

A Letter of Hope

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of the prophet Jeremiah and chapter 29.

Jeremiah chapter 29, page 794 in the Pew Bible. And I'd like us to look at the verses we read, verses 1 to 14, but if we just read again at verse 10.

Jeremiah 29 at verse 10. For thus says the Lord, when 70 years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord.

[1 : 17] And I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. Now it's safe to say that in the 21st century that we live in, posting handwritten letters, it seems to be a thing of the past.

For thousands of years, letter writing was probably the most common form of communication. But now sending or receiving a handwritten letter is something that's almost extinct.

And the reason for this is obvious when you think of its nickname. It's called now snail mail. And snail mail, well, it just can't keep up with a modern world. Our modern world of email, text messages, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Skype, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and many other forms of communication.

With all this information and all this communication at our fingertips, writing a letter doesn't really have a hope. Writing a letter seems almost pointless.

And very few of us, myself included, very few of us would take the time to sit down and write a letter by hand. It's too slow. It's too slow for our fast-paced modern world of up-to-date information and instant messaging.

[2 : 41] But you know, on that rare occasion when you get a handwritten letter through the door, and you see it, and you open it, and you read it, there's always something so different about it.

Because with a handwritten letter, you know that time has gone into writing it. You know that care and thought has gone into the structure and the content of the letter.

And because it's handwritten, it's far more personal. You can see the author's handwriting. You know that they've touched the letter personally. You know that they've taken the time and the care and the consideration to write you a letter and send it to you and make sure that you get it.

And when you receive that handwritten letter, you know that whatever it says, it's far more personal than an email or a text message. And in many ways, you know, that's what we're considering here this evening.

We're considering a handwritten letter from the Lord. And it's addressed to his people who are in exile in Babylon. They're very, very far away from where they should be.

[3 : 48] But as we shall see, this letter that was written by the Lord, it was personal. It was very, very personal. Time was taken to write down what the Lord had to say to his people.

Care and thought went into the structure and the content of this letter. And we're told that even the letter itself was delivered to the Lord's people personally.

And this letter, although it was written and delivered to the Israelites during one of the darkest periods of their history, this letter was a letter of hope. It was a letter of hope.

And I'd like us just to consider this evening what the Lord said to his people in this letter of hope. And I want us to consider this letter under three headings. The three headings.

The Lord's punishment. The Lord's promise. And the Lord's plan. The Lord's punishment. The Lord's promise. And the Lord's plan. So we look first of all at the Lord's punishment.

[4 : 47] The Lord's punishment. You look at verse 1. Verse 1 of chapter 29. It says, These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet, Jeremiah was the Lord's spokesman.

Jeremiah wrote it down. Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

This was after King Jeconiah and the Queen Mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem.

And so the chapter opens in chapter 29. It opens by reminding us about the current situation of the Israelites, that they are in exile in Babylon. They are very far away from the promised land.

They're far away from home. They're far away from the temple. They're far away from the presence of God. The Israelites, they're living in a foreign land under the rule of a foreign king, and they're being encouraged to worship foreign gods.

[5 : 51] The Israelites were in Babylon, but they weren't there for good behavior. The Israelites were in Babylon because they had turned away from the Lord and turned to worship idols.

They had sinned against the Lord. They had disobeyed the Lord. They had rebelled against the Lord's commands, and the Lord punished them. The Lord drove them out of the promised land into Babylon, and they were driven away from the presence of the Lord into this godless nation.

And you know, what we always must remember is that exile is a picture of God's punishment.

Because that's what happened in the Garden of Eden, right at the beginning.

You go to Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve, when they sinned against the Lord, they listened to Satan. They sinned against the Lord. They disobeyed the Lord. They broke his commandments.

And the Lord then drove them out of the Garden of Eden.

The Lord exiled Adam and Eve from the Garden. And he removed from them all their privileges that they once enjoyed. And he removed from them the presence of the Lord that they experienced every single day.

[7 : 01] They were driven into a foreign land to be under the rule of a foreign king. And they were to be, well, they were going to be encouraged to worship foreign gods.

