



THE WORD FOR TODAY

Psalm 103, 1-8

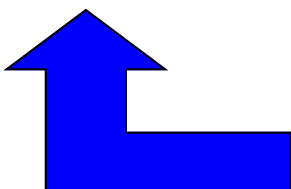
“Praise the Lord, O my soul”

This Psalm is one of the many written by David, the shepherd boy chosen by God to become Israel’s King, and the ancestor of the Messiah, Jesus. David’s life wasn’t straightforward—on his path to being King he was often in danger, for example—and he wasn’t a perfect human being. As a result we have psalms for many different circumstances.

One thing David knew how to do was praise God. When the Ark returned to Jerusalem David celebrated by throwing off his King’s robes and dancing before the Lord. His wife Michal mocked him for being vulgar and un-kinglike, but he was praising God with his whole heart and setting an example for his people. We should not forget what God is like, and what he gives us, and that should make us want to praise him—that’s the message of this psalm!



Follow the words of this passage round the church, beginning on the north wall of this little building, the Offering House. We are using the New International Version of the Bible, which you can find on the internet under Bible Gateway, and the whole “Word for Today” is on the church website, which is www.libertonkirk.net You can also find meditations and prayers on other Bible passages there in previous “Words for Today”.



Turn immediately left to find the first verses of the Bible passage on the bench

***“Praise the Lord, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits”***

1



These verses call us to praise the Lord wholeheartedly. This is not just a token “Praise the Lord!” It has to come from deep within. The way we express it is up to us. God knows the depth of feeling behind it, whether we choose to dance or sing or simply offer up a quiet prayer.

In Psalm 40 we read *“Burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. . . . Then I said . . . ‘I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”* It is not some big show or sacrifices God is looking for: God is hoping for our hearts, freely offered in his praise.

***Lord, we praise you for who you are and all that you give us.
May our praise not be superficial,
but an outpouring of our love for you from our hearts.***

(Station 2 is on the East side of the church building)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“ . . . who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,”*

2

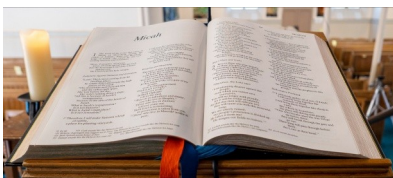


David had cause to seek God’s forgiveness during his life, and knew how God could bring freedom from guilt to repentant lives and heal damaged souls. Long after David, Jesus came to show us the extent of God’s love when he paid the price for our sins with his death on the cross. His rising again confirmed our sure hope of forgiveness and eternal life.

We know that in that life all disease and disability will be no more. In this present life we know that prayer can bring healing of physical, mental and spiritual ailments. Some of this healing may be miraculous, some perhaps not what we are hoping for, but healing and peace deep within will be provided, of that we can be sure.

*Lord, thank you for Jesus’ death on the cross
and for the promise of forgiveness this brings.
Reach out to me with your healing touch—make me whole and at peace.*

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church building)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“ . . . who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion, . . . ”*

3

What drama! But today we have Jesus to show us what God is like, and knowing Jesus does indeed make a dramatic difference! Inviting Jesus into our lives is to invite a radical transformation—death into life, bottomless pit to sunlit mountain top. Jesus really does make that much of a difference. David had no knowledge of Jesus but had nevertheless worked out for himself that being close to God was a transformational experience. He had experienced personally what God could do—he had known danger, despair, and realisation of his own failings, and yet he had become an outstanding King and leader of his people and had enjoyed many blessings in his life. He knew that he had God to praise and thank for that.



*Lord Jesus, come into my life and transform it.
Make me a different person knowing your love and compassion.
Help me to show that love and compassion to others.*

(Walk along the back of the church and turn right to find No. 4 on the prayer bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“ . . . who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”*

4



As we get older we may well have a few new joints from the N.H.S. but in general we know our bodies and minds are in decline! This is a natural process. We do though have the other dimension which is more difficult to define—our spirit—which need not decline.

The phrase “Be careful what you wish for” is so applicable to our prayers! We should remember that God knows what we need and what is good for us, and will give us good and life-nourishing things. However old we are, in God’s care all of us can soar with the eagles.

*Lord, help me when I pray to ask for the right things
and to know that you act for my good at all times.
Come into my life and renew my spirit, I pray.*

(No. 5 is on the West side of the church before you come to the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“ The Lord works righteousness and justice
for all the oppressed.”***

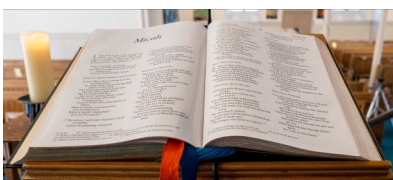
5



There are so many oppressed people in the world today, and so much unfairness and inequality, that we can wonder where God is in all this. The answer is that he is here—God wants justice and right to prevail, and his ways would bring this about. Human beings, however, can be selfish, and can seek after power and status and trample on others in the process. We need strong opposition to the way things are going and better leadership. What can we do? We can let our voices be heard. We can call out injustices and oppression for what they are. And, most powerful of all, we can pray to the God who listens and acts.

***Loving God, we pray for justice for all the oppressed people in the world.
We pray that you would strengthen and comfort them.
We pray for courage to stand up against oppression.***

(Walk towards the front of the church and find No. 6 near the cairn)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

***“He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:”***

6



For centuries before David, and many more since then, God has given guidance to people who listen to his voice. What he can do is plain to see for people whose eyes are open to it. The key is surely to open our ears and eyes—to take time to listen and look—to draw close to God in our everyday lives by setting aside time for him.

God does not change. God does not disappear. We are the ones who neglect him, or take him for granted, or forget him altogether. He is there for those who are there for him! What he brings is not just guidance and reassurance, but constant ever-present love and grace.

***Lord, thank you that you are unchangeable.
Help me to listen for your voice and look for your presence.
Draw me closer to you day by day, I pray.***

(Walk to the front of the church and find No. 7 on one of the benches)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

*“The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.”*

7

What an accolade it would be if someone described us as all these things! Oh that we could look at world leaders and say they had compassion and grace! It's in short supply these days. Oh that angry people could just think first and slow down before acting! Oh that love would be something that all human beings wanted to show for other human beings!

How blessed we are to have a Father God who is all of these things. Someone we can rely on, someone we can turn to when life is difficult or when we have made a mess of things. His love is boundless!



*Loving Lord, how can we thank you for being
compassionate, gracious, slow to anger and loving?
Only by trying to show those same qualities in our own lives.
Help us Lord, to become more like you day by day.*

If anything you have read has prompted questions you would like to discuss, please contact John Young on 664 3067 or jyoung@churchofscotland.org.uk



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