

# Reasons to Praise our Delivering God

Friday morning, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018

*‘I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.’*

Psalm 22:22-24

I desire this morning, in common with all the Lord’s servants every time we come into the pulpit, to join with Paul, to determine to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified, so that our testimony might be, ‘We preach Christ crucified.’

We lose a lot if we join in with some in the Christian world who say that we have no need of the Old Testament, thinking that because we are Christians we need only the New Testament. This 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm is full of the gospel. Some have gone as far as calling it the fifth gospel – the ‘Gospel according to David.’ Here we have a declaration about the sufferings and the work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in his death, in his resurrection, in his ascension into glory. Here we have the gospel! We read in the accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, about the outward sufferings of Christ. But if we want a window on the sufferings of the soul of Christ, on the innermost sufferings that the dear Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, entered into in making atonement for us, then we have to go to the Old Testament. We have to go to Isaiah 53, to the Psalms, to Psalm 22. It is in this Psalm that we are brought, in prophecy, to the heart of the atonement, to the centre of the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Here we see not only the outward sufferings and hear the outward cry, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ (verse 1) but here we hear the silent prayer to his Father. ‘Be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.’ (verses 19-21) It is in this Psalm we hear the private prayer of Jesus to his Father while he was suffering on the cross. Here we discover that as his soul was poured out to death

and he felt the withdrawing of the comfortable presence and communion of his Father, because he was made sin for us, nevertheless he still cried to him, 'Deliver me!' 'Make haste to help me.'

Our text this morning is towards the end of the psalm. So before we come directly to our text, I would like to begin by looking briefly at the preceding contents of the psalm. To set the context for our text, we can look at a contrast, a cry, and a deliverance.

(a) **First see a contrast.** This one who is set before us in the Psalm in prophecy is the Son of God, the same one of whom the voice of God the Father spoke out of heaven and said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' (Matthew 3:17) That was at his baptism. What a contrast with the cross! This same one, God's beloved Son, is here on the cross crying, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' The well-pleasing one is now the forsaken one! Why was it, friends? What had brought about the difference? This was the holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; the Son of God; the perfect one; the sinless one; the one who was in constant communion with his Father and delighted in him. Yet here we find him crying out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Why was this? This is the mystery of the atonement.

What is the mystery of the atonement? It is the mystery that the holy Lamb of God became sin for us. The Lamb of God was appointed to take away the sin of the world, and the sin of the world was now being laid upon him, and he was made sin for us. There on the cross at Calvary he bore the sins of his people, and he bore the punishment that was due to them. No punishment was due to him personally – remember that! He was never a sinner. He never sinned. He never had any cause to be punished for the least sin. If he had needed to be punished for sin we would have had no offering, no sacrifice, but because he was holy, because he was perfect, because he was sinless, he could be that blessed sacrifice. He could bear the punishment due to us. And in bearing that punishment, he made a way whereby God and sinners might be reconciled. The way whereby peace was brought in was through his bearing of the chastisement due to us. 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.' (Isaiah 53:5) This is the mystery of the atonement.

This is why there is such a contrast between the Son at his baptism, and the Son on the cross. This is what brought about the difference. God cannot look upon sin with any degree of lenience. There can be no communion between light

and darkness. And here, Christ was being brought into darkness as he was made sin for us. There was darkness because there was a disruption, if I might put it that way, in the communion with light. There was a disruption in the comfortable communion between God the Father and the holy soul of Jesus Christ. I would like to be clear that there was no disruption in the Trinity. There was no separation between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, even in the sufferings of Christ. But the human soul of Christ lost communion with the Father when he was made sin for his people. The Lord's people can be brought in a little measure into a similar place in our experience when we feel a disruption in the comfortable presence of God with us. For example there are sometimes places where we cry out, 'Be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.' (Psalm 28:1) So, in his soul, Christ experienced the hidings of his Father's face. He was not only surrounded by natural darkness as the sun was eclipsed, but there was a darkness that was felt in his soul as he was made an offering for sin. 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34)

Friends, here we see the heart, the very centre of the atonement which was made for our sin. Here is the proof of imputation, the proof that our sin was really laid upon Christ. It was not just a transaction on paper. Christ was really made sin for us. And as he was really made sin for us, as our sins were really laid upon him, we see the effect. What a solemn effect! He was forsaken by his Father. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' When we are brought to see by faith the Lamb of God uttering this cry from the cross; when we are brought to see our sins really laid upon him; when we see that it was because of our sin that he endured this darkness, and endured the shame, and bore reproach; when we realise that he went to the end of the law, fulfilled it in every jot and tittle, that he might bring in a righteousness to justify us, so that when our sins were imputed to him, his righteousness were imputed to us – it is a sight of this that makes sin such a bitter thing to us and that makes the person of the Redeemer so very precious to us.

