

Psalm 95: Today!

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[0 : 00] Well, if I could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if I could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of Psalms, the book of Psalms and Psalm 95.

Psalm 95. The book of Psalms, Psalm 95, and we'll read again at verse 1 and then we'll read at verse 6.

Psalm 95, from the beginning, where the psalmist says, O come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

And then in verse 6, O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our maker, for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

[1 : 13] Today. Today. It was a 19th century preacher and author, J.C.

Ryle. He once said, tomorrow is the devil's day, but today is God's. Satan doesn't care how spiritual your intentions are or how holy your resolutions are.

If only they are determined to be done tomorrow. Tomorrow is the devil's day. Today is God's day. And you know, tomorrow it may seem like such an innocent statement, but it's a statement that can actually change your eternity. I'll do it tomorrow. I'll become a Christian tomorrow.

I'll make a commitment to Christ tomorrow. I'll cast my lot in with Jesus tomorrow. Always tomorrow. Tomorrow may seem like such an innocent statement, but it's a statement that can change your eternal destination.

[2 : 20] And in many ways, tomorrow, you could say, is the most dangerous word in the English language. Because God never promises us tomorrow. You know, Solomon in all his wisdom, he reminds us in Proverbs 27, he says, don't boast about tomorrow because you do not know what a day may bring.

James in his New Testament letter, he also warns us about waiting for tomorrow. He says, you don't know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? What's your life?

He says, your life is just a mist. It's a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. What is your life? Because you're not promised tomorrow.

My friend, tomorrow is such a dangerous word. That's why the Bible always emphasizes the importance of today. Today. That's why salvation is on offer to you today.

And that your opportunity to come to Christ is being held out to you today. The offer might not be there tomorrow. The reality is you might be in hell tomorrow.

[3 : 32] That's a reality. You look at that football player, 35 years of age. He didn't have tomorrow. It was that quick.

But you know, salvation in Jesus Christ, it's on offer to you today. Which is why the psalmist is saying to us, he's saying to us today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

You know, Jesus, Jesus even emphasized the importance of today. When Jesus was being crucified on a Roman cross, you remember one of the criminals. He turned to Jesus at the 11th hour of his life.

And he said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And what did Jesus say to him? Today, you will be with me in paradise.

Tomorrow would have been too late for him. It had to be today. And for you, my unconverted friend here tonight, tomorrow may be too late for you.

[4 : 35] That's why you need to come to Christ today. Tomorrow. Such a dangerous word. Because God doesn't promise us tomorrow. He's only given you today.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. And you know, it's because of the urgency of this plea that the psalmist is saying here, O come.

O come. In fact, you could say that Psalm 95, it's divided into two sections because of this heartfelt plea. He says in verse 1, O come.

Let us sing to the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. And then he says in verse 6, O come. Let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. And so we can see that Psalm 95, it's divided into two sections by this heartfelt invitation.

[5 : 34] O come. O come. And notice this invitation is given. Because tomorrow is not promised. And my friend, what you're being invited to do today.

What you've been invited to do today is come and sing. And come and submit. Come and sing. And come and submit. There are two headings this evening.

Come and sing. And come and submit. So we'll look first of all at come and sing. Come and sing. He says in verse 1, O come. Let us sing to the Lord.

Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving. Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.

Now, Psalm 95, it finds itself situated in the book of Psalms. In this section that focuses upon Jesus as our king. Because Psalms 93 to Psalm 100, they're all royal psalms.

[6 : 38] And they all rejoice in the fact that Jesus is exercising his office as a king. And that as king, Jesus is ruling over and he's overruling in all the affairs of this world.

That's what we were singing about in Psalm 93. We were reminded there that Jesus is monarch. He's the one who's monarch of this world. And he sits enthroned on high.

And as the royal and regal king, he reigns with glory. And he's robed in majesty. His throne, we're told, is from everlasting to everlasting. And he has decreed all things that come to pass.

My friend, this is the beauty of King Jesus. He's crowned with a crown of purest gold. He has a scepter in his hand. He has a sword upon his thigh.

