

A Day of Celebration!

Psalm 118:21-29

April 17, 2011

Today is a day of celebration...

...as we do here at Kossuth St. Church every Sunday, we celebrate the risen LORD Jesus Christ who is the King of the Kingdom of God who left the glory of heaven and came to earth to be born in very humble circumstances in order that He might live a perfect life so that He could offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice, satisfying the wrath of God for all who would trust in Him alone. Do you believe this?

...we celebrate the work of God in the lives of Mark and Amanda from whom we have heard as they have followed the Lord in obedience to His command in the waters of baptism this morning....what a great blessing to hear the story of God's work in their respective lives in unique ways.

...we celebrate the all-powerful work of the Spirit of God who has the ability to take a spiritual dead individual and open their eyes to see the glory of Jesus Christ....who had *"no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him."* (Isaiah 53:2)

...we celebrate the *"stone that the builders rejected"*...which *"has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."*...the Lord Jesus Christ upon whom His Church is founded and being built.

...we celebrate the power of the Gospel....the on-going building of the people of God who were once blind, but who are now seeing just how marvelous the LORD Jesus Christ is, all because of the work of the Spirit of God in their lives through the word of God. These are turning from their sin and trusting in the LORD Jesus Christ alone, who is able to save.

...we celebrate the privilege to be faithful in the proclamation of the Gospel...the announcement that people who are the enemies of God because of their sin can be made right with their Creator, who is their Owner. This offer of reconciliation with God can be made because of the perfect life, death, burial and resurrection of God's One and Only Son, Jesus. I invite you to respond to the command God issues to "all people everywhere"...to repent of your sin...to turn away from it and trust in Jesus Christ alone as the ONLY way to be made right with God, your Creator.

Does your heart resonate with the joy of today's celebration? Does your spiritual pulse quicken at the thought of all we have ALREADY heard and witnessed in this place this morning? _____ If this morning has just be another day at church for you, I want to challenge you to examine your heart before the LORD...to get your spiritual blood pressure checked to see if there is any spiritual life in you at all! If you have seen the spiritual deadness of your own hear, call out to the LORD who is all-powerful to save...ask him to open your eyes to see how marvelous He is!

Example of Google Earth....gives perspective....looking back from a specific location...looking ahead toward it....very different views!

Today in various parts of the world, people who normally don't attend church have attended...maybe you are here this morning because of the special nature of this day.....why? Because, of course, it is what people "do" on Palm Sunday...they have gone waving their Palm branches, remembering, some for the first time since last Easter, the beginning of the week leading up to the arrest, "trial", condemnation, and execution by crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 21, Mark 11-12:12, Luke 19:28-20:18, John 12:12-19). This morning we want to go back to Psalm 118 to examine several themes from one of the songs of Israel... ..sung at the remembrance of Passover...when God worked on behalf of His people to liberate them from the enslavement of the Egyptians so that they could go and worship Him. This remembrance points us forward to the work of the Promised One...the Messiah/the Christ...Jesus! In fact, we see this Psalm, one of the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament, cited by the people who recognize something special about Jesus and which Jesus Himself uses to point to Himself and the work He had been sent to do.

READ Psalm 118

The God who made promises thousands of years ago is Faithful and True...He NEVER forgets those promises and ALWAYS keeps them. We will see specifically this morning the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are partially fulfilled through Moses and then in David and then years later find complete fulfillment in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ...through His life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension...all of which have specific implications in the lives of those of us who trust in Him TODAY...in the 21st century and will continue to have implications until Jesus returns to take His people to be with Him forever!

This morning we are going to take a quick look at verses 21-29...the last third of this song of prayer and praise sung frequently by the people of Israel. Psalm 113 – Psalm 118 comprise what is known as the Egyptian Hallel...or Egyptian praise song...known in this way because these were the songs the people of Israel sang when they celebrated and remembered the LORD's deliverance of them from the hand of the Egyptian slavery. It seems Psalms 113-115 were sung prior to the Passover meal while Psalms 116 -118 were sung after the meal. Remember the words of Matthew (26:30)...*"And when they ad sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."* Psalm 118 gives us perspective, as it directs our attention to the past...all the way back to the covenant promise God makes with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob....rejoicing in the work of God in being a covenant-keeping God and then pointing our attention forward, as we have opportunity to see it in retrospect, to the future coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah/the King of Israel.

From Psalm 118 we want to see how the response of the heart of a person transformed by the power of God will be dramatically different from one who is hardened in unbelief...or one who is simply going through the motions, because he/she knows what is expected of him.

