

Morning.

I'll be reading from Psalm 98 this morning.

Psalm 98.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Oh, sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The Lord has made known his salvation.

He has revealed his righteousness in the sight of nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Break forth in the joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre and the sound of melody.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn, make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who dwell in it.

Let the rivers clap their hands.

Let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Thank you, Lee.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before you today as your people because your mercy is more.

Lord, we come not as people that have it all together.

Lord, I come to preach this message not as someone who has lived this passage perfectly this week.

But Lord, we come in the grace that you have shown us, in the shed blood of your Son, who has made us new creations, is sanctifying us, Lord.

And we look forward to the day, as we just sang, when we will be together in heaven with our bridegrooms.

as the spotless perfect bride and lord we just are thankful for the love and the grace that you have shown us that we experience now and we look forward to experiencing in a much fuller and completer way one day with you for eternity we pray all this in jesus name amen nobody really says what they mean i don't know if you've noticed that

in your travels, as you've gone around in life.

Even though we all know life, especially our relationships, would be much easier if we all just said what we mean, we still don't.

Sometimes we intentionally don't say what we mean because what we really mean isn't that great.

Someone may say, you know, that's interesting, after you've told them a story.

They don't really mean that it's interesting.

If they did, they'd ask you more questions about it and keep the conversation going.

What they really mean is, that's kind of weird, and I think I would really like you to stop talking about that now.

Or when you ask your wife what's wrong and she says nothing, you know that really everything is wrong and it's time to start fixing it, right?

Guys, we struggle with this too though because sometimes we don't say what we mean because we don't really know what we mean.

or we don't know how to say it, right?

Deep down, we all know that we don't really understand ourselves.

We don't really understand our heart.

We don't really understand our desires very well.

So it's difficult to say what we really mean sometimes.

If you read the book of Romans, you'll see that Paul struggled to understand himself, why he did what he did.

The prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 17, 9 says that the heart is deceitful

above all things and desperately sick, who can understand it?

This means that not only is it difficult to understand our hearts, but that actually on our own, in our own strength, it's impossible to understand our hearts because our hearts are actively deceiving us.

perhaps as like a defensive mechanism for hiding our own sin and brokenness.

But having a healthy, pure heart then is crucial, not just for knowing ourselves, but also, more importantly, for knowing God.

Jesus says in the Beatitudes, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

So how can we tell, big question, how can we tell

If we're seeing God and seeing our hearts rightly, how can we know that we're seeing God and seeing our hearts rightly?

Well, in Psalm 98, the psalmist tells us that God is showing himself, he's revealing himself, and the psalmist tells us how God is revealing himself, but he's also telling us how we ought to respond, how God's people respond when God reveals himself.

So the big question today for you and me personally is what do you see and how do you respond today?

to the content of Psalm 98.

What do we see when we see God revealed in Psalm 98, and are we responding like the people of God, like creation responds in Psalm 98?

We should see that God's glory is known throughout the world as he reveals his salvation

And his creation responds or his creation praises him.

So only two points today, but I've got more points under those two points.

So don't get too excited, not necessarily getting out of here earlier.

But the two main points today, God has revealed himself and then creation responds or creation praises God.

First, God reveals himself.

We see this in the first couple of verses, verse three verses here.

He says, the Psalms writes, O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The Lord has made known his salvation.

He has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

God has worked, he's made known, and he has revealed or he has confirmed that his salvation has been seen by the nations, by everyone.

So the first thing that God is revealing about himself is salvation.

The psalmist opens with this call to sing a new song because God's done marvelous things.

And there's a long list of marvelous things that God has done that the psalmist could call our attention to.

God's created the planets and the stars with the word of his power.

He made mountains quake and he gave his people the law and exodus.

He made axe heads float and he brought people back from the dead during the time of Elijah and Elisha.

But out of all of these things, the psalmist chooses God's salvation to describe as marvelous.

Which is right, because providing salvation for his people is the primary way God has chosen to reveal himself.

God has chosen to show us who he is, his character, his heart, by providing salvation for his people.

We see this in the psalm in verse 1, as the psalmist reminds us that it's God, right?

God that has worked his salvation for his people.

And then in verse 2, that in working this salvation for his people, God has made known his salvation.

So he's done it, but then also he has shown it to the world.

Not just his salvation, but he's shown himself to the nations.

And then in verse 3, the psalmist confirms that the nations have indeed seen God's salvation, and therefore they've seen God.

So God's revelation project, God's project about telling the world, the nations about himself, is successful, they have seen him.

So as God works this salvation for his people, it's clear that this is about God, right?

This whole, his saving and working on behalf of his people is about God and the spotlight is on God, especially because Israel did nothing to earn this salvation.

We see this at the beginning of verse three.

