

Psalm 92: A Day of Thanksgiving

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 November 2023

Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. It's in the book of Psalms, page 498, if you're using the Pew Bible. Psalm 92, we're going to read again from the beginning. A psalm or a song for the Sabbath. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High, to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night, and so on.

Last month, so in the month of October, a Harvest Thanksgiving service was held in Scotland's capital at the St. Giles Cathedral on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. If you've ever been to Edinburgh or walked up the cobbled road off the Royal Mile that stretches from Holyrood Palace all the way up to Edinburgh Castle, then you'll have passed an iconic church on the way at St. Giles Cathedral. And of course, St. Giles Cathedral, it's an iconic church, not only because it has beautiful medieval stonework, it's got this 900-year-old architecture, but it's also an iconic church because it houses the pulpit of one of Scotland's famous, formidable, and also ferocious preachers. He was the Scottish reformer, John Knox. But in order to express Scotland's thankfulness for this year's harvest and to explain to all the tourists who walk up the Royal Mile who were passing by St. Giles Church, the congregation in St. Giles, they held a harvest Thanksgiving service that was slightly different because they parked a 30-ton combine harvester outside the front door of the church. I'm not sure what John Knox would have thought of a combine harvester parked outside the door of the church. I'm not sure what the elders would have thought in Barvis here if I had organized some of the local crofters to pack their tractors and their trailers and their mowers and their balers outside our church for our harvest Thanksgiving service this morning. But it would certainly get the message across, wouldn't it? It would get the message across that we're thankful to the Lord for the harvest He has provided. And is that not the message we want to get across this morning? That we're thankful to the Lord for the harvest He has provided. We're thankful to the Lord for the harvest He has provided. And you know, Psalm 92, it helps us to get that message across, that we're thankful to the Lord for the harvest He has provided. Because Psalm 92, it reminds us that a day of Thanksgiving is a day of gratitude, a day of grace, and a day of growth. A day of thanksgiving is a day of gratitude, a day of grace, and a day of growth. And there are three headings this morning. A day of gratitude, grace, and growth.

So first of all, a day of gratitude. A day of thanksgiving is a day of gratitude. That's what we see in the opening verses. We're told that this is a song for the Sabbath. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High, to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp and to the melody of the lyre.

[3 : 43] Now, as you know, when it comes to thanksgiving, we don't celebrate thanksgiving the way the Americans celebrate thanksgiving. Because Americans, they have been celebrating thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday in November since the beginning of the 17th century. And over the years, it has become, as you probably know if you know any Americans or if you've seen it on the telly, harvest thanksgiving has become a huge tradition where there'd be this family gathering of all these Americans and they would have turkey and all the trimmings and then they would have pumpkin pie to finish off. But across the pond here in Britain, we never really set a date or a day to celebrate harvest thanksgiving. Because when you actually look into the history of harvest thanksgiving or the harvest festival, as it was once known, the days and the dates throughout the centuries, they have repeatedly changed. They've changed sometimes depending on what happened in history. Sometimes it was all because of who was on the throne. The days and the dates of harvest thanksgiving have repeatedly changed. But the principle has always remained the same.

The message that we want to get across, that we are thankful to the Lord for the harvest He has provided. But you know, it shouldn't really matter what day or what date in the year we hold for harvest thanksgiving. Whether it's in September or October, which most churches in Britain hold it in, usually in October, or it's on the fourth Thursday in November. It shouldn't matter as long as we're thankful. It shouldn't matter as long as we're thankful. As long as we acknowledge and we appreciate the Lord's provision. As long as we have this attitude of gratitude for the Lord's goodness to us. And Psalm 92, it reminds us that there's actually not one day of thanksgiving a year for us to be thankful to the Lord. There's one thanksgiving day a week for us to be thankful to the Lord. And

Psalm 92, it tells us, it expresses and explains this to us in the title, the title of the psalm, because it says that it's a song for the Sabbath. It's a song for the Sabbath. Therefore, every Sabbath, every Sunday, every Lord's day should be a day of thanksgiving. Every Lord's day should be a day of thanksgiving. It should be the day that is sanctified and set apart for demonstrating and displaying our gratitude to the Lord. And that's what Psalm 92 seeks to remind us. It's a song for the Sabbath day.