(b) **Let us think also of the cry of Christ.** The whole psalm is a cry, or a prayer, and up until our text it is a cry for help.

From verse 1 onwards we see the depths that Christ found himself in. He cried, and his God was silent to him. 'O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.' (verse 2) He comes to this point: 'I am a worm, and no man.' (verse 6) What brought him there? A remembrance

that even the forefathers of Israel, the godly, cried to the Lord even though they were sinners, and God heard them. He heard a deceitful Abraham and a deceiving Jacob. He delivered Moses even though he was disobedient and struck the rock. God had had mercy on sinners in the past. He remembered them. He attended to their cry. He had mercy. But the precious Son of God here, suffering under the load of their sin – the sins of these fathers – he finds his Father to be silent to him. And so he comes to this, ‘I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.’ These were the sufferings of the Christ. They cast it at him, ‘He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.’ (verse 8) Here as he was being mocked by those very words, his Father hid his face from him.

But then, he remembers his past trust upon the Lord. In his holy humanity, though he was anointed with the Spirit beyond measure, he had to trust God for his daily provision. Though he was the creator and lord of the ends of the earth, in his humiliation he was found in fashion as a man. He endured weakness. He was constrained in regards to time and place. He who is the omniscient, the omnipotent, the omnipresent God, was contracted to a span for sinners such as us. He remembers on the cross the trust that he had in his Father in the past. ‘Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.’ But now, this God, his gracious Father, seemed silent to him.

Then, friends, we read how these things were compounded by the sufferings of his body. ‘I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.’ (verses 14-16) And so on.

Yet in the midst of his sufferings he cries to his Father. May this be an example to us this morning. May Christ be our example in this. Is there a soul here who feels they are crying to him at the ends of the earth? Is there a soul here this morning who is experiencing with Jeremiah, ‘when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer?’ (Lamentations 3:8) The dear Son of God, though he cried from the cross that he was forsaken, and though the heavens seemed to be as brass, and though his Father hid his face from him, nevertheless he cried to his Father. ‘Be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me.’ (verse 19)

Dear soul, go on! Go on and cry. Plead still. This gracious Father did not endlessly hide his face from him. He did not cut off his own dear Son. He did deliver him in the end. Therefore, dear soul, go on. Cry to this same God, this gracious Father. Follow the example of Christ. Don't give up. Because it will never be said:

Here's a soul that perished suing  
For the boasted Saviour's aid. (Daniel Turner)

Sue for mercy on the grounds that are set before us – the precious finished work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Plead his name. Say, 'Lord, thou didst hear the cries of thine own dear Son, hear me now for his sake. Have mercy on me. Make haste to help me. Be not thou far from me, O Lord.'

(c) **Then we see the deliverance of the Son.** When we come to our text, we come to a change of tone in the psalm. The Son is no longer crying to his Father for deliverance: he has been heard. He was heard in that he feared. He was delivered. He was brought out into a wealthy place. 'I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried to him, he heard.' (verse 22-24)

We see how this deliverance was fulfilled on the cross. He cried, 'It is finished!' 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' In that moment the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. The separation was ended. He was received. The offering for sin was accepted. A way was made whereby God and sinners might be reconciled – in the person and the work and death of Jesus Christ. It was fulfilled also in much greater fullness in his resurrection. He was brought out into the wealthy place on the third day, when he was brought again from the dead, the shepherd of the sheep. He rose again triumphant. Then it was fulfilled in even greater measure when he ascended into glory. But the fullest extent of this deliverance will be seen in the last great day, when, 'A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.' (verse 30) Then he will gather all his people to him, and there, all the praise shall be to the glory of God forever. Though it is a mystery to us, the praise in heaven will be led by the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.' O to have a hope that the things that are before us this morning were done for us, and therefore to have a hope that in that last great day we will join in the praise, according to the

exhortation here: ‘Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.’

Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,  
While heaven's resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign grace. (Lady Huntingdon)

Now, friends, in looking directly at the text I want to notice three things.

I. Firstly, Christ says he will praise God. ‘I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.’ This is the work of Christ: to praise his Father.

II. Secondly, Christ gives an exhortation to his people: ‘Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.’

III. Thirdly, Christ gives reasons for this praise. There is a reason why the Lord's people are called to give praise: because we have a finished salvation, a complete redemption. The Son was not left upon the cross to die. No! He passed through death. He was victorious. Therefore we have hope. ‘For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried to him, he heard.’

**I. Firstly, then, to notice the work of Christ. Christ says he will declare God's name and praise God. ‘I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.’**

(a) The first thing I want to notice is: **what was the primary work of Jesus Christ?** Perhaps we sometimes have a wrong conception of the work of salvation in our minds. Our conception of salvation is that the ultimate end of, the principal reason for, Christ's work is the salvation of our souls. But that is not the main goal of the work of salvation. That is not the primary reason Christ was sent into this world. The reason Christ came to save sinners was to glorify God. That is the end of salvation – the glory of God.

We read this in 1 Corinthians 15. ‘He hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him, *that God may be all in all.*’ (verse 27-28) (That is to say, the Father is not put under the feet of

the Son in his mediatorial offices. Don't get Paul wrong here. There are no divisions in the Trinity. The Son is in no way inferior to the Father, but as he humbled himself and entered the mediatorial offices, the Lamb of God is put under the feet of the Father, who put all things under him.) Paul says that eventually, God will be all in all. That is the end of the work of redemption, the ultimate end of salvation. Not that your poor soul will get to heaven, but that, having got to heaven, your purpose in getting there is to glorify God.

We might express the work of salvation in another way: Christ Jesus came into this world to glorify God, and in glorifying God he saves sinners. Again we read of this in Philippians 2. 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*' (verse 9-11) That is the end of the work of salvation, 'the glory of God the Father.'

And one more place, 'Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,' that is the Father, 'according to the power that worketh in us,' the Holy Spirit, *'to him,'* the Father, *'be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.'* (Ephesians 3:20-21)

This is the ultimate end of the work of Christ: to glorify the Father. If we have any part in the work of redemption, it will be our desire to glorify God. To worship him. To praise him. This is the end of the work which Christ came into this world for. Therefore the work given to the Son in the covenant, the work committed to Christ in his mediatorial offices of prophet, priest and king, is this: 'I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.'

(b) Now to notice more specifically that **Christ's work of glorifying God has two aspects mentioned here: declaring God's name to his brethren, and praising God's name in the congregation.**

1. *I will declare thy name to my brethren.* Jesus makes known to us the name of God. And perhaps most blessedly, the name of God that he makes known to his children is the name, 'Father.' He taught his disciples to pray, 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' (Luke 11:2) How does he teach us to say, 'Our Father'? He teaches us as he makes known to us the blessings of redemption and we are brought to see that as the purchase of his blood, we not only have a title to heaven, but we are made the sons of God. Sons by adoption. As sons, we

have a right to a place in heaven in our Father's house. We have a right to a place in heaven because we are the children of God. We have been brought into this relationship through the death and sufferings of the Son of God, who cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Through his sufferings we are made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus – the sons of God. Therefore we can cry to him using that name, 'My God, my Father!' Can you join in with Anne Steele this morning, on the basis of Christ's redemption, 'My God, my Father, blissful name!' Perhaps there is someone here who can only join her in the lower notes:

O may I call thee mine?  
May I with sweet assurance claim,  
A portion so divine?

If so, where will you find assurance? You will never find it in yourself! All the while you are looking within yourself for your grounds of acceptance with God, you will always be disappointed. They are not to be found. Where is the ground of assurance of our sonship? It is here, in Christ, in the one who says, 'I will declare thy name to my brethren.' He says to his Father and our Father: 'I will show them their sonship. I will teach them that they can call thee Father. I will show them that they are thy sons, and thy sons for ever. I will make it known to them that thou art a loving and gracious father. And as thou hast not forsaken me, but as thou didst remember me in my lowest place, so, Father, remember thy children.' This is the work which Christ performs, and he performs it to his brethren.