He says, he has remembered, he's called to mind his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

God had to call to mind or put to use his steadfast love and faithfulness because Israel had not been steadfast.

They had given their love to idols and had been faithless to God.

Psalms 90 to 98 are the beginning of the book four of the Psalms.

And they were likely written as Israel's coming back from exile.

So the salvation that the Psalmist is talking about here is primarily the salvation from captivity and coming back from the exile that they were in for 70 years.

Israel didn't deserve this mercy, right?

They were in exile in the first place because of their faithlessness.

but God worked it out on their behalf.

And not just for them or on their behalf, but we see at the end of verse three that God has the whole world or the nations in view.

He says, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

It's implied here in three and two, verses three and two, that the public nature of God's salvation is meant to entice the nations to follow this good and gracious God that loves his people and works on behalf of his people.

The nations are to see God's character revealed in how he treats his people and be moved to repent and follow him.

All right, so let's not miss what the psalmist is saying in these first three verses, that God has revealed himself.

The primary way that he has revealed himself is in his salvation for his people, and that all of the nations...

see God, not just that they're meant to see God, but that they actually see God and his salvation as it's worked for his people.

They're all aware of God's goodness and mercy.

But then the psalmist doubles down on this theme as he calls the earth to praise him for what we see of God, like the character and the mercy that is revealed.

and how God treats his people and acts on behalf of his people.

He calls all of the earth, all of creation to praise with him.

First, we see in verses five to six that God's people are called to praise God with not just their voices, but with instruments as well.

We see in verse five, sing praises to the Lord with a lyre, with a lyre and the sound of melody, with trumpets and the sound of a horn.

Make a joyful noise before the Lord.

All right, so Israel was right to praise God with joy because God brought them through the Red Sea, right?

They brought them through the Red Sea, and then we saw 1,000 years later that he brings them back from exile.

But how much more of a reason do we have as God's people here at the church to praise him?

He didn't just bring us back from political exile, but he raised us from the dead spiritually, right?

He didn't just overlook...

our sin to deal with it later, but he atoned for our sin by sending his son to take the punishment we deserve so that we can be born again, new creations.

God has revealed his salvation much more clearly this side of the cross, and prayers ought to be much more joyful.

When I'm preaching from a tablet, I should probably silence my notifications because some of you are on a group chat that I'm on and you're texting one another and I can see that and it's a little distracting.

So Kirk, Kirk who's not with us, stop texting.

All right, anyways, back to the main point.

That's why I was fumbling a little bit there.

Oh, man.

All right.

So smooth.

All right.

So God's revealed his salvation more on this side of the cross.

James Johnson says it a little better than I do.

He says you can't praise God like you should unless you realize that your salvation is his work from beginning to end.

I'll be reading that one more time.

You can't praise God like you should unless you realize that your salvation is his work from beginning to end.

The more you think you have done in your salvation, the less you will praise God for what he has done for you.

You know, seeing the beauty of God's character in his ultimate act of salvation is what drives worship.

Isn't that what Johnson's saying here?

He's saying that the more that you see God's character and his mercy in

and the extent to which he's worked for you, the more you'll be moved to worship.

Jonathan Edwards puts it this way.

He says, worship is not occurred when the external duties are performed of reading, praying, singing, hearing sermons, and the like.

So one, he says, just doing this stuff

isn't worship in and of itself, right?

Just coming to church, doing the things that we do at church.

That's not worship in and of itself.

And most of us would be like, yeah, you got to really feel it, right?

You got to really feel it from the heart.

But then he says, even when zealously engaged in, right?

Even when we feel these things that we're doing from the heart and we've got good vibes, it may not be worship.

But only when our hearts are affected and our love captivated by the free grace of God.

And when the great spiritual, mysterious, and invisible things of the gospel have the weight and power of real things in their hearts.

He's saying true worship, right?

It's possible to come and it's possible to sing and it's possible to read and it's possible to be with God's people and have good vibes, right?

To have good feelings, right?

to be even moved to tears and it not be worship.

He's saying, what is moving you?

Is it the music?

Is it the fact that you're around people when you haven't been around people in a while?

Is it that the fact that the preacher is passionate and he's saying his point with a lot of ethos, right?

And a lot of emotion, right?

If that's all that's moving you, it's not worship.

It's only when the gospel, only when God in the gospel, who's revealed himself in the gospel, is moving you with what he's done and who he is, that you're truly worshiping.

And I think a decent test, not a perfect test, I've asked this often of worship teams that I've led or been involved in, and I'm like, have you ever been moved in your car,

at home, when you've just read the song or called to mind the words of the song or moved to tears by something you read in the scripture, has that ever happened?

I'm not saying that

it has to happen every time.

There are times that, especially when I'm here with you and we're singing, that I'm far more moved than I was rehearsing in my office, right, to come out and lead in worship.

