

Psalm 92: A Sunday Song

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- [0 : 0 0] But 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 Psalms, Psalm 92, page 498 in the Church Bible. And if we read again from the beginning. Psalm 92 from the beginning.
- A psalm or a song for the Sabbath day. 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.
- Never in a month of Sundays. Never in a month of Sundays. I'm sure we've all heard or even used that phrase before. But where does it come from? Never in a month of Sundays.
- Apparently, the expression was first recorded in 1832 to refer to an extremely long period of time. And of course, back then in 1832, if you didn't spend your Sunday in church, Sunday was seen as a drab and dreary day of the week that seemed to drag on and on and on.
- [1 : 2 2] Because back in 1832, as you know, all the shops, all the markets, all the pubs, they were all closed. Entertainment and amusement was all shut down. Travel was restricted.
- Sport even rested on the Sabbath. It all stopped on Sunday. And so if you didn't spend your Sunday in church, Sunday was a long day.
- And so a month of Sundays, you could say, well, a month of Sundays would seem like it was never going to end. It was like an eternity. Never in a month of Sundays. It was never going to happen.
- Never going to come to pass. Never in a month of Sundays. And you know, I'm sure that the church in our island probably said that about 30 years ago.
- Never in a month of Sundays will there be planes flying on the Lord's Day. And yet the first Sunday plane flew into Stornoway in 2002. Never in a month of Sundays will there be shops open on the Lord's Day.
- [2 : 2 4] And yet Inge's opened its doors the following year, 2003. Never in a month of Sundays will ferries sail on the Lord's Day. And yet the first ferry sailed on Sunday in 2009.
- Never in a month of Sundays will a supermarket open in Stornoway on the Lord's Day. And yet, as you know, Tesco is set to open next Lord's Day.
- And for our island, it now seems that the month of Sundays has passed. As the Lord's Day is being done away with altogether. But of course, the erosion of the Lord's Day, it's nothing new.
- What we're being confronted with are the same concerns, the same challenges, the same controversies that they faced in 1832. And back then, in the 19th century, D.L. Moody, he was a great evangelist.
- He could see that to erode the Sabbath, and even to eradicate the Sabbath, it would not only remove a day of rest in our week, but it would also remove the very foundation of society.

[3 : 34] Which is why D.L. Moody said, and I think what he said is absolutely brilliant. He said, the Sabbath question is a vital one for the whole country. The Sabbath question is a vital one for the whole country.

And this is what he says, And sadly, as an island and as a nation, the trajectory in which we are traveling is towards the nation going.

So how do we respond? Do we stay silent? Do we bury our heads in the sand? No. Do we speak out? Of course we do.

Do we preach about it? We must. But, you know, we should always respond the way Jesus responded. With care, compassion, and concern.

We should always look at those who are lost and wanting to erode the Lord's Day. We should look at them like Jesus did often and love them. My friend, we should respond, as many have already, by lovingly compelling people to see the beauty and the benefits and the blessings of the Lord's Day.

[5 : 01] The beauty, the benefits, and the blessings of the Lord's Day. Because that's what the songwriter does here in Psalm 92. He sings here in Psalm 92 a Sunday song. Here's a Sunday song for you.

And in this Sunday song, the psalmist or the songwriter, he reminds us and reaffirms to us what Sunday should be all about. Because for the psalmist or the songwriter, as we'll call him, he says that Sunday is all about gratitude.

It's all about grace. And it's all about growth. Sunday is all about gratitude, grace, and growth. There are three headings this evening. Sunday is all about gratitude, grace, and growth.

So first of all, he says Sunday is all about gratitude. Verse 1. 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.

As you can see from the title, this is a psalm or a song for the Sabbath day, which immediately indicates to us that this particular item of praise was used in worship on the Sabbath day.

[6 : 10] So as they gathered, as old Israel gathered together on the Sabbath day, they used this psalm in worship. Of course, it would have been the Jewish Sabbath, which was Saturday.

But as those in the New Testament church, that's us, we are to read Psalm 92. We're to sing Psalm 92 with New Testament spectacles on. We're to look at it from a New Testament perspective and see its relevance and even its application for us as we gather together to worship the Lord on the Lord's day, which is the Christian Sabbath.

In fact, the songwriter here, he states from the outset that the application of this Sunday song is that as the Lord's people, we are to gather together in the Lord's house on the Lord's day to worship the Lord, this is the answer to your first question, with an attitude of gratitude.