It's a song to praise the Lord in thankfulness for His plentiful provision. In fact, the Hebrew word for thanksgiving, fascinating how all these Hebrew words link together, the Hebrew word for thanksgiving is derived from the Hebrew word to praise. So, thanksgiving and praise go hand in hand.

Thanksgiving and praise go hand in hand. Thanksgiving is, in fact, a form of praise. It's a form of praise and worship to the Lord, which is why Psalm 92 was written. It was written as a song of thanksgiving.

[7 : 12] It was written as a song to give praise and thanks to the Lord on the Sabbath day. It's a song even for the Sabbath day. It's a song for the Sabbath day. Now, as you know, the word Sabbath, it's a word that we're familiar with. But the word Sabbath means rest. It means, the word Sabbath means rest because our Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath, the Lord's day, it's to be a day of rest. But not just a day of rest, it's a day of rejoicing. Do you know that today is the best day of the week? And it should be your best day of the week. It's a day of rejoicing. Rejoicing in the provisions of our Heavenly Father.

Rejoicing that He is the one who has heard our prayers and our petitions. Even what we were saying and praying with the children, give us today our daily bread. And the wonder is that we are to praise and thank the Lord because we are of more value to Him. This is what Jesus says, more value to Him than the birds of the air or the lilies of the field. And we're so valuable to Him that He has provided all our necessary needs in life. The food on our table, the clothes on our back, the family in our home, the money in our wallet, the car that sits outside our house, and the fuel that goes into our car, the health in our body, even the silage that all the cattle and the sheep have to eat. He has provided for all our necessary needs. He has done, as Paul says, He has done in us and for us, exceedingly, abundantly, above all, more than we could ask or even think.

So that's why today is a day of rejoicing. What's more is that the Sabbath is to be a day of rejoicing because our Heavenly Father has provided for us not only physical needs, but also for our greatest spiritual need. He's provided a substitute. He's provided a Savior to take away our sin.

And this isn't news to you. You've heard this all before, that the Bible tells us that we are so valuable to our Heavenly Father. We're worth something to Him. We're so loved by Him that He sent His only begotten Son to be our Savior and our substitute for sin on the cruel cross at Calvary. My friend, the Sabbath day, it's a day of rest. It's a day of rejoicing. It's a day of redemption. More than that, the Sabbath is to be a day of resurrection. It's a day of renewal. It's a day of restoration because it's a day that reminds us that we do not worship a Savior who is dead, but one who is risen. Do you know Psalm 96, it reminds us that all the other gods, they're but idols dumb, which blinded nations fear, but our God is the Lord by whom the heavens created were. And you know, we gather on the Lord's day because we do not worship a Savior who is dead, but one who is risen. Because when Jesus Christ rose from the tomb on the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, the Lord's day, He destroyed the power of death. He defeated death.

[10 : 45] He conquered the grave. He brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And through His resurrection, Paul tells us He has been highly exalted. He's been given a name above all names.

That at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. You know, what better song to consider this morning than this song for the Sabbath? But as you know, I don't like referring to Sunday as the Sabbath. I like to call it the Lord's day because it is the Lord's day. Jesus is Lord over all, and He's Lord of the Lord's day.

And I'm sure I've mentioned to you before that there are only three things in the Bible that the Lord claims as His own. He claims as His own the Lord's people, the Lord's supper, and the Lord's day. It's His. His people, His supper, His day. The Lord's people, the Lord's supper, the Lord's day. And so when it comes to the Sabbath, when it comes to today, it's not my day. It's not your day. It's the Lord's day.

It's the Lord's day. It belongs to Him. The Lord has graciously given. That's how gracious He is. He's given us another six days of the week to do all that's needed, all that's necessary. And so He says to us, don't be greedy.

