

Trusting God in Every Moment

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. Can I just add my welcome to you all. Yeah, I'm JT. I'm one of the elders here. I've got the privilege of being able to take us through this psalm this morning. We are in a summer series in the Psalms. We've had a couple so far in what is called Book Two of the Psalms.

That may not mean anything to you, but that starts in Psalm 42. You know, it's great to be in the Psalms. The Psalms is a wonderful book. If you don't know much about it, or it's always good to remind ourselves, it is the longest book of the Bible.

It's got 150 chapters in it. You know, there's multiple ways of splitting the Psalms up or looking at them, but a simple way of doing it is that there's two types of Psalm. There are laments and there are praise.

A lament is an appropriate response to the evil in the world. And we've seen that over the last couple of weeks. And then there are Psalms of praise. Celebrating what is good in the world. Thanking God for what he has done. The Psalms, it's sometimes described as the prayer book of God's people. Who are waiting for the messianic kingdom to come.

[1 : 1 3] That's a bit of a complicated sentence. But what it's saying is that it's for God's people who are waiting for the Messiah, the promised one, to come. For his kingdom to come.

And for the people writing this Psalm, for the people, the initial readers of this Psalm, they are waiting for the promised Messiah. But for us, in the privileged position we're in, we look back, we know that the Lord Jesus has come.

The Messiah has come. But as we read it, we still are looking forward to that messianic kingdom. When the Lord Jesus will return and that perfect kingdom of heaven will come into place.

And so we have Psalm 44. And thank you, Rachel, for reading that so well to us. Psalm 44, it is a national lament. We see that plural language.

I hope you picked that up as we read through that. We see a nation that is in complete distress. And you maybe have a heading in your Bible.

[2 : 1 5] Please, if you do have a Bible, please keep it open in front of you. There's plenty of pew Bibles about. It's page 568 if you have one of them. Please do have your head in the Bible this morning.

But you might have a little inscription and it says, For the director of music of the sons of Korah, Amaskal. Now, the sons of Korah, we don't entirely know what that means.

There's 11 psalms called the same thing with the same inscription. But we do know that Amaskal, it's an instruction. And it means that this psalm is to be contemplated for wisdom.

So my prayer is that by the end of this morning, we have done just that. The psalms are sometimes called a mirror to the soul.

A mirror to the soul. We've really seen that over the last couple of weeks. We've been considering, why are you cast down, O my soul? The end of chapter 43 says, Why are you in turmoil within me?

[3 : 1 8] Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. So that's the psalms.

And to get us thinking, Corrie, I'm glad she's come back in and managed to get Maggie settled in the back. Because we have a running joke that we see things as we're walking around, driving around, and we say, You know what? There's a sermon in there somewhere.

I don't think this is working. If you could just move on, please, Deb. And we saw this the other day. We were driving. It'll definitely not be working now. We were driving up north.

I think it was to the weekend away. And we went through the bit on the road. And there's the roadworks. And they often have this because they don't want you to break down and block up the road. Okay? So it says, Free recovery.

Await. Rescue. Rescue. We know we all face periods in life that we all have, that there'll be difficulties. And if we're driving, we may break down.

[4 : 18] But do we trust this? Do we think that this is actually going to happen? It's just a sign. Someone's plonked it there, put down some cones and some sandbags and driven off. How much faith do we have in this rescue system?

You know, we once had a driver at work, a van driver, and the van broke down. And we phoned the RAC or the whatever, AA, whatever it is. And they said, yeah, no problem.

We'll be there in 11 hours. What a system that is for recovery. But you know, there's some good examples of recovery when people find themselves in difficult situations.

You might recognize these two. We have the Chilean miners. Remember that story? An amazing story. The Chilean miners, I think it was 69 days, they were stuck underground in a mineshaft.

What a position of difficulty to be in. But you know what? They were rescued eventually. What an amazing story. Well, the other one, you might not make that out, but that is the football team from Thailand.

[5 : 22] And they went down this cave system, miles underground, the waters raised up, and they were stuck. And these divers flew from all over the world, and they came, and they managed to save every one of them.

Quite a remarkable story of rescue. You know, in times of difficulty, we do need to look for help. But where do we look? Well, this morning, we'll see that the people here, well, they trust in the Lord, even in their difficult times in life.

Why do they do so? Well, because he has been faithful. He will be faithful. And because he is, by definition, by character, faithful.

The Lord is faithful. So we're going to look at it in three sections. We have the past. We see God's care and provision in verses 1 to 8.

We have the present. We see suffering and struggles in verse 9 to 22. And then we have the future, our cry, and his faithfulness in verse 23 to 26.

