

Aug 7 At the heart of all work

Psalm 92

*“Accompanied by dulcimer and harp, the full-bodied music of strings. You made me so happy, God. I saw your work and I shouted for joy.” 92:3-4*

David’s first job as king was making music, attempting to re-establish the divine order in Saul’s disordered mind and emotions. Establishing order in the midst of chaos is basic to kingwork. Music is probably our most elemental experience of this essential work.

Music, bringing rhythm and harmony and tunefulness into being, is at the heart of all work. Kingworkers, whatever their jobs, whistle while they work.

Eugene Peterson, *Living the Message*, p. 319.

Aug 8 Our God Reigns!

Psalm 93

*“Your statutes stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days, O Lord.” 93:5*

The psalm bears witness to the richness of the doctrine of God the Creator in the Old Testament. In the structure of the psalm we note that vv. 1, 3, 4 describe situations, while vv. 2 and 5 record testimonies. It is as God’s people dwell on the basic truths about Him that they are drawn out in devotion and dedication. The stability of the created order depends on the unseen power and strength of its ruling God. The unseen power of God is made known to the people of God through faith, for it is “by faith” that “we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” (Hebrews 11:3) and that what is seen is also maintained by what is invisible, the everlasting God. Since the Lord rules over all, we acknowledge that He rules us also. His decrees, that which He has testified to be what He requires of us, are firm, i.e. to be relied upon as correctly stating His will and correctly outlining His rules for us; and His basic requirement of those admitted to the fellowship of His house is holiness, a requirement He will never relax but which will stand for endless days.

Aug 9 Hope in waiting

Psalm 94

*“Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law; you grant him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. For the Lord will not reject His people, He will never forsake His inheritance. Judgment will again be founded on righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it.” 94:12-15.*

The theme of this psalm is the age-old problem of reconciling what happens in the world with the goodness and power of God. Primarily this psalm expresses the immediate reaction of the natural man to the affirmation of faith in Psalm 93. It is the challenge of harsh realism to the confidence of heartfelt trust. However, in the time of trouble the godly man always has God and hope. For blessed is he whom God teaches by imposing a discipline upon him (Psalm 119:71, Hebrews 12:5-9) and instructing him in the law of the Lord, i.e. in the nature and meaning of the divine self-revelation. That man is given peace of heart and mind, he is at rest inwardly even in times of adversity, which will continue until the full and final judgment of the wicked is effected. That ultimate action is inevitable, and equally sure is the faithfulness of the Lord to His chosen people.

Aug 10 Let us Pray

Psalm 95

*“So come, let us worship” bow before him, on your knees before God, who made us! Oh yes, he’s our God, and we’re the people he pastures, the flock he feeds.” 95: 6-7*

We commonly think of prayer as what we do out of our own needs and on our own initiative. We experience a deep longing for God, and so we pray. We feel an artesian gush of gratitude to God, and so we pray. We are crushed with a truckload of guilt before God, and so we pray. But in a liturgy we do not take the initiative; it is not our experience that precipitates prayer. Someone stands in front of us and says, “Let us pray.” We don’t start it; someone else starts it, and we fall into step behind or alongside. Our egos are no longer front and center.

Aug 11 The Universal King

Psalm 96

*“Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns.’ The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.” 96:9-10*

This psalm shows the extent to which a missionary universalism had entered Old Testament thought. All the earth and all peoples are summoned into the church. In the first movement of the thought the emphasis is that this universal message centers upon the name or character of God as revealed to Israel, and the supernatural marvelous works He has done for them. The second movement exposes the unreality of other gods. The third movement summons all peoples to praise, offering, prayer, opening full membership of God’s people to them through the sacrificial offerings. The fourth movement declares the kingship of the Lord over all mankind. It is only in Him that the world becomes stabilized. The cry of acclamation that the Lord is become King echoes against the background of His creation of the world out of chaos. The psalm concludes with Messianic anticipations that when the Lord completely reigns, the world will for the first time have an utterly righteous government, and be blessed in the knowledge of the truth.

Aug 12 The characteristics of the rule of the Lord.

Psalm 97

*“Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for He guards the lives of His faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light is shed upon the righteous and joy on the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous, and praise His Holy name.” 97:10-12*

The rule of the Lord is marked by morality, for while much about God remains hidden, as with clouds and thick darkness he conceals His blazing glory, He has revealed the principles of righteousness and the decisions and acts of justice on which His government rests. Righteousness is holiness in action, and justice is righteousness applied to specific cases. God’s moral nature is not passive, but is a fire of holiness. The rule of God is also marked by universality whereby His world-wide, intense power is made known by means of general revelation. Also, He is to be adored as the only God. In response to the divine rule, all His chosen people are required to model their lives on His known moral

requirements, and to adore Him as the sole object of their religious devotion, for “the sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods.”(Psalm 16: 4)

Aug 13 All the ends of the earth have seen

Psalm 98

*“The Lord has made His salvation known and revealed His righteousness to the nations. He has remembered His love and His faithfulness to the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” 98:2-3*

This psalm is obviously suited to the Feast of Tabernacles, the paramount feast of Kingship. Rooted in the Exodus-events (Leviticus 23:42ff), Israel could recall annually their divine salvation, accomplished before the eyes of the world. In the light of God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3), God’s saving acts were world-wide. Hence there is a summon to rejoice: to God’s people (1-3) who ever find something new as they contemplate His salvation and are stirred to new songs of praise; to the whole earth (4-6), to hail the Lord’s universal Kingship; and to all nature (7-9)-even to His traditional foes, the floods- to greet Him as He comes to rule.