And sadly, because of the sin and rebellion of Adam and Eve, that's where we all begin life. We're all born in exile. We're all born in sin.

We're born in rebellion against God. We're born far away from God. Separated from God. And under his wrath and curse. And yet, the Bible reminds us that the Lord has provided a way of salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ.

But you know, like the Israelites, many of you refuse to listen to what the Lord commands. You refuse to submit to his authority. And you refuse to bow your knee before him.

And I say that you're like the Israelites because when you consider the history of the Israelites, the Lord loved them. And the Lord called them to be his people. We saw that with Abraham this morning.

[8 : 07] The Lord called Abraham to follow him. And the Lord promised to Abraham that he would be their God. They would be his people. And then later on, you see that the Lord redeemed them from Egypt.

He delivered them from slavery. And because the Lord provided salvation. The Lord said that the Israelites, the Jews, they were not to worship any other God or bow down to any other idol.

They were to love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, with all their strength. But sadly, the history of the Israelites is a history of disobedience.

Because the Israelites, they didn't obey the Lord. They did what was right in their own eyes. Forty years in the wilderness. It's all overshadowed by disobedience.

The period of the judges, it's tainted by rebellion. The era of the kings, it's tarnished by every succeeding king being worse than the last. The kings, they were all leading the people astray, turning them away from the Lord and turning them towards idolatry.

[9 : 10] And so what does the Lord do? The Lord raises up prophets. He raises up spokesmen to remind the Israelites that if they refuse to repent and turn from their sin and turn back to the Lord, the Lord will bring judgment.

And down throughout the years, you see all these prophets. The Lord is sending prophet after prophet after prophet. And the message that all these prophets that we read about, about Jeremiah, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, they're all preaching this message.

Judgment is coming. Judgment is coming. You need to repent, they're saying, because judgment is coming. But you know, it didn't matter how many times the prophets came and the prophets preached.

The people weren't listening. They thought that they would be okay in the end. So they ignored all the warnings of God. They put it to the back of their mind.

They just carried on the way they wanted, living life the way they wanted, doing what's right in their own eyes. But then here we go. One final prophet before the exile.

[10:21] The Lord raises up a man called Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a young man. And Jeremiah knew that he was young. He knew that he was inexperienced.

He was a young prophet, but he was the Lord's prophet. And the Lord had called him and the Lord had appointed him to be a prophet to the nation. He was to be God's spokesman.

He was to proclaim whatever the Lord wanted him to say. And from the beginning of his ministry, Jeremiah was told that his ministry and his message was going to be the same message as all the other prophets before him.

The message wasn't going to change because he was a young and inexperienced prophet. The message would remain the same. Judgment is coming.

Jeremiah, he was a young preacher and he took his role seriously. He knew that the message he had for the people was of the utmost importance. And because he took it so seriously and because he felt the burden of the message that he had to preach, he often preached with tears.

[11:28] You know, Jeremiah, he's known to us as the weeping prophet. He often wept over the state of his nation and he wept over the hardness of people's hearts.

Jeremiah wept and pleaded with the people of Israel to repent and turn to the Lord. He pleaded that they would seek the Lord. But they didn't listen.

They didn't listen. And in the end, judgment finally came. The Lord was true to his word.

And you know, the same is true today. Like it was for the Israelites. With all these prophets, the Lord has sent many preachers to stand in this pulpit.

And they have stood here down throughout the years. And you've seen them. You've met them. You've spoken to them. And they've reminded you again and again and again that judgment is coming.

[12:32] That there is a day coming when you will be called to the bar of God's judgment. They've told you that you need to repent of your sins and turn to the Lord. All these preachers have told you that you need to seek the Lord while he's to be found and call upon him while he is near.

And that you need to commit your life to loving, honoring, and worshiping Jesus Christ. But you know, despite all that you're told, despite the fact that you're pleaded with, despite the fact that people weep for your soul, you refuse to listen.

You refuse to listen. You choose to ignore what's said to you. And you willingly pass up all your opportunities to be saved.

