

Psalm 108
Feilding Baptist
23.2.25

Call to Worship

Welcome to worship at Feilding Baptist!

This morning we look at Psalm 108, the opening lines are;

Psalm 108 New International Version - UK
A song. A psalm of David.

- 1 My heart, O God, is steadfast;
I will sing and make music with all my soul.
- 2 Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.
- 3 I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
- 4 For great is your love, higher than the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
- 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.

These last three verses were a chorus that was sung and sung a couple of decades or more ago. It helped if you could reach the very high notes, let your glory be over all the earth...

Father, thank you for David's words here, his confidence in you, and his place before you. Thank you for the way he engages with nature, with the dawn chorus, being the dawn chorus to the dawn chorus. May that passion and enthusiasm for you be our experience too. May we also sing of you among the peoples. May we each day be wonderfully grateful for your love and your faithfulness.

Holy Spirit please help us to respond to this love. Please spread the glory of Jesus over all the earth. May there be delight in Jesus in the four corners of the earth. Holy Spirit, please give us grateful hearts as we worship this morning. Please fill our minds with good things. Please bless this time, and this space, in Jesus' mighty name we pray, Amen.

Message - Permeating Faith

We walk with God into the world, spreading a positive difference, like the smell of good food to the hungry.

Who comes to mind when you hear of someone who eats, sleeps, and breathes, something?

I have a nephew who works for a logging contractor. He loves the work. In fact, he eats breaths and dreams of logging! It's not just a job for him. His boss commented that before Shane started working for him the other workers would finish for the day and be out the gate as fast as they could.

But now at knock off they hang around and have a few laughs, enjoy each other's company. Yes, that's personality. But it's also heart, his heart is so into it. He just wants to give everything.

Greg Foran who leads Air New Zealand also seems to be like this. Especially when he was running the Wal Mart chain of shops. Interesting, he said that what drives him is the fear of failure, more than the desire to win.

I think of Jacinda Ardern who realised that she no longer was eating, sleeping and breathing being the country's leader. Her heart was no longer in it, so she checked out.

Imagine a Prime Minister who only worked from 9 to 5. At two minutes past five their EA says, hey, I've got Donald Trump on the line. The prime ministers says sorry, tell him to ring back during working hours.

When you have a job that is your heart and soul, the hours don't matter.

Is this like faith? Is faith our heart and soul? Do we eat breath and sleep faith? Maybe not. For God gives us passion for work, and skills for other things in our lives. It isn't wrong to be passionate about logging or farming or dressmaking or baking or teaching. But faith, should permeate through all aspects of our lives. Faith shouldn't be just certain hours of the day or week.

Do you agree?

What does it look like when faith permeates our lives?

What does it look like when faith doesn't?

Look at how this Psalm begins, My heart O God is steadfast. Not head, but heart that is stable, secure, firm, permanent. This isn't the theory of faith, as it would be if it was just your head that was in it, this is the heart of faith, the outworking of faith, the experience of faith.

This is an interesting Psalm. And it's also interesting in that this Psalm isn't original. There has been an editor who for some good reason has taken the ends of David's Psalm 57:7-11 and 60:5-12 and joined them to make a new Psalm. It's a copy and paste with a little bit of Chat GBT (AI).

Let's read Psalm 108.

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- 4 For great is your love, higher than the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
- 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.
- 6 Save us and help us with your right hand,
that those you love may be delivered.
- 7 God has spoken from his sanctuary:
'In triumph I will parcel out Shechem
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.
- 8 Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah is my sceptre.
- 9 Moab is my washbasin,
on Edom I toss my sandal;
over Philistia I shout in triumph.'
- 10 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
- 11 Is it not you, God, you who have rejected us
and no longer go out with our armies?
- 12 Give us aid against the enemy,
for human help is worthless.
- 13 With God we shall gain the victory,
and he will trample down our enemies.

Footnotes

Psalm 108:1 In Hebrew texts 108:1-13 is numbered 108:2-14.

V1 Steadfast

My heart O God is steadfast, v1. Can we say that of ourselves to God?

I will awaken the dawn, v2, such is the enthusiasm for worship in a new day. The steadfast hearts lead to worship. They sing, make music, are joyful. Even before the dawn they're delighting in life!

What a picture to aspire to! There's a positive enthusiasm here that is challenging. Gratefulness is to God, but for what?

