

**Introduction:** The psalms provide great encouragement. They reassure us of God's might & goodness, of His watchfulness & care. They also enable us to take stock & to see beyond our present circumstances.

PSALM 92 is a very reflective & expressive psalm which fuels worship, possibly written by David. It is song designed for use on the Sabbath: to help us pause & refocus our attention on God's greatness & to encourage ongoing faith in Him. It urges us to take time out to think about the things that really matter & to concentrate on God & our relationship with Him. This is a song of praise & commentators have stressed that it celebrates God's works of creation, providence & redemption. It also declares His overarching wisdom & points us afresh to His lovingkindness. It admires His unique attributes & His unequalled achievements.

Praising God essentially means magnifying His Name, paying tribute to His character & boasting of His wonders. Various key aspects of praise are covered in Psalm 92: admiration/ proclamation/ celebration/ contemplation/ appreciation/ thanksgiving/ trust/ testimony. God is worthy of all these expressions of praise on our part. The clear implication is that we will offer this praise in a communal context as we join with God's people. It is obvious that the psalmist is composing this song not just for personal devotion but also for corporate worship in God's house. It is this latter dimension that we have so missed over the past 10 months. Singing God's praises together is so integral to the Christian faith & to our church life!

### **V1 It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High**

Praise is crucially important & right from the start the psalm urges us to give priority to praise. It begins by emphasizing that we have good reason to honour God & to employ music to convey our delight in Him. Praise shapes our whole outlook by lifting our gaze to the Most High. Praise is good & fitting for gives God the glory & it releases us from despair. It promotes Sabbath-rest by reminding us of God's power, protection & provision & by reinforcing our reliance Him for the future. As we adore Him our souls are restored.

### **Vs2&3 proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp**

We have a framework here for daily praise: an encouragement to dwell on God's love as we launch into the new day & a reminder to recount God's faithfulness at the end of each day. We should seek to proclaim our confidence in God's love & faithfulness & to share this confidence with others too. Singing & musical accompaniment are wonderful vehicles for doing so, aspects promoted so effectively by David in his psalms. God's glory & His help & deliverance are in view throughout this psalm & give constant impetus to praise.

### **Vs4&5 For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. How great are your works, Lord, how profound your thoughts!**

We have solid grounds for worshipping God enthusiastically & joyfully! The psalmist bursts into song because of all that God has done. His personal experience & his wider reflections on God's nature & accomplishments have given him cause for encouragement, happiness & praise. As he ponders God's tremendous works & God's profound thoughts, his emotions are stirred & his convictions deepened. A sense of gladness sweeps over him & an irrepressible desire to sing out God's praises lifts his spirit. True praise is a deeply moving experience & it is always anchored in the truth of who God is & in our awe of His magnificent deeds.

### **Vs6&7 Senseless people do not know, fools do not understand, that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be destroyed forever.**

The psalmist's thoughts turn to those who choose not to praise God. He mentions at least 4 categories of people: senseless fools, wicked evildoers, God's enemies & his own adversaries (also referred to as his wicked foes). Some are spiritually blind & some deliberately reject God's standards & some are blatantly opposed to God & His servants. Whilst paradoxically the unrighteous & the ungodly might seem to prosper, divine judgment awaits them. Their days are numbered. It is impossible to succeed in dismissing or opposing God & He holds all accountable.

**Vs8-11 But you, Lord, are forever exalted. For surely your enemies, Lord, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered. You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured on me. My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries; my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.**

Ultimately God & His servants will be vindicated & will be triumphant. God is enthroned for ever – His detractors & His enemies can never undermine His glory or succeed in thwarting His eternal purposes. The routing & destruction of those who oppose Him & His people is vividly described. The psalmist is very conscious of being strengthened, shielded & anointed by God. There are echoes here of Psalm 23 & of the way in which God delivers those who honour Him as Shepherd & lavishes His kindness on them. In a manner that must be truly galling to their adversaries, God openly displays His favour towards His servants & may permit them to witness the demise of their foes. As Christians we know that victory over Satan & his minions has been secured by Christ – He triumphed over them by His cross & their total & final defeat is assured.

**Vs 12-15 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, “The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.”**

The blessings & the testimonies of the righteous are set out in these very encouraging verses. We have a place in God’s house & a permanent home in His courts. Unlike the short-lived, self-centred & evil flourishing of the wicked, the righteous will keep on thriving in a manner that is pleasing to God & that bears fruit for His Kingdom. They will be renewed daily, being sustained & nourished by God to the end of their days, however long that might be. They will flourish like a tall & attractive palm tree & like a stately & long-living cedar of Lebanon. Their testimony will be radiant & impressive: they will declare the greatness of God. They will speak of having proved His utter reliability, constant protection & sheer goodness!

**Concluding Remarks:** This psalm communicates great reassurances & conveys an overwhelming sense of gratitude. It reminds us of the worthiness & generosity of God – it is always appropriate & beneficial to rejoice in Him & we are given solid grounds for exuberant praise. God has revealed His glory, His love & His faithfulness. In the beauty of creation & in the tenderness of His dealings with us we have abundant evidence of His power & His covenant commitment. His saving grace & His lavish promises, most fully expressed in the ministry of Jesus Christ on our behalf, underline His desire for our eternal happiness. What a thrill to know God, to depend on Him & to walk with Him! As we read the Scriptures, as we reflect on the wonder of the cross, as we experience a living relationship with God & as we enjoy fellowship with each other, our worship is constantly resourced & replenished.

Praise transforms our whole state of mind! As we focus on God & enjoy Him, as we ascribe Him honour & acknowledge His glory we are released from fear & despair. Praise lifts us above the anxieties & foes that menace us. God’s enemies & our adversaries may appear at times to be holding sway but the triumphant message of this psalm is that God will frustrate their perverse strategies & sweep them away. There is an overriding acknowledgement & reassurance here that God remains supreme: His power & majesty never wane & His holiness & lovingkindness never alter. We can put our total confidence in Him for the future!

On this Sunday let us blend our hallelujahs with the praises of the heavenly multitude as together we declare (in the words of Revelation chapter 7):

*‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne & to the Lamb’*

*‘Amen! Praise & glory & wisdom & thanks & honour & power & strength  
Be to our God for ever & ever. Amen!’*