'I will declare thy name to my brethren.' This does not just mean declaring literally the name of God. Included here is the idea that he will declare the perfections of God. 'No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' (John 1:18) He declares to his brethren the character of God. The righteousness of God, the holiness of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, the faithfulness of God. And where did the Son proclaim these things most plainly? Was it not on the cross? Here we see the righteousness, the faithfulness and the holy justice of God, met together with his love and his mercy. And they meet together in the person of Jesus Christ. And they meet together for sinners. When the Holy Spirit reveals to us a blessed, bleeding Jesus; when the divinity of the Son is revealed to us by the Spirit; when we find him to be our all and we see in him all the perfections of the salvation he



has provided, so that there is no need you can name that you cannot find a full and complete provision for in Christ – don't we then praise this gracious Father?

I love that name of God, I AM. I AM THAT I AM. I was that I was. I will be what I will be. The eternal, unchangeable God. That name contains everything. He says, I AM the bread of life. I AM the water of life. I AM the way, the truth and the life. He says to weary souls this morning, I AM rest. 'Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28) This is what Christ says to his brethren. He reveals to us the fullness that God is, and the fullness that God has provided for sinners – a full and a free salvation. All is provided. A complete salvation. A complete redemption. Nothing lacking. If we are taught our utter inability and complete worthlessness, our sinfulness, our total depravity, and if we are brought to realise,

My best is stained and dyed with sin;

My all is nothing worth,

(John Newton)

Then we will rejoice in that our salvation is complete in Christ. If we had to take one step towards our own salvation, if we had to do one thing to help save ourselves, we would all fall into hell. Salvation is all of grace. Here in the atonement, in the person, work and death of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, everything is done. And he declares this to his people. A full provision made by God himself, in himself, for sinners. 'I will declare thy name to my brethren.'

Just a few words in passing on these words, 'my brethren.' What a motley lot they were! He was derided for them by those who thought they had some righteousness of their own. 'The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.' (Luke 15:2) 'The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' (Matthew 11:19) These were his brethren – publicans and sinners. Yet he was not ashamed of them.

Or think of the characters of his brethren at his death. Peter, one of the chief disciples, denied him – denied the very one who had delighted to number Peter amongst his brethren. But after his death Jesus sent an angel to the women at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection to say, 'Tell his disciples *and Peter* that he goeth before you into Galilee.' (Mark 16:7) Nothing could disrupt his relationship with his brethren, not even their sin. There he declared the end of his salvation to his brethren, including to a denying Peter. And when Jesus appeared to his disciples

and Thomas was not there, and Thomas subsequently expressed his doubts about the resurrection, Jesus graciously had compassion and appeared to Thomas, a doubting Thomas, in order to declare his work to all his brethren.

But although we often single out doubting Thomas and denying Peter, let us not forget that this was said of his brethren: ‘They all forsook him, and fled.’ (Mark 14:50) *All* his brethren forsook him. Not one stayed with him when they took him into the judgement hall. And yet he did not forsake them. They were his brethren. ‘While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.’ (John 17:12) He went to the end of the law, fulfilled all its demands. The cup of suffering had to be drunk right up. He had to fulfil all righteousness. He had to pass through this darkness. ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ He passed through this for his brethren, who all forsook him and fled.

How often we forget him! But our mercy is that he does not forget us. His work is to ‘declare thy name unto my brethren,’ and he is faithful in that work. Our salvation has to rest on that: the faithfulness of Jesus. If our salvation depended on our faithfulness, we would perish. But it rests on the faithfulness of Jesus. ‘If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.’ (2 Timothy 2:13) Therefore this work shall be completed: ‘I will declare thy name unto my brethren.’

2. The second aspect of his work here is, *In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

We see the Son giving thanks often while he was here on this earth. He gave thanks when Lazarus was raised from the dead. He thanked his Father when the seventy disciples went out and returned. ‘I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.’ (Matthew 11:25) The Son praised the Father for this blessing.

