

Our Glorious God's Strong, Steady, Joyous City (Family Worship lesson in Psalm 48)click bit.ly/3vOoqSd to hear this lesson as taught (or scan QR code→)

How does God strengthen, steady, and gladden us? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Psalm 48 prepares us for the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these fourteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us to gain strength and gladness by observation and consideration of how the glory of God is at the center of His people's life.

Tuesday, April 26, 2022 • Read Psalm 48

Questions from the Scripture text: What sort of Psalm is this (superscript)? For ("of") whom was it written? Who is great (v1)? What is to be done greatly? Especially in what place? What else is it called? What does v2 call its height? Who rejoices in it? What two things does v2 call it? Who is the great King, Whose city it is (cf. Mat 5:35)? Who is in her palaces (v3)? What do people know about Him? With what command does v4 begin? Who assembled? How did they pass by? What did they see (v5)? How did they respond to her scope? How did they respond to her strength? What took hold of them (v6)? How badly? What sailors have gone through the same fear (v7)? With what two senses does v8 describe the certainty of the Psalmist's faith? Where have believers' faith seen this; what two things is this place called? In the city, what has their faith known about the city? In the midst of what, in this city (v9b) do they think upon what (v9a)? What (v10a) determines the quantity and quality of the praise in v10b? Where is this praising done? How does v10c name the mightiness of the actions of God? With what are these actions full? Who is to rejoice in v11a? And who specifically are to be glad (v11b)? Over what (v11c)? What five commands does the Psalmist give in v12-13 (cf. v4a)? What are we to observe now? With what structures/images are her defense and beauty described here? Who, really, is her defense and beauty? Why are we to spend so much effort observing and meditating upon this (v13c)? Whom, then, do we see (v14a)? Whose is He (v14b)? For how long? What will He do (v14c)? For how long?

Great is Yahweh and exceedingly to be praised (v1a)! This is the glorious God, Who will be our God forever and ever, and Whom we know that if He is ours then, surely He will be our guide even until death (v14)! These are the bookends of the Psalm, but the perhaps surprising theme of the Psalm is *the location where* the Lord's glory is displayed: His church!

In the Psalm, it's the city Jerusalem, but there are several hints that this city is something broader and higher and more enduring than the hill that had once been Jebusite. It's not the city of a great man, but the city of the great God (v1a-b). It's not a moderately high hill but of a dizzyingly beautiful height (v2a). It's not just the joy of Israel, but the joy of the whole earth (v2b). It's location is true north (v2c). God Himself is in her ramparts (v3a). God Himself mans (Gods?) her defenses (v3b). Unlike Jerusalem, which has seen almost constant chaos for 2500 years, this city is established forever (v8e). The worship in its temple (v9) is attended by praise-ers from the ends of the earth (v10b).

It's not "spiritualizing" or "metaphorizing" to see Jerusalem as the nascent church. For there is a heavenly Jerusalem here in Psalm 48 before the "Jerusalem from above" of Gal 4:26 and the New Jerusalem out of heaven in Rev 21:2. Although much further along, the visible church today is still a nascent form of that glorious city. This visible/invisible distinction isn't an invention of the theologians but a reality in the Bible. Many would scoff to hear that we are to see the glory of God greatly displayed in His church. They've been to church!

But Jerusalem then, and the visible church now, is a local expression of something worldwide, an earthly expression of something in heaven, a temporal expression of something eternal. What we are to see, there, however is not how much it falls short of what the city points to, but how marvelously glorious it is that God Himself is in her! In this way, Psalm 48 strikes the same chord as Psalm 46. With such a glorious God as this, Who displays His great glory in such a great Heaven as that, even in our small and weak "city" now has great glory. This God is our God v1. This God is our God, v8. This God is our God, v14!

Who can resist Him? The nations may rage like the kings gathered in v4 and the fleet of Tarshish in v7, but they will be reduced to a madness of panic (v6a), a helpless agony of pain (v6b), and the sheer terror of a sailor whose great ship is being shattered to smithereens beneath him (v7)!

Jerusalem and her temple, and the earthly church now, exists for the worship of God. It is the place where He is praised (v1). It is the place where what is heard of Him (v8a) comes to be known by experience (v8b). It is the place where His steadfast, covenanted love is dwelt upon (v9a). It is the place where praise seeks to conform itself to the greatness of the Name of God (v10a-b). It is the place where His almighty power comes and gives righteousness (v10c). It is the place where the daughters are not feeble but rejoicing, exulting in the strength of Him Whose judgments determine how all things end (v11).

Or is it? Was Jerusalem such a place? It was supposed to be, but generation to generation forgot their God. Is the church such a place? In many places, praise God, it is. But are there not many places in which God Himself is not the glory of the church? It is so easy to have earthly structure and institution without heavenly reality and focus and joy. So the church must not give up her glorious calling, even in the midst of her current smallness and weakness.