We're to gather together in the Lord's house on the Lord's day to worship the Lord with an attitude of gratitude. Because as the songwriter says, verse 1, it is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High.

My friend, the application and the attitude of this Sunday song is to be one of gratitude. Because we're being told that it is good. It is good.

[7 : 30] It's a good thing to give thanks to the Lord and to praise His name. It is a good thing to begin your week. What better place to begin your week? And what better thing to do at the beginning of your week than to worship the Lord?

It is a good thing, he says, to gather in the Lord's house on the Lord's day. It's a good thing to sanctify and set apart one day in seven to sing praise to the Lord.

And you know, what better way is there to rest on the Lord's day than to rejoice on the Lord's day? What better thing to do than to rest and to rejoice on the Lord's day by doing, as the songwriter says here, to render thanks unto the Lord, because it is a comely thing.

And as I know what we're being exhorted and encouraged to do in this Sunday song, to render thanks unto the Lord, it is a comely thing. And to thy name, O Thou Most High, do praise aloud to sing.

He says, it is a good thing. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Thou Most High. It's a good thing. You know, it always reminds me, those opening words there in Psalm 92, it always reminds me of what Peter said to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

[8 : 49] Do you remember when three of Jesus' closest disciples, Peter, James, and John, they were taken up onto a high mountain? And Jesus appeared before them with these two Old Testament starward saints.

There was Moses and Elijah. But Jesus, we're told, he was transfigured. His face was shining. His clothing was whiter than white. And as the disciples saw Jesus, as Jesus revealed a glimpse of his glory to these disciples, you could say that when Peter saw the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, what did he say?

He said, Lord, it is good for us to be here. He didn't want to be anywhere else. He didn't want to be among anyone else.

He said, Lord, it is good for us to be here. And you know, my friend, is that not our confession tonight, that as we gather together to worship in the Lord's house on the Lord's day, are we not coming here saying, Lord, it is good for us to be here?

I'm thankful to be here. I'm thankful. I had the strength to be here tonight. Because it's here that we sit under God's word. It's here that we sing praise to the God who made us and the God who provided salvation for us.

[10 : 11] It's here that we're given a glimpse of God's glory in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's here that we receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is good to be here. It's a good thing. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High.

My friend, it's good to be here. And with that, the songwriter, he reminds us and reaffirms to us that it's good for us to be here both morning and evening.

It's good for us to be here both morning and evening. That's what he says in verse 2. To declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night. Steadfast love in the morning, faithfulness at night.

In this Sunday song, the songwriter, he exhorts us and he encourages us to gather together in the Lord's house on the Lord's day, both morning and evening, to declare his steadfast love and faithfulness.

[11 : 12] We're to gather morning and evening to declare his steadfast love and faithfulness. We mentioned the first phrase, last Lord's day, when we were looking at Psalm 118, the hymn of thanksgiving, where we were reminded to give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

And we said that the steadfast love of the Lord is his undeserved, his unbreakable, his unrestricted, unconditional, unchanging covenant love towards us.

It's a love that never lets go. It's a steadfast, superglue love. That's the answer to the other question. It's a superglue love. But whenever we see the phrase steadfast love and faithfulness, when we see them side by side in the Bible, we should always stop.

And we should always think, Jesus. Because steadfast love and faithfulness is not referring to a proclamation. It's always referring to a person. Because in the New Testament, when you go into the New Testament where it's all revealed, John explains to us that God's proclamation of steadfast love and faithfulness, his proclamation of grace and truth, it has been revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Is that not what John says in his gospel? The prologue to his gospel. Right in the introduction, John tells us that the Word that was eternal, in the beginning with God, was God.

[12 : 40] He became flesh, dwelt among us. Why? So that we might behold his glory. The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full. Full of grace and truth.

Full of steadfast love and faithfulness. And that's who the songwriter is exhorting and encouraging us to sing about in this Sunday song. We're to sing about Jesus.

That's what he's saying to us. Right from the outset of this Sunday song, we're being told to sing about Jesus. And you know, my friend, don't let anyone ever tell you that Jesus isn't in the Psalms.

Don't let anyone tell you that we do not sing about Jesus in church. No, Jesus is in the Psalms in his fullness. Because he's here in this Sunday song.

He's here full of steadfast love and faithfulness. He's here full of grace and truth. And we're being exhorted and encouraged to sing about him.

[13 : 40] To sing about him in the Lord's house, on the Lord's day, both morning and evening. Which means that we're not to be half-day hearers.