And he speaks grace from his lips. You know, he's the Lord who reigns. But then in Psalm 94, which we were also singing, we're reminded that this king is no pushover.

[7 : 40] Because when Jesus exercises his office as a king, he does so with all the authority of heaven and earth. And with that authority, he defends his people and he destroys his enemies.

And you know, as we progress through these royal psalms and then come to Psalm 95, we can see that there's this picture building all the time. This picture of who Jesus is.

And he's coming into clearer focus. In Psalm 93, Jesus is enthroned on high. He's ruling over and overruling. Then in Psalm 94, Jesus is this omnipotent king who defends his people and destroys his enemies.

And it's with that context and that backdrop that Psalm 95 begins with this heartfelt invitation and plea. He says, It's because of who Jesus is as king and what Jesus has done as king that the psalmist invites us to come and sing because Jesus is king.

We're to come and sing because Jesus is king. And you know, this invitation to come and sing, it's to everyone.

[9 : 04] Whether you're a Christian or not, you're to come and sing because Jesus is king. And you know, this is one of the greatest reasons why we should sing in church.

We're to sing because Jesus is king. He's ruling and he's reigning in all things. And he's reigning whether on a political scale with kingdoms or armies or political powers.

He's ruling and overruling. But he's also ruling and reigning in our personal lives too. He's on the throne in everything that's going on in our situation.

This Jesus is king. He's reigning. And because he's king, we're to come and sing. But you know, I often wonder if there's some of you here who don't sing to Jesus, your king.

You maybe don't even open your mouth when you come to church. You might look at the words of the psalm, but you don't take them upon your lips. You don't sing them from your heart. What I find so sad is that people might come to church week by week and we can sing together, but people remain silent.

[10 : 16] You refuse to sing to Jesus, your king. You refuse to praise the God who made you and sustains you and keeps you every day of your life. You close your mouth, maybe even your heart, to this king.

You know, why is that? Why would we do that? Some people would say, well, I can't sing. I'm too embarrassed to sing. I don't sing. I've never sang. But the Lord doesn't ask.

He doesn't ask for perfect worship. He doesn't ask for perfect singing. He just asks us to ascribe worth to his name. Because that's what worship is.

It's all about ascribing praise, honor, and glory to God because he is worthy. His worship, my friend, is all about ascribing worthship to God because of who he is and what he has done for us in Christ. And our worship, whether it's poor or professional, our worship is to be, as the psalmist reminds us here, it's to be a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

[11 : 21] It's all to be to the rock of our salvation. And you know, what a description of King Jesus. What a way to describe this king to whom we're to come before singing.

He's the rock of our salvation. And as you know, this metaphor of the Lord is our rock. It's quite common throughout the Psalms. We sang about it at the end of Psalm 94.

But even in Psalm 61, we sang that this morning. Psalm 61, David is crying to the Lord for mercy. He's longing for the Lord to hear him.

And David is saying, Then you go to Psalm 62.

He's there again. David is making the confession of the Christian. He's saying, But you know, it's in the well-known and much-loved Psalm of Psalm 40 that David, he describes his conversion experience.

[12 : 42] What he says about Jesus, Oh, he took me from a fearful pit. And from the miry clay. And on a rock he set my feet. Establishing my way.

But more than that, says David, He put a new song in my mouth. Our God to magnify. Many shall see it. And shall fear. And on the Lord rely.

And you know, it's no wonder the psalmist is inviting and he's pleading with us to come and sing to Jesus our King. He's saying, Oh, come. Let us sing to the Lord.

Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. My friend, Jesus. He's the rock of our salvation. And as our solid rock, He's a firm foundation.

He's sure and steadfast. He's solid and secure. He's unmovable. He's unchangeable. He's unfathomable. And yet, He's unfailing.

[13 : 42] He's the rock of our salvation. He's the chief cornerstone that the builders despised and rejected. But you know, by His death at Calvary, He, it was the doing of the Lord.

And wonderful in our eyes. Jesus is the rock of our salvation. And as our rock, He remains the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And because He's never changed, this is the thing. His love for you has never changed. His patience with you has never changed. His care for you and His compassion towards you has never changed.