Despite everything you've heard throughout your life, you are still going on this trajectory towards hell. My friend, why are you wasting your life chasing after the things that will not last?

Why are you trying to hold on to things that will only be taken from you? Why are you willfully rejecting the Lord as your Savior? Why? Why? You know, rejection, it's only going to lead to the Lord's punishment.

[13:57] That's what happened to the Israelites. They were told for so long, and then they rejected all the way to punishment. In the year 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, he invaded Jerusalem.

He destroyed the city. He destroyed the temple. He destroyed the walls of the city. He took many of the Israelites captive into Babylon. And those he didn't take captive into Babylon, he slaughtered. And it was there in Babylon that the Israelites were living in that foreign nation under the rule of a foreign king, and they were being encouraged to worship foreign gods. The Lord had brought judgment upon the Israelites for their disobedience.

He brought judgment into their experience because they didn't listen. But you know, this is what's so wonderful. Even in the midst of the Lord's punishment, the Israelites had hope.

And they had hope because of the Lord's promise. And that's what this letter contained. This letter that came from the hand of the Lord, the letter contained a message of hope.

[15:10] And so we see the Lord's punishment. But then secondly, the Lord's promise. The Lord's promise. We'll read in verse 10.

This is where the promise comes. It says, For thus says the Lord, When 70 years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise, and bring you back to this place.

I will fulfill to you my promise. When King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem, destroying the city and the temple and the walls, many of the Israelites, they lost their homes.

They lost their livestock. As we said, they lost many family members. They lost their freedom. They were now captives in Babylon. They lost their identity. As Jews, they were no longer living in the promised land.

They lost the Lord. That was a major one because the temple had been destroyed. When the Israelites were exiled into Babylon, they lost almost everything apart from their lives.

[16:16] And you know, it didn't matter how they looked at it. Their situation, it seemed almost hopeless. But as we said, even in the midst of the Lord's punishment of exile, the Israelites were given hope.

And they had hope because of the Lord's promise. And we see that as we read in verse 10. The Lord's letter to his people, in that letter, the Lord promised that after 70 years in exile in Babylon, they will return to the promised land.

I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. The Lord's letter contained a message of hope. And that even under the Lord's punishment, they received the Lord's promise. And that's why this letter of hope was so precious to the Israelites. Because they were downcast. They were despondent in exile. They knew that they had sinned against the Lord. They knew that they had disobeyed the Lord's command.

They knew that they had foolishly turned to the Lord, turned away from the Lord to idols. But even under the Lord's punishment, they received this promise of forgiveness.

[17:31] And in this letter of hope, the Israelites were encouraged to focus upon the Lord's promise instead of focusing upon the Lord's punishment. They were to look to the Lord's promise of forgiveness instead of looking to their problem of sin.

They were to look to the promise, not the problem. And you know, we have to do the same. We have to do the same because far too often we lose sight of the Lord's promises of forgiveness because we're always focusing upon our problems of sin.

But we're not to doubt the Lord's promise. We're to trust Him. We're to lean upon Him. We're to look to Him. We're to focus upon the Lord's promise of forgiveness and not our problems of sin.

And you know, my friend, you might have doubts about yourself and your fitness to be a Christian. You might have doubts about your salvation and you might even lack assurance.

How can I be a Christian? You might even have problems at home or in your family that cause you great concern. You might have sins that seem to be to you insurmountable and unforgivable.

[18:45] But you know, when you focus upon the Lord's promise of forgiveness and His promise of restoration and His promise of blessing and His promises of help, that's when you'll discover that there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

My friend, there's nothing in your life and in my life that the Lord can't deal with and help you through. We just need to take our eyes off our problems. the problem of sin and we need to focus upon the Lord's promises.

The Lord's promises. That's what we need to look at. You know, as Dr. Warren Weersbe, he was, amazingly, he was one of the first people converted under the evangelistic ministry of Billy Graham. Halsey, but Warren Weersbe, he wrote in his commentary on this passage, he said one of the first steps in turning tragedy into triumph is to accept the situation courageously and put yourself into the hands of a loving God who makes no mistakes.