[12:24] Be thankful. Don't be greedy. Let's not be selfish. Instead, He says, let's have an attitude of gratitude. Let's demonstrate and display our thankfulness by giving the Lord's day to the Lord of the Lord's day.

Because, you know, even from this title, I know we haven't gone very far into the Psalm yet, but even from the title, Psalm 92 is reminding us that if we're truly thankful to the Lord, we'll give the Lord's day to the Lord. If we are truly thankful to the Lord, we will give the Lord's day to the Lord. I'll say it again. If we are truly thankful to the Lord, we will give the Lord's day to the Lord. But, you know, a day of thanksgiving is not only to be a day of gratitude, it's also to be a day of grace. A day of grace. That's what we see secondly.

So a day of gratitude and a day of grace. A day of grace. It is good, He says, verse 1, Good to give thanks to the Lord. To sing praises to your name, O Most High.

To declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night. To the music of the lute and the harp. To the melody of the lyre. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work. At the works of your hands I sing for joy.

[13:45] How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep. As we said, Psalm 92, it reminds us that there's not just one day in the year for having a day of thanksgiving.

But there's one day every week for having a day of thanksgiving. Because every Sabbath, every Sunday, every Lord's day should be a day of thanksgiving. And that on that day of thanksgiving, we should come to church.

That's what he's saying here. We should come to the Lord's house with an attitude of gratitude.

What attitude did you have coming into God's house this morning?

Was it an attitude of gratitude? Because if we're truly, as we're saying, if we're truly thankful to the Lord, then we'll give the Lord's day to the Lord. But you know, today is not only a day of gratitude, it's also a day of grace.

And it's a day of grace because, as you know, the word grace, it means gift. The word grace means gift. That's why when we sit down to eat a meal before we eat, we would stop and say the grace.

[14:56] That's what we call it, the grace. We give thanks to God for the gift, the grace of food, the gift of food. We give thanks to God for God's gift of a plentiful provision before us.

And so when we're saying the grace, we're not to say it flippantly or just parrot fashion, but we're to actually acknowledge and appreciate the goodness and the gifts and the grace of God towards us. And here in Psalm 92, we're being reminded that every Lord's day should be a day of thanksgiving because it's a day of grace. Today is a day of grace.

And you know, the thing is, so many people in our community, so many people in our country, they misunderstand and they misuse the Lord's day because they don't see that this day, this day, a beautiful day, it's graciously gifted and given to us.

For so many, they see the Lord's day as a grudge, not a gift. They see the Lord's day as a burden, not a blessing. They see the Lord's day as a bind, can't do this, can't do that, instead of seeing it as a benefit.

[16:10] They see the Lord's day as a dread, oh, they dread this day because they have to not do things. Instead of seeing it as a dread, they should see it as a delight. They see the Lord's day as a day of restraint, not a day of rejoicing.

So many people, they misunderstand and misuse the Lord's day because they don't see it as a day of grace. A day that has been graciously given to us by God. A day for our benefit and our blessing

and our delighting in.

That's why the psalmist says there in verse 1, The psalmist says it's a good thing.

It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord. It's a good thing, he says, to come into the Lord's house with an attitude of gratitude.

It's a good thing to gather together on the Lord's day to sing praise to His name. It's a good thing to lift up our voices in thankfulness for all of God's goodness and grace towards us.

[17 : 19] Because, you know, what better way to begin your week? What better way can you begin your week than to have a day of gratitude and grace by giving thanks to the Lord?

You know, we should always begin our week the right way. And by beginning our week the right way, we are to begin by giving thanks to the Lord.

Now, as you know, there are a couple of people in our congregation, not here today actually, a couple of people in our congregation called Grace, which I think is a great name. I think if Matthew was a girl, we would have called him Grace.

I haven't consulted with Alison on that, but we would have called him, I think we would have called him Grace. Because as we said, the word Grace, it means gift. Grace means gift. And our Bible, it beautifully reminds us that we need Grace.