Or part-time praisers. Or consumeristic Christians. No, we're to see that Sunday is all about gratitude. And Sunday is all about grace.

Sunday is all about gratitude. And as we see secondly, Sunday is all about grace. Gratitude and grace. Sunday is all about grace.

Look at verse 5. He says, How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep. The stupid man cannot know. The fool cannot understand this.

That though the wicked sprout like grass, and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever. But you, O Lord, are on high forever.

[14 : 41] As you know, the name grace, or the word grace, it means gift. That's another answer. And the Bible often uses the word grace to describe and to define our salvation.

Because we're saved not by works, but we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We're saved by grace because salvation is a gift. Salvation is a gift.

It's the gift of God. It's God's gift to this lost and fallen world. And what a gift it is. Because it's a free gift. It's not only a free gift, it's a full gift.

Because nothing is left out in this gift. It promises to you forgiveness of sins, adoption into God's family, a new identity in Christ. It promises you grace by the way, and even glory in the end.

And as you know, this full and free gift of salvation, it can't be earned. But it is to be enjoyed. It can't be bought, but it can be bequeathed to you.

[15 : 44] You can't work for it, but you must be willing to receive it. That's the key to grace. You can't work for it, but you must be willing to receive it.

Because it's all of grace. It's all gifted and given to us when we come to Jesus Christ, confessing our sins, and committing our life to Him.

Because the promise remains even tonight. Jesus says, Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.

Ask and you will receive this gracious gift of salvation. So salvation is all of grace, and it's all a gift of God. But what we often don't realize is that the Sabbath is also a gift of God's grace.

The Sabbath is also a gift of God's grace. That's why Jesus, who is the fulfillment of the Sabbath, Jesus said, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

[16 : 51] The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. In other words, the Sabbath, or Sunday, or the Lord's Day, it's a gift to be appreciated, not a gift to be abused.

The Lord's Day is a gift to be appreciated, not a gift to be abused. But as you know, and as is evident in our island, and even our nation, sadly, the Lord's Day is not appreciated, as it should be.

It's abused by many people. They don't see the beauty, and the blessings, and the benefits of the Lord's Day. And the songwriter here in Psalm 92, he's quite blunt, isn't he?

He's actually quite brutal in the way in which he describes those who abuse the Lord's Day, those who refuse to appreciate the beauty, and the blessings, and the benefits of the Lord's Day, because he calls them, verse 6, stupid.

He calls them foolish. He says they're wicked, they're evildoers, they're enemies of the Lord. Now you might think, well, that's a bit hard. That's a bit harsh. But the songwriter of Psalm 92, he's reminding us, and he's reaffirming to us, that the Lord's Day is a gift.

[18 : 01] It's a gift of God's grace. It's a gift that has been given to us. Therefore, to misuse, or to abuse that gift, is stupid. It's foolish.

To misuse and abuse a gift that God has given to us is stupid and foolish, because the Lord's Day has been given to us out of love for us, and even to look after us.

The Lord's Day has been gifted to us out of care for us, and compassion towards us. Which means that shopping and sport, eating out and entertainment, travel and Tesco, they're not the purpose, they're not the promises of the Lord's Day.

No, no. We are to rest on the Lord's Day, and we are to rejoice in the Lord's Day, because it's a day that God has graciously given and gifted, not just to Christians, but to all of mankind.

All of mankind has been graciously given and gifted the Lord's Day to rest and to rejoice in. And as you know, the Sabbath was gifted to us way back at the beginning.

[19 : 12] It's not a new thing. Right at the beginning of creation, the Sabbath was ordained. It was ordered that we were to take a Sabbath day off.

That's why we call the Sabbath a creation ordinance. It was ordered and ordained at creation. But you know, God, He not only established the Sabbath at creation, He exemplified the Sabbath at creation.

After God had created this world in all its beauty, after He had created the world in the space of six days, and He looked at it all and He said that it's all very good, what did He do?

He took a Sabbath day's rest. He sanctified and set apart the Sabbath. He not only called us to see the beauty of the Sabbath, He also exemplified the Sabbath for Himself.

He sanctified it and set it apart. He called it the Sabbath day because the word Sabbath means rest. Therefore, the Sabbath is to be a day of rest, a day to rest in the Lord and rejoice in the Lord.

[20 : 18] It's a day of rest that has been graciously given to rest our minds, our bodies, and our souls. We are to rest our minds, our bodies, and our souls.

