

The Cornerstone of our Faith (Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 & 1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

Easter Sunday 2018

Just a reminder that there is an outline in the bulletin for you to take down notes if that helps you concentrate

There are Bibles in front of you.

Let me pray for God's help and understanding. Let's pray...

Intro

On Good Friday - we left Jesus dead on the cross

And we concluded that His sacrificial death on the cross - so that the sin of the world could be forgiven - was a **supreme act of God's love** for people

And we decided that our response to God's love was that we should love Him and love others

Praise God - that the events of Good Friday - **are not the end of God's plan** for humankind

[PowerPoint 1a-Intro/Psalms]

Our OT reading today is Psalm 118

Psalm 118 is part of a series of Psalms - Psalms 113 to 118 - and Psalm 136 - they are known as **Hallel** Psalms - where we get Hallelujah (Praise God)

They are praise Psalms!

These psalms/songs were sung - at all the Jewish feasts - including The Passover Festival

Now remember at the time Jesus died - it was time of The Passover Festival

At the last Supper on the night Jesus was betrayed - when Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover meal together - we read in Matthew 26:30

[PowerPoint 1b-Matt 26:30]

When they had sung a hymn [Psalms 113-118], they went out to the Mount of Olives

It's pretty well certain they would have sung Psalm 118

How awesome it would be to hear our Lord sing this Psalm - 118 - which is a prophetic Psalm about Jesus Himself

(pause)

God's Love Endures Forever (Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24)

So let's look at Psalm 118 - please turn there now.

Psalm 118 begins by praising God because **He is good** (God is the only one who is truly good) and the psalmist says **God's love endures forever**

[PowerPoint 2-Love]

God's love endures forever - is a really really important statement

Because it means God's love for us didn't stop when Jesus died on the cross for our sins - and fixed sin for us - on Good Friday

Because we still have another problem - that needs fixing - and that is that we all die one day

But as the Psalm says - again in v2 - *God's love endures forever*

God's love goes into eternity

(pause)

That's why the psalmist can say- in v14

[PowerPoint 3-Psalm 118:14-15]

That the Lord is the psalmist's strength and defense and salvation

We can join the psalmist and say the Lord Jesus - is our strength and our defense in this dark and evil world - because He has overcome this evil world on the cross

And we can say the Lord Jesus is our salvation from sin

And so we can join the Psalmist in v15 - and shout with joy and claim victory - because our sins are forgiven - it's like we're living in the tents with God's righteous people

Not only that the Psalmist can proclaim with confidence - in v17

[PowerPoint 4a-v17-Not die]

that he will not die but live and he will proclaim what the Lord has done

As the psalmist explains in v18

[PowerPoint 4b-v18-Chastened]

Even though God has chastened (instructed, corrected, disciplined) the psalmist - literally to the point of being sore - the psalmist can say he is not been given over to death

And it's the same for each one of us - even though God instructs, corrects and disciplines us in our sinful life - if we believe in our Lord Jesus - we will not be given over to death

That's because of the events of that very first Easter Sunday

When God's love endured beyond Good Friday

When Jesus opened up access to the Father

And God's love endured into Easter Sunday

When God raised Jesus to life again!

And because of this act of love and grace and mercy

[PowerPoint 5a-Psalm 118 v19-20]

We who believe in Jesus {**we must believe**} - We who believe in Jesus - will enter through the gate of our Lord - and into the gates of Heaven - as v19-20 say

So can we join with the Psalmist this morning (this evening)?

[PowerPoint 5b-Psalm 118 v21]

And say **thank you to Jesus** - for our salvation and access into Heaven - as the psalmist says in v21

(pause)

Ironically the Psalmist describes our Lord Jesus as the stone that the builders rejected which has become the cornerstone - in v22

[PowerPoint 6-Cornerstone]

The builders that the psalmist is referring to are the people of Israel who rejected the stone - which is Jesus - and they refused to accept Him.

Jesus Christ came because of the Promise of God - to send a Messiah (A chosen Saviour) to the nation of Israel.

Jesus came not to BE the Messiah

But AS the Messiah

Jesus came as the cornerstone of His church

[Explain Cornerstone]

When Peter declared Jesus as being the Messiah - the Son of the living God (In Matthew 16)

Jesus replied that He would build His church on the rock (stone) foundation of this statement from Peter - that Jesus is the Messiah - the cornerstone of the church - on which all other stones of the church (the people) are built upon
So Jesus wants all of us - as stones of His church - to build our lives on Him - the cornerstone

[PowerPoint 7a-Psalm 118 v23]

As the Psalmist says in v23 - the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday - **should be marvellous events in our eyes** - that the Lord as brought about - because He has given people the opportunity to be saved from sin and death

Even though the Romans and Jewish leaders think they are in control
It's all part of God's plan to make Jesus - the stone they have rejected and killed - it's God's plan to make Him - into the Chief Cornerstone of His church - His church which starts to build from Easter Sunday onwards...