But we especially see how he praised the Father when he thanked his Father in the upper room for the provision of the atonement. In the night in which he was betrayed he took bread and blessed it. He took the cup and gave thanks. ‘In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.’ The term ‘in the midst of the congregation’ here signifies ‘in the midst of my brethren,’ in the midst of my people, in the midst of the children thou hast given me. In the midst of the church, I will praise thee. There amongst that precious little church, the first church, the

firstfruits of our Lord's ministry, the twelve gathered around their Lord in the upper room, in the midst of them he thanks and praises his Father for the provision God has made for his church in himself. 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.'

'I will glorify thee' – that's what it is to give praise. This is the end of the work he came into this world for. 'For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' (John 6:38) What was his confession at the end of his ministry? 'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: ... I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' (John 17:1, 4-5) This is the end of the work that was given to Christ, to glorify his Father, and in so doing he was also glorified. He glorifies the Father by this, 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.' (Hebrews 5:8) He passed through death. He set his face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' (John 13:1) For this end, that all the glory, all the praise, might redound to the Father. 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.'

But there is a reference here to the future. There is to be a future fulfilment of this claim. We can read this eschatologically, with a view to the end of time and the last things. The complete fulfilment of this glorifying work will be seen in that great day, the day of the Lord, when Christ in the midst of his church in glory will praise his Father. 'In the midst of the congregation,' the great congregation (verse 25), 'will I praise thee.' Although he rejoices over his people while they are in this world, but there, in heaven, his joy will be full. When all his people are gathered together in one body, and when they are no longer the church militant, but the church triumphant, and when they are crowned with glory and honour and sitting on the throne that he has given to them as his bride, then he will joy over us with singing. He will joy over us in love. And all his praise and singing will be to the glory of God. To the praise of free grace. 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.'

**II. In the second place I want to notice that the Son speaks to his people and says, 'Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.'**

The Lord's people are viewed in three distinct ways here. Some see in it phases in the work of grace.

They are called first of all, 'ye that fear the Lord,' that is, those who tremble before the Lord. When the Lord first begins the work of grace in us we tremble at him. We realise that,

If my soul were sent to hell,  
Thy righteous law approves it well.                      (Isaac Watts)

If we are brought to say that by grace, we will be enabled to praise him. When the Lord's people are convinced of their sin and brought to realise that their just desert is hell, they accept God's verdict on this matter. In this sense they praise and glorify God, not by literally singing, but simply by their acquiescence in his righteousness. In this they tremble before God. It is an experience which might be known in greater or lesser degree, and at different points in a believer's experience. But the Lord says to those who tremble, 'Ye that fear the Lord, praise him.'

Then they are called, 'the seed of Jacob.' This is a reference perhaps to those who have been brought to see some beauty in Christ, the babes in Christ who are being fed with the sincere milk of the gospel.

They are also called, 'the seed of Israel.' These are perhaps those who are settled down on Christ, who rest on him, and who eat strong meat.

Whatever the precise meaning of each of these names may be, the fundamental thing is that here we have an address to the church. Those who fear the Lord, who are the seed of Jacob, who are the seed of Israel: they are all the Lord's people. He says to all his people, 'Praise him.' 'Praise God. Glorify God. Fear God.'

(a) **What is it to praise the Lord?** What is it to praise God for this salvation that he has provided? To praise him because 'he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard'? We might say that praise is the first degree, the lowest in these three requirements, praise, glorify, and fear. Praise is when the tongue is loosed and we are enabled to sing of him. Praise is when we can speak and say, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' (Psalm 66:16) This is the experience that John Cennick describes:

Then will I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found;

I'll point to thy redeeming blood,  
And say, 'Behold the way to God.'

You see, God is glorified in that. We were considering last Lord's Day evening the woman who came to Jesus in the crowd, with an issue of blood. Knowing what was done within her, she had to make confession. She had to give praise. She feared. She came trembling. 'But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.' (Mark 5:33) She was constrained to praise the Lord, and praise the Lord she did. She glorified God with the testimony she gave.