We need to be saved by Grace. We need to be saved by receiving God's free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

[18 : 26] And as I learned as a child sitting in the Melbost Mission house, and as we often say to the children, we need to experience and enjoy Grace.

G-R-A-C-E. God's riches at Christ's expense. We need to all experience and enjoy God's riches at Christ's expense.

We all need Grace. We all need to be saved by Grace. We all need to receive God's free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Because as our Bible beautifully reminds us, it is by Grace that we are saved through faith.

This is not of yourself. It's not your own doing. It is the gift of God. It's not of works. That's why no one can boast. It is the grace of God.

It is God's riches at Christ's expense. And what the psalmist is saying here is that it's a good thing. It's a good thing to give thanks to the Lord for all of His goodness and all of His grace.

[19 : 34] His grace that is offered to us in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. We're to give thanks to the Lord for all of His goodness and all of His grace.

Now, I don't want to mention the C word. But when we're speaking about grace, you can't help but mention the C word.

Because it's only 36 days until Christmas. 36 days until Christmas. And as you'd expect, children, our children, especially in the manse, they're already thinking about it.

Thinking about Christmas. But the thing about Christmas, there's many good things about Christmas. But the thing about Christmas is that it's the greatest image and the greatest illustration of what God's goodness and what God's grace is really like.

Because as you know, when you love your family and friends, you'll give them good gifts. You put thought into your gift. You're generous with your gift. What's more is that Christmas presents, they're free.

[20 : 39] I don't know anybody who pays for their Christmas presents when they receive them. They're free to the recipient. Because you don't make the recipient pay for them. You don't work for them. You don't earn them. You don't give your good gift because that recipient is good enough or worthy enough to receive it.

No, the giver just generously and graciously gives their gift because they love that person. And the recipient gladly receives the gift, the generous and gracious gift.

And that's why Christmas is the greatest image and the greatest illustration of what God's goodness and what God's grace is really like towards us. Because God is so generous, is He not?

God is so gracious, is He not? God has given to us the greatest gift. It's a full and it's a free salvation. You can't pay for it.

You can't earn it. You can't work for it. You don't need to be good enough to get it. You don't need to know enough to get it. You don't need to be worthy enough to get it. And the amazing thing about this gift, it's not just for one or two people.

[21 : 44] It's not just for the elite. It's for everyone. It's offered to everyone. Everyone who asks will receive the gift of salvation by faith. And the thing is, we're encouraged and exhorted in the gospel to ask so that we might receive this free gift of God's grace.

And we receive it not because we're nice, but because we're naughty. Because we're full of sin. Because we're fallen sinners.

That's why we need this gift. That's why it's held out to us fully and freely. God's generous and gracious offer of salvation held out to us.

Held out to us. And all we're told to do in the Bible, all we're told to do is, just ask and you shall receive. Just ask and you'll receive it by trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation.

Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. You know, last week at YF, we had, I didn't want to embarrass her, but we had Marina McKenzie speaking.

[22 : 57] She was sharing her testimony. And one of the things she spoke of was what my predecessor, Reverend Calumian McLeod, used to say to you as a congregation.

And this is what stuck with me, though. This is why it stuck with me. He used to talk about grace.

Marina will confirm this. Maybe I'll get it wrong saying it. When it comes to grace, this is what Calumian used to say to you. Salvation is not a goal to be achieved, but a gift to be received.

Salvation is not a goal to be achieved, but a gift to be received. Now, I wonder how many of you heard Calumian standing in this same pulpit nearly 15 to 20 years ago saying those very words.

That salvation is not a goal to be achieved. I wonder how many of you heard Calumian saying those words. And you know what really hurts or really makes it hard is that you still haven't asked.

All this time has passed. And you still haven't asked. It's the same God. Still generous.

[24 : 12] Still gracious. Still holding out the gift of salvation to you. And you're still in the same lost condition you were in 15 to 20 years ago.