Only God can turn terribly bad events into His good purposes

And so today, Easter Sunday

We can join with the Psalmist - and say in v24

[PowerPoint 7b-Psalm 118 v24]

The Lord has raised Jesus His Son on this very day - let us rejoice today and be glad - that Jesus is alive!

(pause)

The Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

So as we come to our NT passage from 1 Corinthians 15

Which we can turn to now...

We have to realize the context

The Corinth church was a bit of a mess

There had been divisions, a partying mentality, a misunderstanding about spiritual gifts and about love, and some weird concepts and teachings.

Paul addresses these problems in the first 14 chapters.

By the time Paul gets to chapter 15

Paul can finally tackle the problem that some people in Corinth were saying *there is no resurrection of the dead*

So Paul starts chapter 15 by saying

[PowerPoint 8-1 Cor 15:1-2]

Jesus' death on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter Sunday are **actually the Gospel of Jesus** - which he has preached and passed on to the Corinthians

The word Gospel simply means - Good News

The Good News - that Jesus fixed the punishment for sin and fixed the broken relationship between humankind and God on the cross on Good Friday - and fixed our dying by rising from the dead on Easter Sunday

And Paul says by this Gospel we are saved for Heaven

As Jesus puts it - in John 11:25

I [Jesus] am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me [Jesus] will live, even though they die...

[PowerPoint 9-1 Cor 15:3-4]

Then Paul says this Gospel of Jesus - Him dying for our sins and being raised to life on the third day - is not His own idea - he says in v3-4- it was all part of God's plan - according to the Scriptures

What scriptures?

Remember Paul hasn't got all the NT in front of him like we have

So what Scriptures does he mean?

Well Psalm 22 and Isaiah 52:12 through to Isaiah 53:12 predict Jesus' death in great detail

And Hosea 6:2 (on the third day he will restore us); Psalm 16:10 (you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead) Psalm 118 which talks about resurrection

Then there is Jonah 1:17 - **Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.** - this is the **sign of Jonah** that Jesus refers to Himself - in Matthew 12 when He says 39 ...**"A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

And if OT Scripture is not enough

[PowerPoint 10:5-8]

Paul presents further concrete evidence of Jesus' resurrection in v5-8

Jesus appeared to Peter and the 12 apostles

And to 500 people who were mostly still alive as Paul wrote his letter

And to James (Jesus' brother) and to Paul himself

All of these witnesses, Paul says in v11 - preach the same Gospel - the same Good News - that Jesus died and rose again

The cumulative testimony of all these witnesses is overwhelming

Not only did they see Jesus after His death

But they saw Him in a manner that revolutionized their faith and trust in Him

The changed character of the Apostles and their willingness to die for the testimony of the resurrection, rule out fraud or deceit - as an explanation for the empty tomb

(pause)

Response (1 Corinthians 15:9-11)

So - what should our response be today to Jesus' resurrection

Look how Paul responds in 1 Corinthians 15:9-11...

[PowerPoint 11-1 Cor 15:9-11]

With complete humility

He says he is the least of the apostles and he doesn't deserve to be an apostle because he persecuted Christians - before he came to believe in Jesus

But can we say - we deserve to be Jesus' disciples?

Haven't we all sinned - haven't we all done and said and thought things which are far from God's perfect standards?

Haven't our sins be dumped on Jesus too?

We don't deserve to be called Jesus' disciples - anymore than Paul does!

(pause)

But like Paul - we can say we have God's grace - God's undeserved favour

And Paul's response to God's grace - is to work harder than those he perceives as being more deserving than he

He's not working harder because he's working his way to Heaven - because

Jesus has already done that - and Jesus is the only one who gets us to Heaven

No - Paul's working harder because he feels he's been forgiven of so much

Hurting the church - the body of believers - was a grave offence on Paul's part

- but Paul by God's grace is forgiven - and given the privilege of sharing the

Gospel to the Gentiles - so he's working harder because he feels so forgiven and so privileged

As Jesus said in Luke 7 - *the one who has been forgiven much - loves much,*

that's how Paul is responding - he loves Jesus and others - by the grace of God

- so much - as much as he possibly can - because **he has been forgiven much**

If we're honest with ourselves this morning (this evening) we've been forgiven

so much too - and we are so privileged to have the Gospel to pass on - aren't

we?

(pause)

Jesus is the **cornerstone** of Paul's faith - Paul has built his whole life on the

rock of Jesus - the Saviour of the World

Will we join Paul this morning and build our whole life on the rock of Jesus' gift of forgiveness and eternal life - and say **Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith**

Let's pray...