[6 : 33] So let's start with the past, God's care and provision. So we have this faithful passing on, first of all, of what God has done for the people of Israel.

Look down in verse 1. It says this, We have heard it with our ears, O God. Our ancestors have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago.

With your hand you drove out the nations and planted our ancestors. You crushed the peoples and made our ancestors flourish. So we see this faithful passing on.

The people writing this psalm, they have heard from the previous generations. It has been passed down just what God has done for them in times gone by. And as Peter mentioned this morning, actually, that there is many situations in the Bible where people are instructed to pass on the good that God has done for them.

In Exodus chapter 10, verse 2, Moses, when the plagues are going on, Moses is instructed by God to pass on to your grandson and your grandchildren all that God has done and that you have seen.

[7 : 50] And in Deuteronomy 6, the people of Israel are instructed to pass on the goodness of God from generation to generation. And they are remembering times that God drove out the nations, planted their ancestors, crushed the peoples and made the ancestors flourish.

You know, potentially they're talking about the promised land, the land of Canaan. And if we know that story, then the people of Israel, they were taken out of Egypt and eventually they ended up in the promised land, in their own glorious land.

But they admit in verse 3 that it was all God's work. It was not by their sword, the ancestors' sword, that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory.

It was your right hand, it was your arm, and the light of your face, for you love them. Referring to God, of course. It was all God's hand.

It was all his work. I know they would have been thinking about specific examples, but some that came to me. Jericho again this morning was mentioned. What did the Israelites do at Jericho?

[8 : 57] Well, they marched round the city. I don't know what general would put that into a battle plan, but most of the time that wouldn't work, would it? But God said to them to do so. They followed his instruction and the walls fell down.

God gave that city, that mighty city, into their hands. It was all God. Or Gideon. Gideon, with 300 men, conquered the mighty Midianite army.

Why? Not because of their might. Because of God's might. And it gets personal. Verse 4. The writers here, they say, You are my king and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob. Through you, we push back our enemies. Through your name, we trample our foes. I put no trust in my bow. My sword does not bring me victory.

God is still the one who brings victory to the people here. And they have such faith in him. We see that you language there. And they admit in verse 6, that it is not of themselves.

[10:03] They are bows. They are swords. They are useless if God is not with them. They trust in God, not their earthly might.

David and Goliath. You know, David and Goliath. We are really doing a tour of the Old Testament this morning. But David and Goliath. David volunteered to fight this mighty warrior, giant Goliath. And the people, they wanted to put on the king's armor. You know, all these mighty things. This will help you. But in the end, David goes, no. I trust in my sling, yes. My stone, yes.

But I trust in my God. He has brought me to this place. And he will take me on. And so praise is inevitable. Having gone through all this, in verse 8, they say, In God we make our boast all day long.

And we will praise your name forever. Praise is inevitable when we look back on what God has done. And hymns, they pour out praise.

[11:09] And you know, the hymns this morning, it's been lovely just to praise God when we think about what he has done. Look at what God has done. He is worthy of all praise forever, as the end of verse 8 says.

And as it says there, In God we make our boast all day long. It's the only thing we can boast in. The hymn writer says, I will not boast in anything.

No gifts, no power, no wisdom. But I will boast in Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection. And you know, this was for the people writing it, for the people hearing it for the first time.

But as we hear it this morning, these things are true for us as well. If we are Christians and Christ has died for us, we've sung and thought about that already this morning. We look back and we remember, it was all him.

It wasn't us. It was his mighty work. The Lord Jesus completed the work. Is that you this morning?

[12:21] Do you have that saving faith in the Lord Jesus? That is the most important question you'll ever get asked in life, that you will ever respond to. The mighty Messiah who was promised, he came as a baby.

We know that from what we remember at Christmastime. He was fully God and yet fully man. And he lived that life. And through his three years of ministry, he claimed to be God.

He claimed to be that mighty savior. And he backed it up by his miracles, these things that no one else could do. He proved that he was who he said he was.

And unlike us, he lived that perfect life. He never messed up. We have all messed up. He went all the way to the cross. He allowed himself to be killed.

He allowed himself to be put there on that cross. And during those three hours of darkness, he faced separation from God the Father. That separation that we deserve because of our sin, the sin that puts that wedge between us and God.

[13:29] It causes a divide. But the Lord Jesus, he took that upon himself, undeservedly. So that if we trust in him, then we can have our sins forgiven.

And he proved that the work was finished by, yes, he died. That blood poured from him and water poured from his side. But he rose again, witnessing to many that he was alive again, and then ascended to the right hand of God on high in glory, in his glorious place that he deserves.