This is the note of praise we are called to give. We are called to put the crown in the right place. We are called to praise God for the blessings of redemption, the sufferings of the Son of God, the deliverance of Jesus. That is what we have to praise God for. That is what Jesus commands us to praise the Father for. God, the eternal three, before the beginning of time, worked out a way by which sinners would be reconciled to himself. He contrived how we would be saved with an everlasting salvation, to his own glory. When we see this and get a taste by faith of the salvation accomplished on the cross at Calvary, then we have to praise God. When we get a sight of Christ, when we get a sight of salvation by grace, do we not have to sing? We might well ask with William Gadsby:

Shall angels sing the honours of his name,  
And sinners, saved by grace, silent remain?

'Ye that fear the Lord, praise him.'

(b) Then we come to: 'All ye the seed of Jacob, **glorify him.**' Glorifying him is a little more than confession with the lips, whether in words or song. It is to glorify him in our walk and conduct. We are to glorify him in our witness. If we have a part in this salvation then we are not our own, we are bought with a price. And Jesus says, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' (John 14:15) That is not a once in a lifetime experience. Some people seem to speak as if those commands are just the keeping of the ordinances of the Lord's house. But that is far from the truth. John tells us in his Epistles what his commands are. We can almost think of the First Epistle of John as a commentary on the sermon Jesus preached in the Upper Room as detailed by John in his Gospel (chapters 13 to 16). We certainly find in the Epistle a commentary on these commandments which are to be kept. He says, 'And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of

his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.’ (1 John 3:23) O that we have this testimony about us, that ‘We have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.’ (1 John 3:14) This is what it is to glorify God. To be brought to the place where the love of God is shed abroad in our heart. Where we see the depths of that love in the cry, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Where that love makes known to us that these things were done for us. Then we will find that love springs up in our souls to him. ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’ (1 John 4:19) That is why we seek to run in the way of his commandments as he enlarges our heart in love. That is why we seek to glorify him. That is why we behave in such a way that all things would be for his honour and glory.

This glorifying of God should characterise every part of our life. Going amongst family and friends in Scotland, I have been much struck by hearing them generally include this petition in the grace they say before eating, ‘That we might eat and drink to the glory of God.’ We sometimes pass over these things very lightly. We gabble our grace. We eat the food forgetful of the source of every grace and every favour. But the command given to the Lord’s people is, ‘Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ (1 Corinthians 10:31) ‘All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him.’ Glorify him in the least things. Glorify him in your grace. In your giving of thanks. Glorify him in your confession of the fact that you are unworthy of the least of his mercies. Glorify him by not eating and drinking to excess as the manner of the world is. Glorify him by remembering those who are not as well favoured as you are and by being moved with compassion toward them. As we draw out our souls to the hungry, God is glorified.

This is how God’s people glorify him. These are not works with a view to meriting God’s esteem. No! But they are fruits of free grace in us, by which God’s free grace is glorified. We cannot be what we once were. We are bought with a price. Such were some of us, but we are now redeemed by free grace, washed by the precious blood of Jesus, loved with an everlasting love, and therefore our chief desire and delight is to glorify him. And our greatest grief is when we bring dishonour upon him and his cause, and when we fail to glorify God as we should. ‘All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him.’

(c) Then we read: ‘**And fear him**, all ye the seed of Israel.’ The word ‘fear’ here, in the original Hebrew, is a different word to ‘fear’ in the first clause of the

sentence: 'Ye that fear the Lord, praise him.' The first fear speaks of a trembling fear, reverence. But 'fear' here means sojourning, abiding, sitting down under his shadow with delight. To 'fear' here means to trust him, to prove his faithfulness.

This is why some see this expression, 'the seed of Israel,' as applying to those who eat strong meat. Those who have handled, tasted and proved the things of grace. Those who have tried the promises. Those who have pleaded and seen the answers to prayer. Those who have found a full provision in Christ for all their needs. Those who have been brought to trust Christ, to find him to be a rock, a firm standing place, so that when the winds and the waves come they are safe. Their eyes are up to him. We are not always there. We don't always rest in this state long. If only we were there more often. If only our religion was more childlike. Christ says, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 18:3) Little children and babies sit in their parent's arms and they sleep in their parent's arms. They have absolute faith in their parent's arms. They believe their parents are strong enough to hold them. They trust them to protect them while they are asleep. The child allows sleep to come and they leave themselves utterly helpless while they recline and rest in their parent's arms. They trust their parents. They love their parents. And they relax in proportion to the closeness they have with their parent. So it is with the Lord's people when they are brought to rest in Christ. They are weaned from self. They are brought to trust wholly in Christ, to rest on Christ. This is the greatest glory that a sinner called by grace can give to God. This is his highest praise. When we come to the place where we desire to know no will but his. Where we are absolutely submissive to him. When we are happy to be dependent. When we lose what is of self. When we find nothing in ourselves, but our all is in Christ. This humble dependence glorifies God.

