father. They testify to the power of His grace and strength, because they have the resurrection power of Christ at work in their souls; the work of the good Holy Spirit within them, demonstrating that power in good works, and a testimony born to His power and grace. O let us not grow weary or discouraged, or faint of heart in our labors for Him. Let us rather pray like Paul in Philippians 3: 9: that we might be "found in Him, not having our own righteousness which is from the law, but that which through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means, I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

And then finally - because of Christ's resurrection God made a new and special Day for His people. (Verse 24)

"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." In order for you to be able to say with David, "Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go through them," Christ had to go through them first Himself. Our citizenship is not upon this earth. "Our citizenship is in heaven," as Paul says in Philippians 3: 20, "from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." But in order to bring us to heaven, Christ had to appear in heaven on our behalf, so that we could be saved and raised from the dead ourselves, to be eventually brought to heaven. He died on the cross, and was buried, and then on the third day, He rose

again. This was the day that the Lord had made; the day of Christ's resurrection from the dead. For on that day when Christ arose from the dead; all of His people rose in Him and with Him in terms of their salvation. Ephesians 2: 4-7 says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." When He rose on the third day, which was the first day of the week, a change in the day of corporate and public worship took place. The blessings of the New Covenant which Christ had made through His death, began to flow. It was the dawn of a New Day. It was the beginning of a New Creation. Christ finished the work of Redemption, the work which formed the basis of the New Creation and the world (or the age to come), and as it says in Hebrews 9: 11 – "Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation." "Not with the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." The resurrection of Christ was the beginning of a New Day and a New Age for the people of God. He is risen from the dead and gives the true spiritual rest now in this life, and the eternal rest prepared for us in heaven. We are living in a New Day in anticipation of better things yet to come. We have ceased from our own works in terms of our obtaining salvation. God the Father would have every believer in Christ find His eternal rest. Turn over with me in closing to Hebrews 4: 4. "For God has spoken in certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works; and again in this place: They shall not enter My rest.'" "Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, 'Today', after such a long time, as it has been said, "Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." "For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day." "There remains therefore a rest (a Sabbatismos) for the people of God." So even as God the Father rested from all of His works in the Beginning, as a pattern for us to rest from our labors one day in the week; and even as Joshua was a type of Christ giving rest to God's people and bringing them into the promised land; so Christ rested from His work of redemption in the tomb, and was raised in power to bring His people into spiritual rest now, and the eternal rest that is coming for every believer in Him. When He arose He gave us a New glorious day of rest both literally and spiritually. We find rest in Christ when we enter that rest by faith in Him. We who have entered it acknowledge that we have entered it by observing the Lord's Day. We pay tribute to Christ's finished work in observing the Christian Sabbath. In observing the New Testament Sabbath Day, we observe that day as a foretaste of heaven; the eternal Sabbath. We who have believed in Jesus have found rest and worship God and Christ for giving it to us. We say concerning this Day, which began with His resurrection; "This is the day which

the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” We remind ourselves of these blessed facts and glory in our King who gave them to us. This is the day which the Lord has made.” “We will rejoice and be glad in it.” Do you rejoice this morning that the gospel day has dawned, and that its sun shall never set except in the greater glory of the eternal Sabbath? Then rejoice and be glad today that Christ rose from the dead for you.