My friend, when is it going to change? Because the gift is still being held out to you. God is still generously and graciously holding out the gift of salvation to you.

The Bible says, well, now is the accepted time. Today. Today is the day of salvation. Today is a day of grace. You have another opportunity.

Today, the day of Thanksgiving. It's a day of grace. God is graciously offering the gift of salvation to you. So ask that you might receive.

Seek so that you'll find. Knock that the door will be opened to you. Today is a day of grace. But it's also a day of growth. A day of growth.

[25 : 20] That's what I want us to see lastly. It's a day of gratitude. A day of grace. And a day of growth. A day of growth. He says at the beginning of the psalm, And then down in verse 12, he says, As you can see, Psalm 92, it begins and ends the same way.

Or it ends the way it begins. Because Psalm 92, it begins by emphasizing that every Sabbath, every Sunday, every Lord's Day, It's a day of thanksgiving. It's a day of gratitude.

Day of grace. And a day of growth. But notice from those opening verses that it's not to be a half day of gratitude, grace, and growth.

It's not to be a half day. It's to be a whole day of gratitude, grace, and growth. Because he says we're to declare God's grace in the morning and declare His glory at night.

We're to declare the Lord's forgiveness in the morning and His faithfulness at night. We're to declare the Lord's love in the morning and His longing for lost sinners to be saved at night.

[26 : 53] My friend, our day of thanksgiving, according to this psalm, is that it's to be a whole day. A whole day of gratitude, grace, and growth.

Not a half day. We're not to be half day hearers. There's far too many half day hearers nowadays. We're not to be part time praisers.

We're not to be casual and consumerist Christians. No, this day has been gifted to us by the Lord. So we're to be grateful for it.

We're to be grateful for a day of gratitude. And a day of grace. And a day of growth. We're to be grateful for this day. You know, we should treasure the fact. And I don't think we realize how, dare I say, how good we've got it.

We should treasure the fact that there's a place of worship in our community with two services on the Lord's day. We should treasure the fact that the gospel of God's grace is preached and proclaimed in our community.

[27 : 58] So that we will grow in grace. And we'll grow in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And I say that because there are so many towns. And so many villages. And so many places.

Throughout our nation and throughout the world. Where that is not the case. It is not the case. They do not hear the gospel of God's grace.

They do not have the gospel preached and proclaimed to them. There are no churches open for them. They've been turned into pubs or shops. And yet we should treasure the fact.

That the Lord's house is open on the Lord's day. And His word is preached and proclaimed. And you know, that's why I can't understand how someone who is able-bodied, who wouldn't want to come to God's house and worship the Lord, as the psalmist says, in the morning and in the evening.

I can't understand why somebody wouldn't want to come. I know why people can't come. I know there are people with illnesses. I know that there are others with children.

[29 : 11] I know all these things. I'm your minister. I know what's going on in your life. But I also know there's many of you that could come. But you don't come. And it's not for me you're coming.

It's for the Lord you're coming. Because it's His day. It's His day of giving thanks to Him. It's His day of gratitude and grace and growth.

It's His day. It's all about the Lord. But you know, as Reverend William MacLeod often says, it's amazing that man is still preaching. He always says, and we always say it, when the cupboards were empty, the churches were full.

But now that the cupboards are full, well, the churches are empty. We know it. Maybe if our cupboards were emptied, the churches would be fuller.

Maybe we need our cupboards to be emptied in order for us to see that it all comes from the one who is gracious and who is generous towards us. Because, you know, if we were truly thankful to the Lord, this is what the psalm is emphasizing to me and hopefully to you, that if we're truly thankful to the Lord, we would give all of the Lord's day to the Lord.

[30 : 29] We would give all of the Lord's day to the Lord. We would make sure that our day of thanksgiving is a day of gratitude and a day of grace and a day of growth. It's a day of growth because, in contrast to all those who are mentioned in the middle of this psalm, those who are evil, those who are stupid, those who do not flourish, the psalmist goes on towards the end of the psalm and he says, verse 12, the righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

In contrast to those who are reluctant and refuse to thank the Lord for His goodness and grace, the righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

And what's amazing about those two trees, the palm tree and the cedar in Lebanon, the palm tree was known for its beauty. The cedar in Lebanon was known for its strength.