You see, this is where the professing world gets it so wrong. They count glory brought to God by what we have done. Our supposed acts of righteousness. Our exploits for him. But the greatest glory is given to God by those who are brought to humble walking, when they are made to confess that they have nothing of themselves, those who are brought to despair of themselves. They realise that no man can keep alive his own soul and therefore their daily cry is, 'Lord, take not thy free Spirit from me. Uphold me by thy grace. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.' You know, the Lord is most glorified by the helpless soul, by those who are emptied of their own strength. Those who are given the eye of

faith to wait, to rest, to expect their departure to glory. This is the experience of the Lord's people. This is exemplified in the advice given to Ruth. 'Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.' (Ruth 3:18) Once we see this man, Jesus, this precious man of whom we have been singing (Gadsby's Selection, 23), and once we see that he is not in rest concerning his people this day, but is finishing the work of grace in them, then we can sit still. We can sojourn in Christ. We can abide in him. We seek no other healing, but in Jesus precious blood and find that:

He beneath the Spirit's sealing,  
Stands our great high priest with God. (John Kent)

This is what the Lord wants his people to do. 'And fear him,' (rest in him) 'all ye the seed of Israel.'

**III. Then in the final place I would like to look at the reasons that Christ gives for us to praise.** The reasons that he gives for faith. The reason why, dear soul, you can hear and believe the words that we have sung together:

Come, then, repenting sinner, come;  
Approach with humble faith;  
Owe what thou wilt, the total sum  
Is cancelled by his death. (Joseph Hart)

The reason is found in this: 'For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried to him, he heard.' You see, Christ is no longer on the cross. Sometimes we can be left to that kind of religion. In Catholic churches, all the representations of Christ that fill them are only of Christ on the cross. But when Christ was on the cross his cry was, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Our salvation is only certain because of the fact that he 'was heard.'

Christ was delivered. His soul was brought out into a wealthy place. The Father, into whose hands he committed his spirit, received the atonement. The Father received his own dear Son. He received his faith, his precious blood, the fulfilment of divine justice. The Father was satisfied. Therefore, he not only delivered Christ, not only did he receive the atonement, not only did he give glory to his Son in heaven at his ascension, but all his people shall receive a part in glory too. What does Christ say as he enters into glory? 'Behold I and the children which God hath



given me.’ (Hebrews 2:13) My brethren. The vilest sinner out of hell, that has been brought to feel his need by grace, is included there. His people. Those who were given to the Son in eternity past. On whose behalf he suffered these things. The Son says to his Father, ‘Receive these people because of me. Receive them on the same grounds as thou didst receive me, and did not leave me to death, but when I passed through death, thou didst not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer me to see corruption. Do the same for them. Thou hast brought me out into a wealthy place. Father, do the same for these, my brethren, also.’ This is the reason for our praise. You see, our salvation is a finished work. It is a complete redemption. That is why they took the body of Christ down from the cross. He really died. His body and soul separated (although both remained inseparably united to his divinity). His precious body was laid in the tomb and his soul entered heaven. But he was raised again. So we will be raised too. Therefore, ‘Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Jesus was heard. Earlier in the Psalm we read about some of the cries that went up from the holy soul of Christ. ‘Be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.’ (verses 19-21) He was heard! He was delivered! Why was Christ heard? Why was he delivered?

Well, for one thing, he was heard because he feared. We read in Hebrews 5: ‘In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to him that was able to save him from death, he was heard in that he feared.’ (verse 7) These are the cries here in the 22nd Psalm. He ‘was heard in that he feared.’ The word ‘fear’ there does not imply a trembling before his Father. Rather it was a trusting fear. He rested on his Father. He rested on the faithfulness of his Father. And we have to rest on the same ground. When he cried to his Father and said, ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,’ (Luke 23:46) he was heard in that he feared, in that he trusted in God. It was for this reason that he was heard.