But there ought to be times where the content, the text, right, that drives us and moves us to worship in tears?

Or are you only ever moved when the guitar hits the first chord or the lights get dimmed or when the preacher gets to the climax of the sermon?

Is that the only time you're moved?

Those are meant to help, and they're meant to remind us of how we ought to feel about God and the gospel.

But don't make a mistake that it's God and the gospel that's to drive those feelings.

Another way to put it is if you want more joy in your life, and I do think that dim lights, music, passionate preaching, those types of things will eventually leave you dissatisfied in and of themselves.

That if the content of the gospel is not driving you, that you're going to be dissatisfied with those types of emotional stimulants.

If you want more joy in your life, you need more of God.

Specifically, you need to know more about God.

you need to experience the infinite depths of his salvation, right?

The way he wants you to know him and experience him is through his salvation.

Again, Jonathan Edwards, the enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.

To go to heaven fully to enjoy God is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here.

Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends are but shadows, but God is the substance.

These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun.

These are but streams, but God is the ocean.

So how do we know more of God?

If he's the ocean, if he's the sun, how do we experience more of him?

How do we experience this lasting, all satisfying joy?

Well, he's given us his word, right, by digging through his word.

And he's made his word kind of hard, right, to understand and kind of hard to get to him through.

He wants us to work at knowing him through his word.

So digging through his word to know him and to know more about him, striving more to share more.

of God's holiness, right?

So when I see what God is like, striving to be like him and to imitate those qualities and to keep his commands, killing sin, walking in righteousness, also leaning into God's people, like letting them hear your praise, how God has saved you and is saving you.

and to hear how God has worked in their lives and how he is working salvation for them.

Yes, it's true that we're justified and we've been made right with God, but he's also sanctifying us and making us more and more like him.

But the psalmist, so that's, let the people praise him, right?

Let his people praise him with a lyre, with instruments.

But the psalmist doesn't just want us to hear each other's praises.

He doesn't want us just to hear God's people's praises, but he also draws in and points to and calls nature to praise God publicly.

He says in verses seven to eight, "'Let the sea roar and all that fills it.

"'Let the world and those who dwell in it.

"'Let the rivers clap their hands.

"'Let the hills sing for joy together.'"

This is why everyone, everywhere, all the nations can know that God exists and that he is a merciful savior.

Don't sell general revelation short.

Everyone can know that God exists and they can know deep down that he's good to those who seek him, right?

That he's good and merciful.

The Psalm says back in verse four that all the earth makes a shout in response to God's salvation and that's creation included.

And then here we have the sea roaring, the river clapping, the hills are singing, not just with the sound of music, but rather they're singing in anticipation of his coming in verse nine, right?

Before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

So creation not only communicates that God is powerful and the creator, right?

We look around, somebody had to have made this.

It doesn't just communicate that he's powerful and a creator, but creation also, the psalmist tells us, is communicating that things are not as they should be and there's someone to come restore them or to judge and to bring them back to the way that they should be.

Paul communicates this in Romans 8.

He says, "For the creation waits with eager longing "for the revealing of the sons of God."

That's when Jesus comes and we're all glorified and shown to be new creations in him.

That's what he means by the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Paul says that the brokenness of creation

We know that something's not right with the world.

We know that things are not as they should be.

That brokenness not only communicates that something's not right, but if the world isn't right at this current time, then it must have been right at some time in the past.

And if it was right at some time in the past, then that means that there's a possibility that it could be made right in the future.

That if things are not right, it was right at some point, and there must be the possibility of it being made right in the future.

And Psalms 98 tells us that the beauty and awesome grandeur of the sea and the river is

and the hills are joyfully proclaiming that the judge of the world is coming to make it right, to restore his people and creation to the way that it should be.

So God's people and creation are united in eagerly anticipating his return, right?

God's glory is known throughout the world as he reveals his salvation and his creation praises him.

So the question today and the question after we read Psalm 98 is are you, am I joyfully praising God?

Are you vocally praising him?

The Psalmist calls us to make noise, right?

To sing, to make a melody for the Lord.

Are you talking to others about him?

Are you singing to him privately and corporately here at church?

Are you full of joy?

Sometimes that looks like happiness and obvious joy, a big smile on your face, running around.

Sometimes that looks like sober joy, or as Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 6, sorrowful yet always rejoicing.

Is that you this morning?

Are you a person that joyfully praises God all of the time?

If not, or if not as much as you want to be,

I think there's a number of different reasons for this.

We could get into the physical reasons, especially when we're talking about depression and anxiety.

There can also be relational and psychological reasons.

But I think at least in part, or one of the parts, based on this psalm, is that you may not be seeing, or that you're not seeing, truly seeing and experiencing God and his salvation.

