

Psalm 9

Concerning the Death of the Son

Do you have any reason to praise the LORD this morning? Through the Psalms we get to see one of the greatest disciplines in the Christian life - praising no matter what. This discipline is detailed for us in the Psalms and prescribed for us in the rest of the text in passages like 1 Thessalonians where the Apostle Paul says, *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Then James, the brother of Jesus, says, *Count it all joy brethren, when you meet trials of various kinds...* (James 1:2). You mean that we are to rejoice in the LORD no matter the circumstance? Think about how the Psalms answer this question. In the Psalms there is often great trouble but overcoming the trouble is the sovereign, all ruling grace of God. The New Testament then reads this and continues to say what God has always said - no matter what, trust in God! Haven't we seen this over the past few weeks in our study? There has been great despair but greater praise. Real trouble but awesome salvation.

Today's Psalm is really no different other than the fact that it comes on the heels of a declaration of the majesty of God in Psalm 8. What reason do we have to praise the LORD even in the midst of difficult circumstances? Well, put simply we have seen the majesty of God demonstrated towards us in that while we were sinners and far from God the Son was sent to save us who were lost. What is the reason to praise? Really one reason that gives us every reason - Jesus.

READ TEXT

Some of you maybe scratching your heads and wondering what Psalm 9 has to do with Jesus. I am so glad that we get to explore this together. Remember what is undergirding the way that we Scripture - the way that Jesus read Scripture. After the resurrection, when Jesus appeared to the disciples, *He said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'* Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures... (Luke 24:44-45).

There is a hope that is rising from every page the Psalms, and even here, as the Psalmist is recalling the wonderful deeds of the LORD, we understand the hope that we are to have is the hope set out for us in Psalms 1 and 2 - a mighty King coming and bringing salvation. And it is this King that Psalm 9 is proclaiming.

Psalm 9 and 10 have been combined in the LXX (Septuagint) and Vulgate. But there are enough reasons to keep them separate even though they are both closely related. The title of Psalm 9 can't be seen by us because we are reading English and for whatever reason the ESV decided to not maintain the Hebrew Title. (For those of you preparing for ministry out there this sermon is a testimony to not neglect the study of the text in the original languages). In the Hebrew the title of the Psalm is "Concerning the Death of the Son."

The question then comes to our minds - which son are we talking about? Remember where we have been since Psalm 3. David has been fleeing Absalom and we have been walking with David through his anguish all the way from Psalm 3 through Psalm 7. Psalm 8 is an anchor in a sea of chaos to keep our gaze on the indescribable and undeniable majesty of God as well as set our focus back on the messages of the Psalms. Remember the Psalms are telling a story of the universal reign of God the King.

Then in Psalm 9 we are preparing to read about the "Death of the Son". We know from the story of 2 Samuel that the story of Absalom ends with him having his head caught in a tree and General Joab thrusting three javelins in his heart, killing both the enemy and son of David. The head of the enemy was caught and his heart was crushed.

But the Psalms are not just recalling history, the Psalms are telling His story and we have every reason to suggest that the death the son of Psalm 9 is the death of the son of Psalm 8 and Psalm 2 - the death of the Messiah King. Remember Psalm 2:12, *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry with you and you perish on the way...* and Psalm 8:4, *What is man that you are mindful of him, and the Son of man that you care for him?* We are meant to ask who is the Son? We were left wondering until in the fullness of time God sent his Son born of a woman, born under the Law so that we could become sons. Since Christ has come we know the answer.

Let me show you something. Let's hold our place in Psalm 9 and flip over to Hebrews 1 and 2. When we get over there I want us to see if we recognize anything. - Hebrews 1:1-2 - recalls the promise

- Hebrews 1:3ff - Shows us the majesty of God
- Hebrews 2:5-9 - Quotes Psalm 8, but look at what happens next. 2:9 tells the story of the how the Son received glory and honor - death! We go to Psalm 8 and then come to Psalm 9 and discover that Psalm 9's title is "Concerning the Death of the Son."

There may be some of you that are still not convinced. You say, "What does the death of Absalom, the enemy of David, the face of wickedness, have to do with Jesus? Jesus, he who knew no sin,

became sin, so that we who knew sin could become the righteousness of God. Jesus took on our wickedness and bore his own wrath and overcame his own wrath with life and love. As Hebrews 2:9 tells us it was through his death that he was crowned with glory and honor. Jesus says the same thing in Matthew 28:18 when he said, *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* And Paul says the same in Philippians 2:8-9, *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name....*

So, let's go through Psalm 9 with this in mind and learn our highest reason to praise - Concerning the Death of the Son. We say "concerning" because death is a major part of the story but not the whole story. By the way, doesn't the story of Jesus fit perfectly with the Psalms? What looked like utter defeat - the King on the Cross - turned out to be the greatest triumph - up from the grave he arose with a mighty triumph over his foes. He arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lives forever, with his saints to reign.

