

**Psalm 89: 1-18; “Do You Know the Joyful Sound?”, A Sermon delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall at Birkwood Village Assisted Living,
on the afternoon of October 13th, 2024.**

This Psalm was written, it says in the inspired heading, as a contemplation of Ethan the Ezrahite, probably at the time of the great decline of the Davidic kingdom in the time of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. It was a time when Ethan, and many in Israel, were wondering whether the Lord’s lovingkindnesses had failed, as it says in verse 49, and whether God would continue to be merciful in relation to the covenant that He had made with David. The kingdom was divided; the people’s loyalties were divided between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. It was kind of like the situation in our country today. But these words show us that the Spirit revealed to Ethan that God’s faithfulness would continue, and that it would continue forever.

This truth of God’s faithfulness is the “joyful sound” which is talked about in verse 15 which is declared to God’s people by God Himself; to their minds and to their hearts. So at this time, I would like to ask whether you personally have come to know this joyful sound; of experientially knowing God’s faithfulness to you, and believing that it will be shown to you, to all generations? Let me give you 3 Considerations of God’s Faithfulness which are given to us in these verses.

1st of all – The joyful sound of God’s faithfulness to be merciful to His people forever.

(verses 1 and 2)

“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.” “For I have said, ‘Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.’” I hope that you see the importance of declaring the faithfulness of God in His mercy to you personally. I want to remind you that if you are a Christian, that it was because of God’s mercy that He saved you through Christ, in the first place. You did not save yourself from your sins. You simply believed in the gospel. You didn’t believe in what you were doing by your works would make you right with God, so that He could save you. You did not believe that you could change your own heart without His working. You may have even heard the gospel over and over again before you really believed it, and were saved.

How then were you turned, dear Christian, to see the love of Jesus Christ? He showed you your own sinfulness and He showed you the beauty of Christ. It was that He turned you to behold in the gospel, His obedience, and His sufferings in your place. Was this not His Spirit’s working that caused this to come about, in accordance with His mercy? Well, yes it was! Remember Ephesians chapter 2, and verse 4? “But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Oh, how merciful God is in the New Birth. You as a Christian did not bring about your own conversion to Christ by your own free will. No, you were made willing to trust in Christ in the day of His power. The Lord, being merciful to you by His Spirit blew the wind of His gracious influences upon Your heart, according to the eternal purpose of God, in the exact time of His purpose, and He mercifully illumined your darkness. You saw that you were a sinner, and you saw that you needed Christ. You found God true to His word in the gospel, and you found life in Jesus name because God was merciful to you, the sinner. Now you sing of His faithfulness.

2nd – Let’s think together about the joyful sound of God’s faithfulness to His covenant in all generations.

Verse 3 says – “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: ‘Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.’” We must ask ourselves this very sad question: How could David’s seed be established forever, when we find

that Solomon was unfaithful to the Lord at certain critical points, and his grandson Rehoboam lacked the wisdom to be able to keep the kingdom from becoming divided in his days. How did Israel, in one generation, go from the glory of Solomon's peaceful reign, to the fear and anguish and uncertainty of Rehoboam's reign? How then could mercy be built up forever to all succeeding generations, with such unfaithful kings as were seen in Israel? Well, let's be clear, this unfaithfulness began with Solomon's sins during his peaceful reign. He was unfaithful to God in certain ways which he should not have been.

He was unfaithful to God, and unfaithful to the commandments of God's word which were specifically given to him as the king of Israel. He disobeyed God express commands in Deuteronomy 17: 14-20. Listen to it – "When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother." "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'" "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself."

"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites." "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel."

Now this was a part of the Old Testament, Old Covenant law which was given to the kings of Israel. These commands were negative, to show Solomon what he should not do; that is, he should not multiply horses, which he did. And he should not multiply wives for himself, which he did, in a very great and extensive way. And he should not multiply gold and silver for himself, which he also did in a mighty way. Positively, he was told that when he sat on the throne that he should write for himself a copy of this law, the law of the Old Covenant, and he should read it all the days of his life, so that he would learn to fear the Lord, and be careful to observe all the words of the law, so that his heart would not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he would multiply his days.

This, evidently Solomon did not do. He may have written it down, but he did not read the book of the law all the days of his life. And this is why he fell into the other sins which were forbidden for him to do. And so what did the Lord do? He brought Solomon under his discipline. It says in 1st Kings 11: 11, verse 9 - "So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord commanded." Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant." (that is – to Jeroboam the kingdom was given, in Rehoboam's days)

But let me ask – Did these evil actions of Solomon nullify the covenant that is mentioned in verse 3 of our text, the covenant made with David, that his seed would be established forever to build up his throne to all generations? No, it did not.

For God says in verse 34 of Psalm 89, "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; it shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky." Now, it is not David's literal throne that would endure

as the sun before God, it was Christ's spiritual throne, His rule over His Church, which will endure forever. And although David's elect seed would endure forever, it is Christ spiritual seed, His Church composed of all elect believers, Jew and Gentile, who shall endure forever. Let us see that the typical does have a spiritual reality to it. David and Solomon experienced the fulfillment of all the promises of God to them.

So we should see that the typical in the Old Testament gives way to a greater spiritual reality in New Testament times. There is a much greater fulfillment to both Jews and Gentiles. This is the joyful sound for the one who understands, and who can spiritually apply these truths to themselves.

3rd – The joyful sound of God's faithfulness is to give you in your walk with Him, the light of His countenance.

Verse 15 says – "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!" "They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance." "In Your name they rejoice all day long, and in Your righteousness they are exalted." "For You are the glory of their strength, and in Your favor our horn is exalted." "For our shield belongs to the Lord, and our king to Holy One of Israel." Sometimes our experience of going through the national judgments which God brings is one which brings us great discouragement. In verse 49, Ethan says – "Lord, where are Your former lovingkindnesses, which You swore to David in Your truth?" He couldn't find God's blessings coming to him in the midst of all the difficulties.

And what was just as bad, he mentions in verse 50 – "Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants – How I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the people, with which Your enemies have reproached, O Lord, with which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed." In other words, there were many people who were blaming the king, and those who supported him, for all of their troubles. Ethan, who was a loyal citizen, wanted to see good things come to the nation. He wanted to help to bring about good leadership decisions, and initiate good things to strengthen the nation, but he wasn't seeing any progress forward in that, at all. But he knew what you and I should know, that in even the most difficult times, when God's people cry to God, that He will hear them, He will answer them in His appointed time.

He will be faithful to give you the light of His countenance in your walk. You will, in time, be able to rejoice all the day, and by Christ's righteousness you will be exalted. Will you not remember this dear Christian? For it is the joyful sound of God's faithfulness. Even though you may sometimes be a child of light walking in darkness, you still should know, that if you trust in the name of the Lord, and you rely upon your God, that He will come to you, the one who waits for Him. Isaiah 40, verse 31 says – "They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Teach me Lord, teach me Lord, to wait.

I hope that you will always remember that even in the worst of times and the worst of situations, that God is always doing right. Even when you are not able to discern it. And so, I pray that you will trust in Him, and pray to Him that He would lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you His peace. Do you know the sound of God's faithfulness? And will you look for it in every situation that you find yourself? Well, I hope that you will, for your faith will draw you closer to Him.