1. A different observation (about their situation)
2. A different attitude (toward the Messiah)
3. A different response (toward their Creator/Owner)

As we consider this song of prayer and praise, pausing for a moment and remembering the dynamics of the slavery of the people of Israel in Egypt, will assist us in our growth of appreciation for the work of

God...not only in the lives of the Israelites, but also in our own understanding of the greatness of God and His work in our lives. For He has freed us, His people, from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son:

- The people of Israel groaned
- The people of Israel cried out for help
- The people of Israel cried for rescue from slavery
- God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob
- God saw the people of Israel
- God knew [took notice of them] (Ex. 2:23-24)

Under Roman rule

- The people of Israel were groaning
 - Dominated by a oppressing government
 - Heavy-handed Taxation
- The people of Israel were crying out for help
- The people of Israel were longing for a deliverer from foreign rule
- The people of Israel were STILL waiting for the Messiah

This Psalm has also been referred to as the Christian Psalm

The Christian (or the follower of Jesus Christ) is someone:

- who is undeserving of God's favor and therefore, is what he is by God's mercy and grace
- who before Christ was groaning under the taskmaster of sin
- who before Christ was crying out for help.
- who before Christ, was crying for rescue from slavery to sin, and therefore was:
 - was SEPARATED from Christ,
 - ALIENATED from the commonwealth of Israel,
 - was a STRANGER to the covenants of promise,
 - who had NO hope...
 - was WITHOUT God
 - having NO hope of freedom from enslavement to sin

So the response of the believer, therefore,

1. A different observation (about their situation)

- a. Salvation coming from the LORD, (v. 21)
- b. The marvelous nature of the rejected "stone" becoming the Standard, (v. 22)
- c. A blessed One, (v. 26) John 6:40
- d. He has made his light to shine upon his people (v. 27)
- e. He is MY God (v. 28)

Points to Practice – regarding your sinful life

- Repent of the notion that you can, or have contributed in any way to your salvation.
- Align your thinking with God's way of saving His people from their sin...through the rejected "stone"
- Embrace God's perspective on the Promised One...He is approved by God!
- Confess and repent of the sin revealed by the light.
- Daily live in the joy that, by his grace and mercy, God is YOUR God

2. A different attitude (toward the Messiah)

- a. Standard, the "head" of the corner...NOT the rejected one (v. 22)
- b. Savior, (v. 25) (The object of the prayer: *Hosanna...Save us, we pray, LORD!*)
- c. Sacrifice (v. 27)

Points to Practice – regarding the Messiah

- a. The perfect life of Jesus Christ leaves no room to rationalize sinful behavior.
- b. The perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ leaves no room for a life of distraction and apathy.
- c. The perfect and acceptable sacrifice of Jesus Christ leaves no room for a passive lazy faith.

3. A different response (toward their Creator/Owner)

- a. thankfulness, (v. 21)
- b. this is the LORD's doing, (v. 23)
- c. rejoicing...NOT groaning, (v. 24)
- d. blessing (v. 26)
- e. thanksgiving (v. 28)
- f. extolling (high praise...laud) (v. 28)

Points to Practice – responding to truth

- a. Ask God to change your attitude of ingratitude.
- b. Rejoice in God's sovereignty...HE is the ruler of ALL...Reject your resident man-centeredness which seeks to creep up on you DAILY.
- c. Rejoice in God's marvelous work through His Son without which you would have no hope.
- d. Put away your rebellion and agree with God with all you heart, soul and mind
 1. What He says about Himself;
 2. What He says about you;
 3. What He says about your sin;
 4. What He says about His Son, Jesus;

5. What He says about His Church...
- e. Repent of your thanklessness and sense of entitlement and meditate on Scripture which will give you numerous reasons to be thankful.
 - f. Continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (Hebrews 13:15)

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Psalm 118:29

Questions related to Psalm 118:21-29

1. Read Psalm 118 in its entirety. What are some recurring themes you can identify in this Psalm?
2. (v. 21) How has the LORD become the salvation of His people?
3. (v. 22) Who is the “stone” that was rejected? In what other passages do we find reference to this rejected “stone”? What significance does it have? What encouragement does it give?
4. How does Jesus use Psalm 118:22 in relationship to Himself? (Matt. 21:42, Mark 12:10-11, Luke 20:17)?
5. How does Peter use Psalm 118:22? (Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7)?
6. (v. 23) Why should a rejected stone be marvelous in the eyes of anyone?
7. (v. 24) Why should we rejoice and be glad in this day?
8. (v. 25) What is the meaning of Hosanna? What significance does it have in this context? How is it used in the New Testament?
9. (V. 26) Why is the one “who comes in the name of the LORD” blessed? How does John 6:40 relate to this idea?
10. (V. 26) In what ways do we bless God?
11. (V. 27) Why did we need the light that the LORD God shone upon us? Where would we be without that light?
12. (v. 27) On a day of celebration, what is the need to speak of a sacrifice and an altar?
13. (v. 28) Is there significance in the fact that “You are my God” is spoken twice?
14. In what ways do we respond to the God who has:
 - a) made Himself known to us;
 - b) given up the glories of heaven for us;
 - c) lived a perfect life for us;
 - d) offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for us;
 - e) risen again for us;
 - f) is seated at the right hand of God for us.
15. What is the difference between giving thanks and extolling?

16. Why do you think we don't appreciate salvation as much as we ought?
17. What are some concrete steps you could take to grow your appreciation of the salvation God has worked in your life?
18. Why do you think our ideas about sin are so misguided? How did you come to the understanding of sin that you have?
19. Why do you think our ideas about God are so small? Practically speaking, how might you grow your understanding of God and His greatness?
20. To whom is salvation to be attributed exclusively? Why?
21. How did this work become "marvelous" in our eyes?
22. With which "point to practice" did you most identify? Specifically, how will you seek to integrate this into your life?