1. The Lord Has Personally Saved Us (1-2)

The opening of this Psalm sounds like the end of Psalm 7. There are two reasons that these verses give us to praise: The LORD's person and his *Wonderful deeds*. This follows perfectly after Psalm 8 where we learn of the wonderful deeds of God in creation as well as his personal involvement in creation. We learned from Psalm 8 that this God who created the heavens with the work of his fingers is mindful of man.

Look at the way the Psalmist chooses to praise the LORD. The Psalmist chooses to praise the LORD with a *whole heart*. This is what the LORD requires from his people. Remember the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4, *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* We are taught the way to fulfill the Shema is by having our current dead heart of stone removed and replaced with a heart of flesh by redemption. Only a heart made alive can praise and only the Creator can take a dead heart and make it beat again to a song of praise.

Because he has done this, we are acquainted with him. Look at verse 2, after recounting his wonderful deeds, the deeds fall flat in comparison with him. *I will be glad and exult **in you**; I will sing praises **to your name, O Most High**.* He has personally created us, he has personally saved us, we know Him because he has chosen to make himself known to us.

Think about this: When he created, how did he create? Was it through angels or some force? God created through the Son. *All things were made through him, and without him was not anything that was made* (John 1:3). When He redeemed us he did not send anyone other than himself in the person of the Son. John 1:14 tells us that this same Word who was in the beginning who was both with God and God, who created all things, who was the life of men, *became flesh and dwelt among us*. It is through the Son who came to us revealing God to us that we can *be glad and exult in Him*. It is through the Son that we can *sing praises to His name*. And because of the Son we know God as *Most High*.

This is the foundation of our lives. Look at the tense of the verbs: *I will give thanks, I will recount, I will be glad, I will sing....* Our life is built on what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. Because of who he is and how he has personally saved us, our lives are built on a solid rock to weather any storm. Anything else is nothing but sinking sand.

2. We Have Absolute Confidence in Him (3-12)

It is his presence that makes the enemies perish. What does this mean? It means that our salvation is not through some ascent to some higher way of thinking, our salvation comes from the LORD himself. This is what we know: *If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* (Romans 8:32)

Look at these tenses again in these verses. *You have...* These are prophetic perfects. The Psalmist is looking into the future and describing these events as if they have already happened. How can we have such confidence?

God has personally saved us.

Last week I just buried one of my best friends. A man, 51 years old, lost his battle with ALS. He was given a heartbreaking, grim diagnosis, and all through his illness he never lost hope. He constantly had a smile on his face. When you called his phone the song that would be playing in your ear as you waited for an answer from this wheelchair bound man was the song, *I Will Rise* by Chris Tomlin. Listen to the first line:

There is a peace I've come to know though my heart and flesh may fail. There's an anchor for my soul, I can say, it is well. Jesus has overcome and the grave is overwhelmed. The victory is won, He is risen from the dead. I will rise when he calls my name, no more sorrow, no more pain. I will rise on

eagle's wings, before my God fall on my knees, and rise. You know what that song is about? The hope of the resurrection.

Because he has come it means he will come, because he has risen from the dead it means that we who die will rise from the dead. We can have absolute confidence in him because he has paved the way for us in creation, in redemption, and we long for the day when our faith will be sight.

But how do we long for this? How do we long for something that we can't see? Psalm 9 teaches us.

3. We Show Confidence Through Steadfast Devotion (13-20)

After all of this expectation what do we see the Psalm returning to? Look at verse 13. What is the Psalmist doing? Praying. Listen to Chrysostom:

“See him given constantly to prayer: though freed from troubles and made secure, he does not cease from praying again in the words ‘have pity on me’ and implores God for future benefits. You see, we always stand in need of God’s providence, but especially at a time of freedom from troubles. I mean, another battle follows that is more difficult than the former, that against indifference and obtuseness; then it is that the devil comes panting more aggressively. And so it is especially after being freed from troubles that we have need of that grace so as to cope with good times more easily.” (ACC, VII, 82)

What’s he doing? Anchoring his soul on the rock of his salvation. This is what we must do. What we must constantly do.

But look at the confidence in his prayer. He prays in the shadows of the majesty of God (Psalm 8). It is only after we see the majesty of God that we know how to live. God’s great acts of creation, redemption, and restoration leads to our confident praying, leads to us desiring to fill our lives with nothing but devotion to him.

This is why we let the nations know. This is the song that we sing: Because the sinless savior died, our sinful souls have been counted free. Remember the song at the end of the age? Revelation 5:12, *Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.* This our reason to praise - Concerning the Death of the Son. You are joined to sing our song, concerning the death of the Son, because through the death of the Son we live.

Without the Son you have no hope. With him you have nothing but hope. Do you have him? Does he have you?