So what's keeping you from seeing God and his salvation clearly and deeply and experiencing God and his salvation?

Well, Psalm 98 tells us that God has revealed himself, right?

We know that he's revealed himself and his salvation to everyone.

And it is seen, he says it's seen by all.

So that if you and I can't see it, truly see it and experience it.

It's not a God problem, right?

It's a you and a me problem.

So what's keeping us from seeing it?

And I think this is where we come back to the idea that none of us say what we really mean.

You might be saying, you know, I want to have joy.

I want to see God.

I want to know him and truly praise him from the heart, but I can't, right?

He's hiding himself from me.

I think he's punishing me for something that I did.

Well, Psalm 98 tells us God's not hiding.

If you want to see God and you can't see him, it's not because he's hiding.

We know he's not punishing you if your faith and hope is in Jesus.

There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

All that he does for you is for your good and your sanctification.

But if we say that we want to see God and we can't see him, what we're left with is that we don't really mean what we're saying.

We mean something else when we say that.

C.S.

Lewis puts it this way in his novel, Till We Have Faces,

The main character is in the process, right in the middle of accusing God of mistreating her.

She's making her argument against the gods, right?

It's a myth retold, so set in like a Greek mythology type thing.

And she's making her case against the gods.

And she says this right in the middle.

To have heard myself making it or making that argument against the gods that it's not fair that she's been mistreated was to be answered.

Lightly men talk of saying what they mean.

Often when he was teaching me to write in Greek, the fox would say, child, to say the very thing you really mean, the whole of it, nothing more or less or other than what you really mean, that's the whole art and joy of words.

A glib saying."

What Lewis is saying,

is that we're all preaching a sermon to ourselves day in and day out from the day that we're born.

We've got an ongoing internal monologue that is what we really mean.

We may be saying on the outside, praise the Lord, but inside we're saying, it's not fair, it's not fair, it's not fair.

Or I deserve better, I deserve better, I deserve better.

Or why them and not me?

Why them and not me?

Why them and not me?

We've all been on that vacation with that person who's been surrounded by beauty, maybe at the beach or something, and a lot of fun with family, and everyone else is having a good time, and they just can't see it.

They're hung up on some nasty comment that somebody made to them or some argument that they were involved in, and they're too blinded by bitterness to see the beauty around them.

That's all of us.

That's all of us.

Until that internal narrative, that internal monologue is rewritten by God and his salvation, there's no chance at real joy that overflows with praise.

Until the I deserve better, I deserve better chant is transformed into better than I deserve, better than I deserve, God has treated me better than I deserve,

You'll never experience his beauty and joy, at least not to the degree that you're meant to experience his beauty and joy.

So if you're not overflowing with joyful praise, if you're not quite saying what you mean yet, that internal sermon has some more transforming to do.

And the way that that internal sermon gets transformed is by the grace of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, but by fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and seeing God and his character and his beauty in his salvation.

So tenaciously fix your eyes on God and his salvation.

In his word, with his people, take knowing him seriously and ask him to show you his glory.

Let's pray.

God, would you show us your glory and your beauty

in your salvation this morning.

Lord, would you help, especially those of us that I know are hurting, struggling with feelings of depression, anxiety.

Lord, I pray, I know there's no easy way,

silver bullet, just do this and you'll go home feeling better, fixed to this.

But Lord, I pray that you would overcome maybe even some of the physical elements, but especially the spiritual and the psychological elements, Lord, today by your glory, your power, and by the power of your spirit.

Lord, I pray that as we together

gaze upon your beauty and the power of your salvation.

Lord, that you would, again, humble us beneath your word.

Lord, that you would help us to entrust ourselves to the judge of all the earth, knowing that you have declared us righteous in Jesus because of his work and not ours.

Lord, and that you are for us and not against us.

Lord, that if you didn't spare your own son,

that with him you will also graciously give us all things.

And Lord, I pray that you would work that in deep today.

Lord, that we would not only know it on the surface, but at the very core of who we are.

Lord, that...

all the way down to that repeating monologue sermon that we preach to ourselves, Lord, that you would transform us from the inside out.

We know only you can do this.

We know that your salvation wasn't just that Jesus died on the cross, Lord, but you have applied that to us through your Holy Spirit.

Lord, and that you have transformed us from the inside out.

And Lord, I pray that you would bring that about a little bit more fully today.

And Lord, as we gaze upon your beauty, as we reflect on who you are together, we can't help but praise and shout for joy at who you are and what you've done.

You're a God that works for your people, that loves to work for your people, that has carried us from birth.

Lord, that has, will see us to the end and not just our end here, but even to when the world is remade and when there's a new heavens and a new earth and we'll dwell with you forever.

Lord, you're a great and an awesome God.

We give you all the praise.

Pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.