The palm tree for its beauty, the cedar for its strength. Which is why the psalmist says here, when you are planted in the house of the Lord, verse 13, when you're planted in the house of the Lord, when we're found in the Lord's house on the Lord's day, when we gather for the purpose of giving gratitude to God and hearing about His grace and also growing through His word, the psalmist says, we shall flourish.

We shall flourish. We shall grow in beauty like the palm tree. We will grow in strength like the cedar of Lebanon. We will flourish, he says. That's why we should come, so that we'll grow.

[32 : 03] And so, my friend, if you want to grow in your knowledge of Jesus Christ and your assurance of salvation, if you're wondering, am I a Christian or not, then be in church. Both ends on the Lord's day.

It's there, black and white, in the Bible. It's telling you what to do. If you want to grow in grace, then be in the means of grace. Use the means of grace. Read your Bible.

Pray. Attend church. Be part of the congregation. If you want to grow as a Christian, my Christian friend, if you want to grow, then be in Bible study.

How do our children learn in school? They study. How do we learn in university? We study. How do we grow as a Christian? We study God's word. And it's all there for our benefit.

It's all been given to us, graciously by God, for our benefit. And the psalmist, he says, start now. If you're young, start young.

[33 : 03] Start today. That's what he's saying there. Why? Verse 14. Because in old age, they will bear fruit. They will ever be like those palm trees and those cedars of Lebanon, full of sap and

green.

That's what he says. Start now. Start young. Start today. Get into the habit of it, of being in God's house. Be committed to it. Because as the psalmist says, when you're old, you'll bring forth fruit. And you'll continue to confess, verse 15, you'll continue to confess that the Lord, he alone is upright. He alone is my rock. And there is no unrighteousness in him.

Because he is so gracious to me. He is so good to me. He has given me so many good gifts. That's what everyone who uses the Lord's day as it has been gifted to us.

They will all confess, the Lord is upright. He is my rock. There is no unrighteousness in him. My friend, the time has gone.

[34 : 08] Today is a day of thanksgiving. It's a day of gratitude. A day of grace. And a day of growth. So what shall we render to the Lord?

For all is gift to us. Psalm 92 reminds us. To render thanks unto the Lord. It is a comely thing. And to thy name, O thou most high, do praise aloud to sing. Let's be thankful for the Lord's day. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, may we give thanks to thee for thy goodness towards us and thy grace in revealing thy Son to us in the portion of Jesus Christ.

We thank thee, O Lord, for the glory of the gospel, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. But even more so to know that we are able to receive his grace.

[35 : 12] We are able to grow in grace. And Lord, we pray that we would use thy day or that we would use it for our benefit, but ultimately to bless and to praise thy name, to give thanks and glory to God, to the God who is so good, who is so gracious, who is so generous towards us, who does in us and for us exceedingly abundantly above all, more than we could ask or even think.

Cleanse us, we pray, go before us and do us good, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing in the closing words of Psalm 92. Psalm 92, page 353 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. Psalm 92. We're singing from verse 12 down to the end of the psalm.

But like the palm tree flourishing shall be the righteous one. He shall like to the cedar grow that is in Lebanon. Those that within the house of God are planted by his grace. They shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place.

[36 : 37] Down to the end of the psalm. To God's praise. God's holy place. Amen. But like the palm tree flourishing shall be the righteous one.

He shall like to the cedar grow that is in Lebanon.

Those that within the house of God are planted by his grace.

they shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place.

And then old days when others laid they fruit still forth shall bring they shall be found and all of stuff and they be flourishing to show that all right is the Lord.

[38 : 47] He is a rock to me and deep from all unrighteous righteousness is all together free.

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