He was also heard for this reason: ‘Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.’ (Hebrews 5:8-9) He was heard because he had fulfilled all the demands of divine justice. He expiated sin, our sin that was laid on him, the sin that brought about that cry, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ In dying he slew death. In dying he was

victorious over death. He took away, he bore away, the punishment that was due to those sins. Those sins are therefore cancelled, they are taken away by the precious death and justifying righteousness of Christ. The cause of separation between God and the sinner was now done away with. He was heard. He was delivered. His offering was received because he fulfilled all the demands of the law. He fulfilled all the demands it places on you, dear soul, you, sinner, who are feeling your sin this morning. The demands of the law to your soul are, 'Pay! Pay!' But here we see one who fulfilled all the demands of the law on behalf of his people, and took away their sin. Not only was he heard in that he feared. He was heard also because, 'though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.' What a precious Saviour we have! A perfect Saviour! He was heard because of his obedience. Here we see the humiliation of Christ in all its glory. He went to the lowest place for us. The mystery of his humiliation we read of in Philippians 2. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' (verse 5-11) The fullness which is seen here! Though he was God, yet he made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself. He became obedient unto death, so that by his death, death would be swallowed up in victory, and so that through his death we would live and have hope in God.

Do you have any hope this morning in the atonement made for sin by Jesus Christ? Can the eye of your faith see Jesus Christ suffering, bleeding and dying on behalf of sinners? Can you take comfort in the fact that he passed through death and he was victorious over death? If so, it is because God 'despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.' God delivered him. Therefore, as Christ says, 'My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation,' (verse 25) so you can also glorify God in the salvation he has provided for you this morning. Rejoice in the Lord. Rest on him. Wait patiently for the day when his work of grace will be completed in you and it will be true of you:

Thou shalt see my glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done;  
Partner of my throne shalt be. (William Cowper)

Can I go on to put to you the question posed by the hymnwriter:

Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?

Do you find any love this morning in your heart towards Jesus Christ bearing your sins on the cross? Do you have any love to the Father who loves sinners and out of that love sent his Son into the world to suffer, bleed and die for sinners? You might have to say:

Lord, it is my chief complaint  
That my love is weak and faint;  
Yet I love thee, and adore;  
O for grace to love thee more!

If you have the smallest amount of love to him, surely you will praise him?

May praise wait for him in Zion this morning! May we be enabled to rejoice in the fact that our salvation rests on the finished work of Christ! It is a complete salvation. The atonement was received by the Father. Christ was heard. He was delivered. He lives. And therefore through him we shall also be delivered. Through him we shall also be victorious, though the warfare may often seem against us, and though we have to mourn that,

The old man struggles hard to gain  
The conquest over grace;  
And oft he seems to gain the field,  
When Jesus hides his face. (Daniel Herbert)

Yet, here is our hope: we will get safe at last. Victory is assured. Why? Because Christ was heard. Our victory is assured is for this reason and no other reason. If you are looking for any other reason this morning, there is no other reason. The only resting place for faith this morning is that Christ's atonement was successful. 'He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.' The atonement, the precious death of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is the cause for our greatest joys. It is the ground for bringing forth praise to God. It is the greatest motive in

the life of discipleship. 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' (Matthew 22:29) We see this one in all his meekness, in all his labours, yet how victorious! What a Saviour! O that we would be found humble followers of him, and daily desiring to praise, glorify, fear him! To rest on him! To live in Christ! O to be never parted from him, never straying from him, but always keeping close to him!

May the Lord bless his word to us this morning. As we go on our way, may we go rejoicing in the fact that he has provided a complete and a free salvation. This salvation has written over it the cry from the cross, 'It is finished!' It is a finished and sure salvation. Though we are still on this earth and though we are often tried about our salvation, yet it is sure and has been so from before the foundations of the world. It was sure when Jesus cried from the cross, 'It is finished!' Do remember that, poor tried soul, this morning.

Yes, I to the end must endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given;  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven. (Augustus Toplady)

Amen