And you know, in a generation, and we are in that generation, where everything and everyone is going at a hundred mile an hour, and you know, so many people, they're struggling.

They're struggling and they're suffering with stress, anxiety, depression, obesity, exhaustion, burnout. You know, in such a busy world with so much demanding our attention and so many people dissatisfied and discontent with life, God has graciously given the Sabbath to be a gift.

a gift, not a grudge. It's a blessing, not a bind. It's a benefit, not a burden. It's a delight, not a dread.

It's a day of rest, not a day of restraint and restriction. You know, my friend, God is so good to us that He has graciously given and gifted to us a day to come aside and rest a while.

[21 : 34] And you're aiming for young people. You're mobile. Turn it off on the Lord's Day. Take a break from it. Take a break from social media.

All of us, come aside, rest a while. It's a day set aside for us to rest our mind, our body, and our soul.

But of course, this day of grace, it's pointing us to a greater and more glorious Sabbath. That's what the writer to the Hebrews is pointing at. Jesus has provided for us an even better Sabbath, better than the Lord's Day you're having right now because you're going to have a great Lord's Day when you reach the Lord's House in glory, which is one we must all look forward to.

And so Psalm 92, it's a Sunday song which reminds us and reaffirms to us that Sunday is all about gratitude. Sunday is all about grace. And lastly, we see that Sunday is all about growth.

Sunday is all about growth. Look at verse 12. It says, The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

[22 : 49] They're planted in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age. They are ever full of sap and green.

To declare that the Lord is upright, He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Now, the Sunday song of Psalm 92, it concludes by showing us that Sunday or the Sabbath or the Lord's Day, it's not only a means of gratitude and grace, it's also a means of growth.

Because as the songwriter says, he says, He says that we flourish and grow.

We grow strong when we're planted and rooted in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day. We flourish and grow strong when we're planted and rooted in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day.

In fact, what the songwriter is showing us here is that our means of growth are the means of grace. Our means of growth, that's an answer to another question, our means of growth are the means of grace.

[24 : 09] Our means of growth are the means of grace. They are the means by which we grow in grace and grow in godliness. I've mentioned to you before, there was my good friend J.C. Ryle.

You can never get enough of J.C. Ryle. He said, the means of grace, there's five of them, prayer, Bible reading, worship, the sacraments, and the Sabbath.

It's a means of grace. The means of grace are prayer, Bible reading, worship, gathering together on the Lord's Day, sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and the Sabbath.

Therefore, the sanctity of the Sabbath, loving the Lord's Day, is a means of grace, and it's a means of growth. It's a means by which we will flourish, we'll grow strong, because we're planted and rooted in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day.

They are planted, verse 13, they are planted in the house of the Lord, they flourish in the courts of our God, they still bear fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green.

[25 : 17] And you know, that's what you often see with Christians who have been coming to church for years. They're still bearing fruit. They still have this desire, this longing, this want to be in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day.

You know, I often, when I read that verse, I often think of Duncan Mackay, the late Duncan Mackay. You all remember how he used to come to church in the latter years of his life. He was two sticks crawling in the door, because he had this deep desire to be in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day, gathering together with the Lord's people.

There was nothing that was going to stop him coming to God's house. And that's what it reminds us there, they still bear fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green.

And their declaration is that the Lord is upright, he is my rock, there is no unrighteousness in him. So, the means of grace they are a means of growth. They are a means by which we flourish and grow strong because we're planted and rooted in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day.

But of course, we're not just to be Sunday saints, we're to be daily disciples. Jesus isn't just to be the Lord of the Lord's Day, he's to be Lord of our everyday.

[26 : 38] He's to be Lord of our everyday. As the old saying goes, if Jesus is not Lord of all, then he's not Lord at all. If Jesus is not Lord of all, then he's not Lord at all.

He must be Lord of the Lord's Day and he must be Lord of Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday and the next Lord's Day. And so, when it comes to the Lord's Day, Jesus needs to be Lord of your Lord's Day.

You need to begin your Lord's Day with Jesus as Lord because the fact is Jesus is Lord of the Lord's Day. You know, when Jesus declared the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, he went on to say that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. And as I've mentioned to you before, there are only three things in the Bible that the Lord claims as his own. Only three things.

The Lord's people, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Day. The three things that the Lord claims as his own. He wants to share them with no one.

[27 : 46] They're his. His day. The Lord's people, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Day. And so, when it comes to the Sabbath or Sunday, it's not my day. It's not your day. It's the Lord's Day.