His grace being held out to you has never changed. He remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. And that's why you're being invited to come and sing today.

You're to come and sing today. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. My unconverted friend, you're being invited to come and sing to Jesus, your King.

[14 : 57] But why are you being invited? Why are we all being invited and pleaded with and even urged to come and sing? Well, look at verse 3.

He explains it. He says, Why are we to come and sing to Jesus, our King?

Because the thing is, this Jesus, He not only sits enthroned on high, ruling over and over, ruling in all things. This Jesus is not only the omnipotent King who defends His people and destroys His enemies.

My friend, this Jesus is our Creator. He's a great God. And He's a great King. And He's so unlike all the other gods and dumb idols of this world.

Because we're told that in His hand are the depths of the earth. And by His hands, He has stretched out the heights of the mountains. He has made the sea.

[16 : 13] He formed the dry land. And you know what the psalmist is reminding us, my friend, is that we are so small and so insignificant in comparison to the greatness and glory of King Jesus.

And because of who Jesus is as King and what Jesus has done as King, we should see that we are unworthy of the least of His mercies. He is far above and beyond our asking or our thinking.

And yet, He bids us to come. He bids us to come to Him. He demands us to worship Him. He calls us to glorify Him.

He instructs us to enjoy Him forever. My friend, there's no one like King Jesus because He's infinite, He's eternal, He's unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

And He's the Word. He's the Word who was in the beginning with God. And all things were made through Him and without Him there was nothing made that was made. And my friend, if we ever think of ourselves as something before God or that we're worthy of His grace and His mercy, then we've lost sight of the fact that Jesus is King and we need to stop and we need to bow down before Him because as our Creator, as our Creator, if you were just to consider that alone, we have been fearfully and wonderfully made by King Jesus.

[17 : 43] We have been uniquely and personally and individually made and shaped and formed in His image and in His likeness. It's in Him that we live and move and have our being and we're to worship Him and we're to come and sing to Jesus, our King, because He's our Maker.

And He brought us into being without any contribution from us. He gave us a beginning. He gave us an existence. He made us a living soul and He made us for eternity.

And you know, we're so important to Him and we're so loved by Him that He would go to the extent of being crucified in our place in order to be saved.

In order so that we could be saved. My friend, King Jesus, He has made you with so much dignity. Science doesn't dignify man.

It's only God who dignifies man. And you have been made with so much dignity and God thinks so highly of the life that He has given to you that one day, very soon, when this mist passes away and your last tomorrow comes, you will have to stand before Him and give an account.

[19 : 06] This Jesus thinks so highly of the life that He has given to you that one day He will ask you what you did with it. What you did with it.

And you know, that's the truth of Scripture. All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of the deeds done in the body.

The body that He made. Whether they are good or evil. My friend, are you ready? Oh, are you ready? Are you ready for that great day?

Are you ready today? Are you ready today? Because today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

Today, if you hear the voice of King Jesus, come. Oh, come and sing. And come and submit.

[20 : 07] Come and submit. That's what I want us to see secondly. Because tomorrow, it's not promised. you're only given the invitation today. You've been invited to come and sing.

And secondly, come and submit. Come and submit. Look at verse 6. Where the psalmist says, O come, O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.

For He is our God. And we are the people of His pasture. And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

And don't you just love the plea of the psalmist? O come. O come. O come. You know, He doesn't say, stay where you are. He doesn't say, if you're in the elect, sit tight and do nothing.

He doesn't say, wait for the bright light. Wait for the miracle to be witnessed. He doesn't say, wait for the voice from heaven. He doesn't say, have you had a text from scripture to prove that you're a Christian?

[21 : 13] He doesn't say, it's not your time yet. Just wait for the right time. It'll soon come. You know, He doesn't say any of these things. All He says is, come.

O come. And is that not the invitation and plea of the gospel? Everyone who thirsts, come. Come to the waters.

You who have no money, come. Come to the gospel table. And buy and eat. It's all there for you. Come and buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Come and hear that your soul may live. Jesus says to you, whosoever comes to me shall never hunger. Whosoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Whosoever comes to me, says Jesus, I will never cast out. My friend, Jesus is saying to you today in the gospel, come unto me. Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

[22 : 17] Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your soul for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Come to me. And you know, here's the psalmist and he's inviting, he's pleading with you to come to Jesus. He's saying, oh come, oh come, come today, he says.