One of the first steps in turning tragedy into triumph is to accept the situation courageously and put yourself into the hands of a loving God who makes no mistakes.

[19:56] and you know what we were saying was that if we want to turn our tragedies into triumphs then we need to look to the lord's promise and not focus upon our problem of sin we need to put ourselves into the caring and compassionate hands of the lord who makes no mistakes we need to trust the lord and lean upon him and look to him because he's trustworthy and his promises are

faithful but you know more than that in this letter of hope the lord not only directs his people to the promise of forgiveness the lord also calls the israelites not to view their punishment in babylon as an obstacle for their faith but an opportunity for their faith the lord says back in verse five we look at verse five the lord says to them or we'll read a verse four thus says the lord of hosts the god of israel to all the exiles whom i have sent into exile from jerusalem to babylon build houses and live in them plant gardens and eat their produce take wives and have sons and daughters take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage that they may bear sons and daughters multiply there and do not decrease but seek the welfare of the city where i have sent you into exile and pray to the lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare the lord calls the israelites to view their punishment in babylon not as an obstacle for their faith but an opportunity for their faith the israelites were to be the lord's witnesses as they lived among the babylonians for this 70 year period and the lord tells them as we read that he tells them build houses plant gardens have a family in babylon they were to live among the babylonians they were to get alongside the babylonians they were to work with the babylonians and be part of the community of the babylonians but they were not to become one of the babylonians they were to be faithful witnesses in a godless nation something they had failed to be in the past and you know it's really interesting the call that the lord was giving to his people it's just the call of christianity because as christians we've been called to live among the world but not become one of the world we're to be witnesses in the world but not of the world as christians we're to live lives that are distinct and separate from the godless nation that surrounds us as i've mentioned many times the phrase that i learned as a christian in fact it was one weersby that wrote it it was this phrase separation is not isolation it's contact without contamination separation is not isolation it's contact without contamination and that's what the lord calls his people to be he calls us to be in the world but not of it he calls us to be in the world but not of it and you know that's what paul reminded the philippians as well the philippians they were struggling struggling with all these worldly temptations around them they were living in the godless city of philippi and yet paul he urges the philippians to be faithful witnesses he says to them do all things without grumbling or questioning why that you may be blameless he says and innocent that you may be the children of god without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you are to shine as lights in the world holding fast to the word of life paul urged the philippians to be faithful witnesses in the godless city of philippi and here the lord is urging the israelites to be

faithful witnesses in the godless nation of babylon and that's what this passage is reminding us this evening that as christians were to be faithful witnesses among the people of our own community and no matter what difficult providence we encounter encounter in our lives do you know the lord has put us there and the lord has put that providence there and the lord has put these people whoever they may be these people we rub shoulders with the lord has put them in our path and they're there according to the lord's providence but you know we shouldn't see all these things as an obstacle for our faith we should see each and every one of them as an as an opportunity for our faith we shouldn't see them as obstacles for the gospel we should see everything as an opportunity for the gospel because the thing is my friend we worship and serve a great god and a great king and he can use us as poor and as weak as we are he can use us in any and every situation you know we often say that nothing is too hard for the lord or nothing is impossible with god but the question is do we believe that do we live that out do we believe that the lord can use all our obstacles all our worries or our concerns do we believe that the lord can use all these things as opportunities opportunities do we believe that the lord can use us to advance the gospel wherever we are and whatever we're doing whether we're a teacher in a secular classroom whether we're an employee in a worldly environment whether we're a parent just taking their children to school meeting other parents at the school or whether we're someone who's retired but involved in the life of the community what we have to remember is that like it was for the israelites in godless babylon and like it was for the philippians in godless philippi so it is for us the lord has providentially placed us where we are at this time in order to advance the gospel that's what it's all about we're not there by chance we're not there by accident we're there as it was for the israelites and the philippians and us we're all here by divine appointment for the purpose of being a faithful witness who seeks to advance the gospel of jesus christ and your circumstances today whatever they may be don't view them as an obstruction to the gospel view them as an opportunity for the gospel and you know when you see that the situation that you're in today wherever it is when you see that that's the lord's