This is why the Psalm is filled with commands of contemplation and communication. Behold (v4). Walk about, all around, and count (v12). Mark well (v13a). Consider (v13b). The reality of God's genuine presence in the church is one that might easily escape notice. Even worse, that reality is one that rather easily recedes from view. And then what? If God is all her glory, then if she ceases to have Him or to revolve around Him, whatever else she has is utterly worthless, regardless of how much men value it. By multiplication of focuses and activities, the church suffers the greatest subtraction there can ever be: the loss of the glory of God Himself. Therefore, those commands of contemplation are for the purpose also of communication: "that you may tell it to the generation following" (v13c).

What heritage do we seek to leave for the next generation? God Himself! God's glory as the only and infinite glory of His church. God's power as her only defense. And therefore God's institutions as her only program. The church shall never perish; her dear Lord to defend, sustain, and cherish, is with her to the end!

Then, we will see His great glory as the only glory of the church.

And then, nothing will ever be able to shake us, because this glorious God is our God. Forever and ever. He will be our guide—even to death.

How is God the greatness and glory of your church? In what activities, especially, do you get to contemplate Him and His glory? To whom, and how, are you communicating this greatness of His glory? When are you most needy of remembering how glorious is the God Who is His church's defense and guide?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You for Your exceedingly glorious greatness! Your almighty power is an impenetrable defense and makes Your work be established forever. Grant that we would think upon Your lovingkindness in Your worship, so that our praise would arise in accord with the greatness of Your Name. And make us faithful to tell of You and Your glory to the generation that is following us. Help us thus to praise You and know You in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP48B "Within Your Temple" or TPH48A "Great Is the LORD Our God"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalm 48. These are the words of God, a song. The Psalm of the sons of Korra Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised in the city of our God and 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 for behold the king's assembled, they passed by together those sort. And so they marveled. They were troubled, they hastened away. Fear took hold of them there and pain as of a woman and birthpangs is when you break the ships of Tarshish with an east wind as we have heard.

So we have seen and the city of Yahweh of hosts in the city of our God, God will establish it forever. We have thought, oh God. On your loving. Kindness and 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. Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah. Be glad because of your judgments. Walk about Zion go all around her count, her towers mark. Well, her bulwarks. Consider her palaces that you may tell it to the generation following for. This is God, our God forever and ever, he will be our guide, even to death.

So, for the reading of God's inspired and and they're in toward

One of the things that we see from this song, is that the Spirit had been teaching, God's people long before the coming of Christ that the city of David, and the son of David on the throne in Jerusalem were initial hints and beginnings of something that would be much greater in the future.

When the people had asked Samuel for a king, Remember, God had said, they have rejected me as King. And yet in verses 2 and 3. We see the Lord still continuing to own the kingship for himself quite personally and calls. Zion the city of the great king and he says, God is in her palaces.

He is known as her refuge and so the people had said, give us a king like the nation so that they may go out and save us as if that's the kings of the nation's did. And yet that is what God does and God has not taken away from them.

The blessing of having him as King. In fact, he combines the promise of a son of David with himself as King when it turns out that the Son of David that was promised is also the son of God. That's something. We'll hear about Lord willing, two days time and the prayer meeting sermon this coming Wednesday evening, that he is, according to the flesh, the son of David, but he's declared with power by the resurrection.

From the dead to be the Son of God. Jesus is the king in the city is not a city that is just of Israel. The description here is one, that is really too much for the hill that David took from the Jebby sites and that came to be called Zion Mount Zion on earth, at least and the city of Jerusalem.

That is called. Beautiful and elevation. But the hill of Jerusalem was not quite that high. It is called the joy of the whole earth. There might have been a time for a short season during the reign of Solomon. When there were many who streamed into the city, to appreciate the greatness of the wisdom and the wealth of Solomon.

And yet the city is called the joy of the whole earth and it says that and there's a translation discrepancy here with the New King James. But it says that Mount Zion is in the north and Jerusalem was not in the north. This description of the north may actually mean something like true north or the Zenith.

It's talking about a heavenly city, the Jerusalem. That is to come the dwelling of God with His people, as King over them forever. This is understanding what God had done and David and Solomon and the establishment of their throne as something that was looking forward to what God would have finished doing.

By the time you get to the end of the book of Revelation, and the apostle there by the Spirit talks about the holy city, the New Jerusalem descending from heaven, does the Psalm 48 city that he is speaking about and it is that city to which we are given citizenship as we are added to the church and brought into union with Christ by faith and guaranteed a resurrection.

So that when all of the cities of this earth have been destroyed and when this earth itself is melted to its very elements yet. Our citizenship belongs to a city whose builder is God. Let's study that is built without hands. A city that is forever. The city that the book of Hebrews teaches us to anticipate and what can anyone do against the church?

Against the Lord Jesus. The king. There are many who try. You have a picture of that and versus four through seven the king's assemble and pass by together. This is not a, a peaceful delegation. This is the kind of assembling you're gathering together taking counsel together as in Psalm 2 against the Lord, and against his Christ.

And we know that because they are not enjoying Mount Zion as the joy of the whole earth like wears do it described, but when they see the greatness of the city, when they see that she is undefeatable, Then they hurry away and they are terrified. Pain takes hold of them as a woman in birth pangs.