Not tomorrow or not next week, not next year, not at a more convenient time in your life, not on your deathbed. No, come today. Come today.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. And you know, the psalmist, he's not only inviting you to come and sing to Jesus, your king, he's also inviting you to come and submit to Jesus, your king.

He says in verse 6, oh come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. And these three Hebrew words, worship, bow down, and kneel, they're used one after another in the same verse.

[23 : 28] But they all mean the same thing. The psalmist is using these three words in order to emphasize how we are to come before King Jesus. He says that we're to come in submission, we're to come on our knees, surrendering our life, submitting our will, and bowing down before this great God and this great king.

We're to come empty handed with no righteousness of our own to boast in or to claim upon. We're just to come in submission. Absolute, humble submission.

My unconverted friend, have you come? Have you come in submission to King Jesus? Because we're reminded in verse 7, He is our God.

And we are His people, the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

In verse 7, we're reminded that King Jesus is the good shepherd. And as Jesus says to us in the gospel, the good shepherd laid down His life for the sheep.

[24 : 43] But more than that, Jesus says about His sheep, My sheep, hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. And I give to them eternal life and they will never perish.

Neither shall they be plucked out of My hand. My friend, Jesus is the good shepherd. And those who hear His voice, and those who respond to His voice, they are His sheep.

And the psalmist is saying, today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

But you know, let's be honest. Let's be honest for a moment. My unconverted friend, you have heard the voice of this good shepherd many times before.

You have heard His voice. You've heard the voice of Jesus speaking to you in many different situations and many different circumstances. You've heard the voice of Jesus speaking to you just like you are tonight, sitting in church.

[25 : 57] You've heard His voice through many different preachers preaching the gospel. You've heard the voice of Jesus speaking to you through the Christian witness. The Christian witness of your own parents, of your wife, your husband, your own children, your family, your friends.

You've heard the voice of Jesus speaking to you through illness, through bereavement, through death. You've been in attendance at many funerals where Jesus has been speaking to you and you've heard His voice.

Oh, you've heard His voice. And you've heard it again and again and again. And today is no different. Today is no different. But my unconverted friend, the plea today is if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

If you hear His voice, don't resist and reject the invitation to come. Don't ignore the plea to come and submit to Jesus your King. Why?

Because that's what the Israelites did. That's what the Israelites did. They were to come and submit to the Lord as their King. But they hardened their hearts, as we're told.

[27 : 14] They hardened their hearts at Meribah and Massah. That's what it says in verse 8. Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof though they had seen my work.

When the Israelites, when the Israelites were brought up out of Egypt, out of slavery and bondage, they had no sooner crossed the Red Sea when they hardened their hearts and they turned their back upon the Lord and they began quarrelling with one another.

And that's what the name Meribah means. It means quarrelling. The name Massah means testing. And this is the thing, the Israelites, they knew the Lord.

They knew the power of the Lord. They knew what the Lord had done in parting the Red Sea and delivering them from slavery. They had heard the voice of the Lord. They saw the Lord in the glory cloud day by day.

They even knew what the redemption of the Lord was. And yet they hardened their hearts and turned their backs upon the Lord. And they did it, we're told, for 40 years.

[28 : 27] 40 years. The Lord says in verse 10, For 40 years I loathed that generation and said they are a people who go astray in their heart and they have not known my ways.

Therefore I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest. For 40 years the Israelites went astray. For 40 years they disobeyed the Lord.

For 40 years they rebelled and provoked the Lord to anger. For 40 years they refused to listen to the Lord and only hardened their heart and turned their back upon the Lord and ignored his word. And my unconverted friend, I have to say you're doing exactly the same. You're doing exactly the same. And I don't say that lightly.

You're doing the same. because for 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, you can count all the birthdays yourself, 70, 80, maybe, even 80 years of your life you've had the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking into your life.