If we're a Christian this morning, then we can, and we should boast in Christ. We have the best news.

Is it good news? Is it bad news? Well, I'll tell you what, it's over there. It's on the high street. I'll tell you that for free. It is the best news that we have. So we can, and we should boast in Christ's death and resurrection.

You know, I don't know if your Bible's got this, but at the end of verse eight, there's a little word, Selah, S-E-L-A-H. Not sure that's how you pronounce it.

[14:41] You know, what that means is it is a, it is a used in Hebrew poetry for a pause. It's a pause for reflection, for meditation, to bring your heart in a state of praise to God.

So we're just going to pause for a minute and think about the truths of these things and how they affect us before we move on to our next section. And so now to the present.

Sometimes people like to reminisce about the good old days, and I found this cartoon. I remember the good old days when the only crisp flavor was salt. You made sure you get those salt and shakes.

I used to quite like them. Had a little packet of salt in them. You know, I'm a big crisp fan. If we open crisps in our household, they don't last very long. That is for sure. You know, nowadays you've got crisp packets for aisles and aisles in the supermarkets.

There's so many different flavors. And that personally, I don't think that's a bad thing. But you know, we like to look back, don't we? We like to think about fond times, reminisce with one another. Oh, remember the good old days.

[15:52] But you know, the present struggles that we read about here, the difficulties in the present time, they're made all the more difficult because when we look back at what the glorious past was like, the good times in the past.

If we could move to the next one, please. Dib. So the contrast with the glorious past.

Now, if you look through from verse 9 through to verse 16, there is such language of rejection, of defeat, of shame. I'll pick out some of the words. We have rejected, humbled, retreat, plundered, devoured, scattered, reproach, scorn, derision, a byword, shake their heads, disgrace, shame, taunt, reproach, revile, revenge.

If we were studying English, you would be asked to write an essay on all that language picked out. But it paints that picture of national humiliation. The people of Israel, they are in complete humiliation, distress.

They feel abandoned. It has made all the more painful because they have just thought about that past glories that God has brought them through.

[17:18] And we don't know exactly the situation that they're talking about in historical context. We don't really know why this has come upon them. But they don't know why. In verse 17 to 21, they are basically saying, why has God left us?

They are suffering. They say, we are suffering, but we haven't broken our covenant. It says, we have not been false to your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back. Our feet had not strayed from your path.

But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals. You covered us over with deep darkness.

They don't know why they are suffering as they are. And they say, verse 20 and 21, God, if we had been unfaithful to you, you would know because you're all-knowing.

And God knows our hearts. He knows each one of our hearts. We cannot hide the truths from him.

But verse 22, yet for your sake, we face death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. They are suffering purely for his sake. They are suffering because they are God's people.

[18:38] And you know, they are a covenant people, the people of Israel. They were living in a covenant relationship. And what that meant was that when they were faithful to God, God was faithful to them. But you know, in times that they strayed away from God, when they worshipped idols or followed other nations or peoples, well, God brought direct judgment onto them in their present situation.

And we know that from times where nations came and they conquered Israel. They took them away into exile. They ruled over them. They didn't have their own land.

But it was not direct sin that they are suffering here. They are purely suffering for his sake. And you know this here, this is quoted, this verse, verse 22, in Romans chapter 8, verse 36, by Paul, the apostle Paul.

Now Paul, he was a man who suffered. We know that if you've been along to our Timothy series in the evenings. He is writing to Timothy in the second book, to Timothy. And he is writing because he is at the end of his life.

He knows he's about to be executed for God's sake, for the gospel. He has suffered throughout his life. He has been rejected. He has been left alone by those who should have been helping him.

[19:57] He has a physical ailment that we don't exactly know what it was. He has been in jail many times. He has suffered a lot. But he encourages others to stand firm in his letters as he did in the gospel, in the good news of Jesus.

Despite the persecution, despite the suffering, despite the difficult times which are inevitable, which will come, which we know. if we are Christians, we are not promised an easy life.

The point of salvation is not where we suddenly don't have any more problems in life. That is not what we are promised in the Bible, so there's no point thinking about that.

But we are promised that in the times to come and when the Lord Jesus returns, that we will be taken to that place where there is no more suffering, where there is no more pain, when everything will be made right again.

I think it's worth reading Romans 8 and it should come up on the screen. Verse 31, What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

[21 : 16] He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?

It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written, and this is the quote from our passage, For your sake we face death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. Knowing all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God. We miss God when his face seems hidden from us, when we are suffering in life. We can think back to the good times and it kind of makes it all the more painful when we are suffering.