And as the sailors of the ships of Tarshish, as when you break the ships of Tarshish with an east wind Tarshish, one of the great sea powers of the time, their sailors would have been thought to be very brave and very strong. They've seen it all before and yet, however, brave the sailor is when he's in the midst of the storm and the ship actually starts to break apart, he comes into a moment of complete and abject terror, such will come upon the all of the enemies of God, all the enemies of Christ, all the enemies of the church.

There are no brave enemies in the last day. Very instead do things like cry out from mountains to fall upon them and hide them. And so We know that the greatness of being God's city with God in her and our rejoicing over him and singing his the praise of his name that comes with the security of knowing that all conspiracy against God and his church and us as a church.

All collaboration to destroy us. Must at last fail and fill utterly and terrifyingly. And this is what we consider, when we come to his public worship. When we gather to him, They were to consider that. When they gathered to him, they gathered to the temple. And look at verse 9, We have thought, oh God, on your Leaven kindness on your hesit in the midst of your temple.

And when they consider God, and when they consider his steadfast love, they realize that the city is established for a verb because God is the strength of the

city. And so according to your name O God. So, is your praise to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is full of righteousness.

Let Mount Zion rejoice and let the daughters of Judah. Be glad because of your judgment's. One of the reasons why silly girls in 21st century. American churches do not have deep enough gladness. And joy is that they are trying to have an emotional romantic joy from current circumstances and human relationships for the Lord does give good circumstances easy circumstances a great deal of the time actually.

And there are some many good relationships that he gives you such as loving relationship, with your mother, with your sisters, or with your brothers, or with your father, or that healthy sisterly relationship, that, you may have the congregation. But none of these are that from which you should be having that deep Great steady joy that belongs to a daughter of Judah.

Daughter of Judah should have her joy from the judgments of God from the knowledge that God who has taken you to be His daughter in Christ shall reign forever and ever shall destroy all of his and our enemies shall end all threat against us and shall preserve our praising Him forever and ever.

And so the psalm closes with a reminder that we should consider the permanence, the strength, the beauty of the church as the one that God is in her. As God is in her, then she is forever. Cannot be ended. If God is in her, then she is strong. She cannot be defeated if God is in her, and she is beautiful.

Because God himself is her beauty and however, much ugliness she has for a time that shall finally and fully be done away with. And she will be beautiful forever. And so he tells us walk about Zion go all around her counter towers Mark. Well, her bulwarks, consider her palaces.

So all of these observation type commands to consider what it is, what an amazing thing it is that God has done and choosing and redeeming, and now is doing in building and sanctifying his church. He says, observe all these things and don't just observe it for yourself, so that you may have the strength and hope and joy that the rest of the Psalm has described, but what are we supposed to do with our observations?

At the end of verse 13, that you may tell it to the generation following If we really have this hope. And this joy in this confidence. Is it not in part so that we can teach our children to have the same hope and joy and confidence. So that they will not be silly.

Circumstantial circumstantially dependent emotionally dependent creatures whose joy can be taken away by circumstances. And by people, Now we should teach our children what God has done and is doing so that they may have that strength, that endurance that gladness and hope that belongs to the people of God, which is to say so that they may have God.

And that's the conclusion of the Psalm and verse 14 for this is God, our God forever and ever. Not only is he the almighty and eternal God. God forever and ever, but he's ours, he has made himself our covenant God and he's taken us to himself as his very own people.

And so he must be the rule of our life. The determining factor that shapes all of our life, He will be our guide. Even to death. And the implication of that is and even after death, when we rise again and we live forever to know him and to praise Him, the Lord grant to us the experience, obedience, to consider his church and the experience of the strength, and the steadiness.

And the gladness that comes from knowing him to be our very own God.

Our Father we thank you that you are King and your city and we praise you for your strength Then we praise you for your wisdom. And we ask that you would give us by your spirits to heed. This Psalm that we would see that you yourself are the glory of your church, and that this is what gives her such power, and such permanence and such pleasure in you.

Oh, forgive us. So God for when we have thought that how well we were doing was somehow the glory of your church and grant to us to take pleasure in or have our exaltation exulting in something that is more permanent and more proper and to have our exalting in you that would not boast and what we are doing though.

You do give us while your grace to do well in many things and we bless your name for it, but make us as we consider your church and what you are doing in her to be amazed that you are the one who is doing it and to know that that which we see in perfectly.

Now we will see perfected Pray, Lord for my children, especially my daughters but all of my children that they would have that strength and steadiness and gladness that is in you so that it would not be shaken moment by moment by circumstances or how well we are doing or even how others are treating us grant to us to have that which belongs to heavenly Zion which is to know you as God in the midst of us, God who are with us.

So that we would live our lives in fellowship with you and therefore dependence upon you being guided through the course of the Providence that you have planned out for us. I'll pray. Lord that not only with these children receive this instruction what you have given us to have together today, but that the psal might be fulfilled and the days when they come to be the parents and they take their children to Psalm 48 and give them the same instruction and grant, then that your spirit would attend them and bring your word home to and make it.

Take root in the hearts of another generation yet. Unborn. Glorify yourself, O God, by answering this prayer that we ask you through Jesus. Amen.