sovereign purpose and plan when you see that that's his providence in your life when you see it and when you believe it you know that will give it to you a great confidence that will make you seek to advance the gospel exactly where you are and that's the message of hope the lord gave to the israelites in babylon they were to be faithful witnesses where they were where the lord had placed them and that even under the lord's punishment they still needed to believe the lord's promise they had to be a faithful witness why because the lord had a plan it's a wonderful thing the lord had a plan that's what i'd like us to see lastly we've considered the lord's punishment the lord's promise but lastly the lord's plan the lord's plan look at verse 11 he says for i know the plans i have for you declares the lord plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and i will hear you you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart and so having reminded the israelites of the lord's punishment in exile and given the lord's promise this promise of forgiveness and restoration from exile this personal letter from the lord this letter of hope it concludes with the lord's plan of salvation and you know it's a wonderful plan of salvation because the lord says in verse 11 that his plan of salvation it's not for evil it says there it's for welfare but literally it means peace it's not for evil it's for peace this plan the lord's plan of salvation it's a plan of salvation not a plan of damnation the lord's plan is to give sinners a future an eternal future it's to give sinners a hope an eternal hope the lord's plan is to bring redemption from sin to bring to bring return from exile to bring restoration for the kingdom reconciliation with himself this plan of salvation is clear the lord wants to bring peace he wants them to experience this the shalom of god the peace and reconciliation with god that passes all understanding and what's clear from these verses is that the lord knows is that the lord knows his plan and the lord knows that his plan will come to fruition the lord knows that his plan of salvation will be accomplished but you know what the lord makes clear here he says that if we want to be part of god's plan of salvation then we have to take our responsibility seriously because being part of the lord's plan of salvation the lord says it places a responsibility upon us the lord says you will call upon me and come and pray to me you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart these are the terms and conditions for being part of the lord's plan of salvation and you know they're non-negotiable the lord says you will call upon me and come and pray to me you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart and you know my friend what the lord is saying to you tonight he's saying if you want to be redeemed from your sin if you want to return from your position of exile far away from god if you want to be restored and renewed if you want reconciliation and peace with god then you must submit to the lord's terms and conditions and these are his terms and conditions then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and i will hear you you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart and the lord says i will be found by you declares the lord and i will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where i have driven you declares the lord and i will bring you back to the place from which i sent you into exile you know what the lord is saying if you really want to be saved if you really want to know jesus as your savior if you really want to be a christian then you will take your responsibility seriously you will call upon me you will pray to me you will seek me earnestly that's what the lord is saying you will seek me with all your heart not some of your heart not a little bit of your heart not half of your heart but all of your heart and my friend if you're seeking the lord if you're genuinely seeking the lord this is the thing you have to be genuine you have to be earnest you have to be sincere you have to be wholeheartedly seeking the lord for his salvation because the lord knows if you're not earnest the lord knows if you're not sincere the lord knows your heart if you want to be saved if you want to be part of the lord's wonderful plan of salvation then you need to surrender your life to the lord one hundred percent because you know the cross of jesus christ it's the lord's plan of salvation to give you an eternal future the cross of jesus christ is the lord's plan of salvation to give you an eternal hope this is the lord's plan to have peace with god because we can only have peace with god through the lord jesus christ and i find if you want to be saved if you really want to be saved you will submit to the lord's terms and conditions salvation is not just going to drop into your lap you have a great responsibility that's what the lord is saying to you tonight and i know that for many of you you have this perverted view of salvation where you always say if i'm going to be saved i'll be saved and there's nothing i can do about it but you know that's not what my bible tells me that's not what my bible tells me i don't know what bible you're reading but it's not what this one says because my bible never says sit and do nothing my bible never says it's that we're just to sit back and wait for salvation to drop into our lap that there'll be this bright light from heaven and the voice that speaks