[29 : 41] He's been speaking into your life and up until today you've refused to listen. You've only hardened your heart and you've turned your back upon the Lord but the plea of the psalmist and all my plea with you, my plea with you is today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart.

Don't do it to yourself any longer. please do not harden your heart. But you know when you look at this psalm it ends so abruptly and it ends on such a solemn note.

It doesn't end with joy but there's a reason why the psalmist ends so abruptly and on such a solemn note and it's because those who heard the voice of the shepherd those who were invited and pleaded with to come and sing and come and submit to Jesus the king they didn't come.

They refused to come. They didn't come and sing to Jesus the king and they didn't come and submit to Jesus the king. Despite the heartfelt plea and invitation they refused and rejected the voice of the good shepherd.

They hardened their heart. They turned their back upon the Lord. And you know as a result the children of Israel those who died in the wilderness they didn't enter the promised land.

[31 : 14] They were lost in the wilderness. They were lost. And you know what the psalmist is actually saying to you is that's not how you're to respond to the gospel.

You're not to harden your heart. You're not to ignore the voice of the shepherd. You're not to turn your back upon the Lord because you're to come. You're to come.

In fact that's how the writer to the Hebrews interpreted Psalm 95. He said that those who rejected the voice of the shepherd, those who hardened their heart, those who turned their back upon the Lord, he says, they have an evil heart of unbelief.

But as we read in Hebrews 3, we're to keep exhorting everyone. the mandate that is given in Hebrews 3 is that I am to keep preaching to you while it is called today.

People are to keep speaking to you about your soul while it is called today. My unconverted friend were to keep exhorting you to come so that you will not be hardened and so that you will not fall into the deceitfulness of sin and die without Christ as your Lord and King.

[32 : 37] My friend, come. Just come. Just come as you are. Come and sing to Jesus, your King.

Come and submit to this King and come today. Come today, not tomorrow.

As J.C. Ryle reminds us, tomorrow is the devil's day. Today is God's day. God hasn't promised you tomorrow.

He's only given you the opportunity of today. Today is the day of salvation. And you know, I don't want you to leave here this evening, as you have left many other evenings, saying, I'll do it tomorrow.

I'll become a Christian tomorrow. I'll make a commitment to Christ tomorrow. I'll cast my lot in with Jesus tomorrow. Always tomorrow. Always tomorrow. My friend, you don't know if you have tomorrow.

[33 : 41] My friend, tomorrow is such a dangerous world. Tomorrow is the devil's day. Today is God's day. Tomorrow is the devil's day.

day. But if you're willing to take the risk of waiting until tomorrow, and all your tomorrows, then on your head be it.

The warning has come from the voice of King Jesus. The invitation has gone out. And Jesus is saying today, or today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

Come. Oh, come. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Oh, Lord, our gracious God, we marvel at the wonder of the gospel.

that the invitation goes out to sinners such as we are. But it only reminds us, Lord, of how gracious thou art. A God who holds out to us this gift of salvation, that we would only come to it and take it.

[35 : 05] Lord, help us, we pray, not to harden our heart, not to turn our back, not to walk away from such a glorious invitation, but to come.

to come and sing to Jesus our King, and to come and submit, knowing that when we come on bended knee and confess him as our Lord and King, we have the promise that we will be saved. Lord, hear us then, we pray, speak to us, we ask, and draw us to thyself by thy spirit, for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen.

We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the closing words of Psalm 95. Psalm 95 at verse 7, page 357 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 95 at verse 7. For he's our God, the people we, of his own pasture are, and of his hand the sheep today, if ye his voice will hear, then harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, as in the desert on the day of the temptation, when me your fathers tempt and proved, and did my working see, and for the space of forty years, this race hath grieved me.

[36 : 29] Down to the end of the Psalm of Psalm 95. to God's please. For he's our God, the people we of his own pasture are, and of his hands the sheep today, in his voice will hear, and harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, temptation, as in the desert on the day of the temptation, where meet your father's others tempt and prove, and did my working see.

Before the space of forty years, this race hath grieved be.

I said, this people there's in heart my ways they do not know, to whom I swear in wrath, but to my rest they should not go.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.