Ah, v4, God's love and faithfulness. So which love is this? Is it phileo brotherly love, eros intimate love, or unconditional agape love?

The interesting thing is that this is hesed again, the same word we had last week, that word that means, the Grace, Mercy, Faithfulness, Goodness, Graciousness, Favour, Devotion, Loyalty, Compassion, Loving kindness, of our God. The character of God. What do we do with this?

The singer here makes music and give thanks for God's hesedness (v4 faithfulness). Faith is never happier than when it can fall back upon the promise of God (Spurgeon). The celebration of God's hesed includes making music with harp and lyre (NICOT, 823). Not only will the redeemed of last week's chapter 107 hear them, but also the nations and peoples as well, v3.

Verse six, has love as well, another Hebrew word, more beloved. It reflects a really close relationship, between the beloved and God. There is the request to save us, which draws a response from God in v7, the list of nations.

Now, here's the interesting thing. When David wrote Psalm 57 and 60, around 1000BC, the world was very differently to when Psalm 108 was put together. This was 500 years later, after the people of God were released from Babylonian exile, 538BC. The point is that God is over all nations, and all peoples. And this includes the Edomites.

Remember when we looked at Obadiah in January last year? The people of Edom betrayed Israel/Judah by helping the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem (Obadiah 12-13). God is over them as well. Perhaps the sandal that is over them, is a sandal that will be given for them at the gate of the city? A transaction, a sale. There's some history here to dig into.

Having just heard God speak, assuring God's supremacy over the nations, v11 is a bit surprising, a complaint to God! You have rejected us! You don't go with our armies! But they want God to go with them, because, v12, human help is worth nothing.

What is important is, v13, being with God. Ah, steadfast heart, and 'with God'. Perhaps the people are realising, admitting, that their return from exile is nothing to do with their efforts, but completely because of the hesed of God. It was an undeserving gift of God (NICOT, 826). The singers of this Psalm not only give thanks, they will continue to rely on God, be with God.

We never live beyond trouble. We always need God's help.

May we also need to rely on God, walk with God, and remember to give thanks.

Is that it?

Ah, what about head and heart faith? What about 9 till 5 faith? What about Jesus? Here is an Old Testament Psalm, a Psalm where David is looking to God as he knew God. We look to God as we know God, looking to Jesus.

What does it mean to look to Jesus with only our heads? What difference does it make when we involve our hearts in following Jesus? Faith should not be 9 to 5. Faith in Jesus should permeate everything.

Now, I sometimes wander around and pick up a bit of rubbish. Most of the rubbish, well, a fair bit of the rubbish comes from a certain place with an upside down W. Now I could get a placard and stand outside, protesting the existence of this store.

Don't chuck your muck in my backyard!

Long Live Wanaka!

No more fast food!

If this store was shut down, Benjamin would be out of a job, but there would be a lot less rubbish. And I'm sure I would get on the news, and I'm sure most people would think, another loopy Christian!

In the last few weeks there have been ‘Christian’ protests in libraries, at parades, and at pedestrian crossings. Yesterday there were seven churches torched in Masterton. Why? Do we want to be known for what we’re against, or for compassion, love, contribution to people and community?

How much is faith about head? How much about heart? How much is steadfast? How much is ‘with God’?

It is six and a half years since I’ve preached from Romans here. Sometimes I wonder if New Zealand Bibles are missing Romans chapter 12?

Romans 12:9-21 New Living Translation

9 Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection,[a] and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.[b] 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13 When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!

17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

“I will take revenge;
I will pay them back,”[c]
says the Lord.

20 Instead,

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them.
If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap
burning coals of shame on their heads.”[d]

21 Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Footnotes

12:10 Greek with brotherly love.

12:11 Or but serve the Lord with a zealous spirit; or but let the Spirit excite you as you serve the Lord.

12:19 Deut 32:35.

12:20 Prov 25:21-22.

Let’s walk with God into the world, spreading a positive difference, like the smell of good food to the hungry. Let’s have hearts that are steadfast and not heads that are hard.

Benediction

Commission & Benediction

(based on Romans 12: 9-12; 2 Thessalonians 2: 16-17)

Let love be genuine.

Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.

Love one another with deep affection,
thinking of others more highly than yourself.

Serve the Lord with zeal.

Rejoice in hope.

Be patient in suffering.

Persevere in prayer.

And may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father,
who loved us and by His grace
gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

encourage your hearts and strengthen you
in every good deed and word.
Amen.