And if Jesus is not Lord of your Lord's Day, then it will have an impact. It will have an influence upon every area and every aspect of your life. Because as D.L. Moody reminded us, if you give up the Sabbath, church goes.

And if you give up church, the home goes. And if the home goes, the nation goes. Everything else follows. So my friend, if Jesus is not Lord of your Lord's Day, it will have an impact and an influence upon every area and every aspect of your life.

And this is why the songwriter is saying here that we flourish, we grow strong when we're planted and rooted in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day. And you know, I think this is so, so important, not only to our worship as Christians, but also to our witness.

So important, not only to our worship, but also to our witness as Christians, especially in an island community where everyone knows one another.

[28 : 58] because we're not to be hypocrites. It's one thing Jesus warns us against in the Sermon on the Mount. We can't be hypocrites.

We can't say one thing and do another. We can't be up in arms about Tesco opening on the Lord's Day and yet flying and taking the ferry or attending football matches on the Lord's Day.

That's absolute hypocrisy. Now, I know people use Sunday travel for hospital appointments and if someone is unwell or dying, everyone knows that's necessity and mercy.

But you know, we can't live, and I often think this, we can't live as Lewis Christians on the Lord's Day and then do something different when they're on the mainland out of the eyes of those around us.

The Lord is the same whether He's here in Lewis or He's in Imerness or Glasgow or whatever it may be. You know, I often think it's no wonder the world is confused by the church because we're not consistent.

[29 : 54] We're not committed to Christ and His day. And that's what we need. We need commitment. We need to be consistent. Jesus needs to be Lord of the Lord's Day and not just the Lord's Day.

Every day. Because if He's not Lord of all, then He's not Lord at all. And which is why Psalm 92 is this Sunday song. It reminds us and reaffirms to us that Sunday is all about gratitude.

We're to render thanks to the Lord. It is a comely thing. Sunday is all about grace. God has graciously given us this day. A day set aside to come aside and rest a while.

And Sunday is all about growth. Growth where we will flourish and grow strong in our worship and our witness when we are planted and rooted in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day.

What a song to sing as we go into a new week. A Sunday song all about gratitude, grace, and growth.

[31 : 06] Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we give thanks to thee for thy word, thy word that is always so relevant.

And we thank thee, O Lord, that thy word is fulfilled in thy son, the Lord Jesus. And help us, we pray, even as we leave this evening, to sing this Sunday song, realizing that it has been given to us to worship our great God and to go into this new week being assured that he is with us, that he promises never to leave us and never to forsake us.

Help us then to know his grace with us and to know, Lord, that we are growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Bless us, Lord, in our time together. Watch over us in our parting one from another that thou wouldest go with us, we ask, and do us good for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, we're going to bring our worship to a conclusion this evening.

We're going to sing the concluding words of that psalm or song, Psalm 92. Psalm 92, page 353 in the Blue Psalm book.

[32 : 26] We're singing from verse 12 down to the end of the song. Psalm 92, page 353 and verse 12. But before we sing, I have four questions that I know there are people who are itching to answer.

So question one, what kind of attitude should we have towards the Lord's Day? Gratitude. So remember that. Every Lord's Day, attitude of gratitude.

Complete the sentence, the steadfast love of the Lord is like super glue. So it's strong and it's sticky. The Lord's love is always towards you.

What does the name or word grace mean? Gift. Yep. Gift. So we're saved by grace and the Sabbath is a gift. Complete the sentence, our means of growth are the means of grace.

Yeah. The means of grace. Now do you remember what they are? Well, that's good too. God's riches at Christ's expense. Yeah, right. What are the means of grace?

[33 : 32] Do you remember? Prayer, reading the Bible. What else? Worship, sacraments, and the Sabbath. Yeah, well done guys. Good job.

And what were the points? Gratitude, grace, and growth. Good job. Okay. Psalm 92 from verse 12.

But like the palm tree flourishing shall be the righteous one. He shall like to the seed to 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 we'll sing on down to the end of the psalm of Psalm 92 to God's praise. PHANTALES He shall like tear the city to grow that is in Lebanon.

Those that within the hearts of God are planted by His grace.

[35 : 13] They shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place.

And in all days when others made the fruit still forth shall bring.

They shall be fat and full of sun and day be flourishing.

To show that upright is the Lord.

He is a rock to me. And here from all unrighteousness is all together free.

[36 : 46] 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. Amen.