to us and says yes you're saved now no my friend my bible is full of divine imperatives my bible is full of commands from god himself all you have to do is read isaiah 55 one of those great gospel chapters isaiah says to us everyone who's thirsty come come to the waters and drink and if you have no money still come he says and buy and eat yes come come buy without money and without price and then the lord says why are you going to spend money on that which will that which is not bread why are you going to labor for that which does not satisfy the lord says listen diligently to me incline your ear come to me here and your soul shall live the lord says to us do it now do it now while you have time while you're on mercy's ground while you still have breath in your lungs while you still have all your faculties before you're too late seek the lord he says while you're too while he's to be found call upon him while he is near my friend my bible is full of commands it never says sit back it never says do nothing it never says wait for the bright light it always says come take learn come come come listen incline hear seek call come not once does it say if you're in the elect sit back and do nothing not once does it say if you're in the elect just wait for it not once does it say if you're in the elect wait for the bright lights they're going to happen one day no my friend every divine command it encourages and appeals and pleads with you to respond and come to Jesus for salvation and that's what we see in this passage

the Lord is giving to you personally this letter of hope and he's saying you will call upon me and you will come and pray to me because you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart my friend what better letter to receive than this personal letter of hope because this letter as beautiful as it is on the pages of scripture it reminds us of the Lord's punishment it reminds us of the Lord's promise and it gives to us so clearly the Lord's plan and what a plan it is that you as a sinner can be redeemed from sin you can return from that exile that was given to Adam and Eve you can be restored and renewed and you can experience reconciliation and it's all there for you this is the Lord's plan of peace with an eternal future and an eternal hope this letter of hope is personally delivered to you to your doorstep but it comes with a great responsibility you will call upon me and come and pray to me you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart the letter is on your doorstep is it not about time you picked it up opened it read it and did as the Lord is commanding you because this wonderful letter of hope is commanding you call upon me come and pray to me and when you seek me you will find me with all your heart you will find me that's his promise so you seek him may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray

[38 : 25] O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee that in a world of sin and in a world that seems to be going headlong towards a lost eternity we thank thee that thou art a God who speaks into it and gives to us a word of hope that thou art a God who is able to change our hopeless end into an endless hope help us then to trust thee to trust every great and precious promise in thy word that thou wouldst speak to us this evening personally intimately and remind us of our need of thee Lord we need thee help us then to seek thee to seek thee with all our heart knowing that when we do so we will find thee Lord bless thy truth to us we pray bless the week that lies before us a week that is unknown to us a week that might have obstacles but help us Lord to have opportunities opportunities to share the gospel opportunities Lord to find Jesus and to know that there is a great opportunity before us this evening to come and to cast every care upon him because he cares for us

Lord do us good we ask thee go before us for Jesus sake Amen we're going to conclude our service this evening by singing in Psalm 126 Psalm 126 it's on page 419 Psalm 126 we're singing the whole Psalm and this Psalm it's actually the last Psalm that was written although it's Psalm 126 it's the last Psalm that was ever written so you could say it's the newest one and it speaks very clearly about what we were just looking at about the fortunes being restored the plan that the Lord had in bringing his people back from bondage in Babylon and how the Lord's people how they described it they were like those who dreamed they couldn't believe it salvation for them was so wonderful that their mouths was filled with laughter their tongues were singing praise to the Lord because of his wonderful salvation and they confessed as it says in verse 3 the Lord hath done great things for us whence joy to us is brought and when they experienced salvation they couldn't keep it to themselves they wanted to sow in tears that they might continue to reap in joy it's a beautiful

Psalm when Zion's bondage God turned back as men that dreamed were we then filled with laughter was our mouth our tongue with melody they among the heathens said the Lord great things for them hath wrought the Lord hath done great things for us whence joy to us is brought the

whole Psalm to God's praise when I a bondage caught turned by as when the tree were we then filled with laughter with laughter was our love our tongue with melody they among the heathens said the Lord great things for them have known our bondage for us when joy to us is brought as dreams of water in the sun our bondage

Lord recall earth soul and tears are reaping time of joy and joy they shall return the man who bearing precious seed then going forth doth more he doubtless bringing back his sheath retarded shall return 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