[22 : 44] You know, we are exhorted to stand firm in our faith despite what's going on as we do so for God and we can withstand it because he is with us in his power, in his strength.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Sometimes the image is used that if we are saved then we are put in God's mighty hand and nothing, no matter what life throws at us, can change that fact.

And so to finish we look to the future, our cry and his faithfulness. So where do we go in times of crisis?

You know, you may be seeing one of these before. You sometimes get them at the side of motorways or they're actually sometimes just dotted about cities. Now this is the kind of button you want to just go and press and just see what happens.

Push button for assistance. You know, I don't know the mechanism. I've never actually tried it. Maybe I should. I don't want to diss it without having tried it.

[23 : 59] But you know, what confidence do you have in that? Is that going to save the day? Maybe it will. I don't know. But you know, in times of crisis and difficult times, where do we run?

Is it emergency services? Is it helplines? Is it charities that are set up for such things? And these things are good. Is it friends or family? Do we go to those who can support us, help us, give us wise words?

Is it our church family and all these things are good? Or do we run to the world? Do we have our go-to sins when we are suffering our times of difficulty?

Do we have addictions? Do we run to the pleasures of the world to try and escape? Well, we see here that the people, they earnestly plea to God for action and for help.

Awake, Lord, verse 23. Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself. Do not reject us forever. The people here, they turn to God. They are in the lowest place possible.

[25 : 14] Verse 25. We are brought down to the dust. Our bodies cling to the ground. You do not get any lower than that. In our minds, they go to the serpent in Genesis 3.14 who was cursed and was caused to crawl around on its belly and eat the dust.

That's where these people describe themselves as being. They are at rock bottom. In a sense, they have nowhere else to turn, but they make the right choice.

They ask God to help them. You know, they do so with good motives. They turn to God and they do not plead their case. They do not say, we are so good, God, you must help us.

God, we deserve help. No, they turn to God because of who he is and because of what he has done. Verse 26, rise up and help us.

Rescue us because of your unfailing love. God is faithful. God is merciful.

[26 : 22] When we look back on the past, we know that God has provided before and so we can have confidence that God will do so again. so as we close, let's consider these things.

Where do we turn when things in life get difficult? Do we cling to the God who has saved us? Do we look back on what the Lord Jesus has done?

Do we get lost in the present struggles? Do we struggle to get our head up and look for help? Do we run to what the world has to offer us?

Do we rely on ourselves and our strength? You know, tough times will come. We will face suffering. We will face persecution as Christians. It might be ill health. It might be loneliness, mockery, rejection. It might be death of loved ones.

[27 : 26] And we all face death ourselves at some point. You might be sitting there thinking, didn't come here for this message this morning. I was hoping for something happier. But you know, it is.

These are just the facts of life. But the good news is that we have the victory as we read in Romans. Our home is in heaven.

Christ has done the work. It is complete. It is finished. It is all on him. All on his work. All on his strength. It is not on ourselves and our feeble ways.

So we can have such confidence in where our home is, where we are headed and that God is faithful, that God is with us and that he will continue to be with us no matter what our situation in present life may be.

You know, in all these things, as it did for these people, it should bring our hearts to a point of praise, remembering who God is and his faithfulness towards us.

[28 : 33] let me just pray and then as is most appropriate after this is that we're going to sing hymns of praise to our God who has done so much for us.

The first one being, yet not I but through Christ in me. And you know, that's such good lyrics for what we've been thinking about. It's not about us.

It's about Christ in us. Let me just pray as the band comes up and before we stand to sing. God and Father, we just thank you for your word.

We thank you that your word does not shy away from the truths of the world. Our hearts at times are in agony with the suffering that goes on in the world either to ourselves or to others.

And as John prayed, sometimes we just do not know what to pray whether it's for global situations or for friends or for family who are struggling and going through difficult times. But we just thank you that we have the victory, that we are more than conquerors over all these things if we are in Christ.

[29 : 51] We thank you that our home is in heaven, that that salvation plan was hatched before the world even began. And Father, we just thank you for sending the Lord Jesus.

We thank you for his work on earth, for his work of the cross and that it was enough and that it was finished and that we can trust in it.

And we look forward to when he will return and will take us to be with him and with yourself, Father. and we look forward to that day when there will be no more suffering, there will be no more pain and that everything will be made right.

And so we bring you praise and we bring you the glory. We just ask that as we go from this place shortly that we will remember these things and no matter what life throws at us that you will be with us as we know you will be because you are faithful, you are merciful and we just ask that you will help us with your spirit to remember these things as we go about our lives.

So we just ask these things and we thank you so much for who you are and we thank you for the Lord Jesus and it's in his name that we pray. Amen.