

Series: Psalms

Title: Our Refuge, Rejoicing and Resolve

Text: Psalm 48: 1-14

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**Psalm 48: 12: Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. 13: Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.”**

Brethren, I have walked round about Mt Zion. I have seen her palaces. I have seen her towers and bulwarks. I am here to tell this generation about our great God and what he has done for us

**Psalm 48: 1: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness. 2: Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King.**

*Our God is great.* We who believe have seen and experienced that our God is great in the salvation of his people. There is none great in the church but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13: 20...the God of peace,...brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that **great** shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,...

Christ Jesus is our great High Priest. His “*mercy is great unto the heavens, and [his] truth unto the clouds*” (Ps 57:10). “*His name shall be great unto the ends of the earth*” (Mi 5:4).

*And indeed our God is greatly to be praised in his city*—the telling mark that you are in his church is that his church praises God our Savior alone. Each one he saves gives him all the glory, all the honor, all the praise for every aspect of our salvation. Our testimony is, “*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake*” (Ps 115:1).

But where is *the city of our God* and the *mountain of his holiness*? It is not an earthly city. The city of God is his church, heavenly Jerusalem, heavenly Mt Zion. Some of the citizens are here in the earth, others are made perfect and dwell in heaven.

Hebrews 12: 22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. 25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

As our text says Christ’s church is *beautiful for situation*. “*Situation*” means “*elevated*”, “*lifted up*”. The church of God is beautiful because God has lifted his people up in Christ in the righteousness of our Great King. He “*hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Eph 2:6)

In this earth, the church, this city of *the great King Jesus*, is *the joy of the whole earth*.

**Proposition:** The reason Christ’s church is the joy of his people throughout the whole world is because Christ had lifted us up—his church—to bear witness of him through the preaching of the gospel.

**Title and Divisions:** 1) Our refuge, 2) Our rejoicing 3) Our resolve

## OUR REFUGE

**Psalm 47: 3: God is known in her palaces for a refuge. 4: For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. 5: They saw *it*, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. 6: Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. 7: Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.**

“*The palaces*” of God’s city are Christ’s local churches. Christ has made his people kings by his precious blood and we dwell in his palaces that Christ has planted. This is how God regards us!

However, Christ has not planted every so-called local church in this world. The majority are not palaces but dens of thieves. Most are planted by false preachers who claim to speak for God but speak their own word. “*Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD*” (Jer 23: 32).

Still, Christ’s palaces—his true local churches made up of his people—are planted by Christ, not men. “*Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established*” (Ex 15: 17).

Therefore—*"God is known in her palaces for a refuge."* By nature, every sinner is ignorant of who God is and we have no way of knowing God in and of ourselves. But God graciously sends his preachers preaching Christ and him crucified and he regenerates and calls his people, making us *know Christ* in spirit and in truth. The apostle Paul said,

1 Corinthians 1: 17: For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...22: For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Through the gospel, by the power of God, Christ becomes unto us the Power and Wisdom of God. He is made unto us everything in our salvation. Therefore, in his church, God our Savior, Jesus Christ, is known for a refuge—our only refuge.

During the days of Israel, God provided cities of refuge. When a man had committed manslaughter, the law said he must die. So the executioner would come to kill him. But no matter where you were in Israel, there was a city of refuge nearby. The roads were kept clear and signs freshly painted to direct you to the city of refuge so the guilty could flee into a city of refuge and remain there safe.

Those cities of refuge picture Christ our Refuge. We all are guilty before the law by nature and God's justice demands we be executed. But God has graciously provided his Son for a refuge. Christ is near to everyone made willing to flee to him—flee into him by believing on him and you will be safe.

He is our refuge from sin—he alone frees his people from our sin-nature and never allows it to bring us back into bondage. Christ is our refuge from the curse of the law—Christ has redeemed his people from the curse of the law [by taking the place of his people] being made a curse for us. Christ is our refuge from all enemies, including our last enemy, death—*"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1Co 15:55-57).

In order to illustrate how great a refuge Christ is, God used the attacks of kings against earthly Jerusalem, *"For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together."* The Philistines surrounded Jerusalem in David's reign (2 Sa 5:17); the Ethiopians in the time of Asa (2 Chr 14:9); the Moabites and Ammonites in the times of Jehoshaphat (2 Ch 20:1); and Sennacherib in the times of Hezekiah (2 Ki 18:17).

But what became of them? *"They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. 6: Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail."* Sunday, April 15, 2001, after church, Melinda and I and a friend walked down to the pond and watched our lab retrieve. We walked back to the house and were visiting with our friend Ken. Then suddenly everything changed in an instant. Melinda went into labor with Emma! The enemies came and saw and marveled at how easily they thought they could triumph over Jerusalem. But a sudden change came upon them. In an instant, they were seized with fear and were so confounded that they ran away. That really happened to those great kings and their armies when they came against Jerusalem! Brethren, Christ is not only our refuge, he can turn the hearts of our enemies with a look and make them fear us and flee. Don't fear man! Christ is our Refuge! A very present help in trouble!

And he is all powerful to protect us, *"Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind."* This is the season when the east wind brings hurricanes. Christ is in control of the hurricane that breaks the ships in pieces. *"He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm"* (Mk 4:39). Our LORD Jesus is in control of all things. Everything is at his disposal to protect his church which he purchased with his own blood.

## OUR REJOICING

**Psalm 47: 8: As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah. 9: We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. 10: According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness. 11: Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.**

As we have heard in the gospel of Christ preached, so we have seen by faith and by experience that God has established his church forever. Look at what he has done for your local church! Look at what he has done for you personally! Brethren, this is the city of the LORD of hosts; the city of our God. We are his purchased possession, his city, his palace.

We are established in his love, *"We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."* God loves his temple—his people—alone! He first loved his people, even when we did not love him. God loves his people in Christ alone. Christ dwells in the midst of his temple and in each of his people individually. Therefore, God's love for his elect never ends. His love saves and that forever!

Jeremiah 31: 3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. 4: Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel:

Therefore, our rejoicing, our praise, throughout the earth is his great name and his righteousness!—*"According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness."* In Christ crucified, we behold

God's very name glorified and his righteousness manifest. God is just and God is our Justifier. The glory of his name and righteousness guarantees us that he will establish us forever.

Isaiah 48:11: For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Malachi 1:11: For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense [praise] shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Therefore, wherever his people are throughout all the earth, our rejoicing and praise is his name for his righteousness sake, *“Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.”*

## OUR RESOLVE

**Psalm 47: 12: Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. 13: Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following; 14: For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.**

Brethren, since Christ is our refuge and our rejoicing, our resolve is to bear witness of him to our generation knowing he shall provide for us all our days.

God commands us to walk about Zion, go round about her, count the towers thereof and mark well her bulwarks. Believer, each local church we know—this one included—is fully provided for and protected by Christ. One, Christ is our Strong tower, Bulwark never ceasing (Ps 18:10) Two, his preachers are towers set by Christ. God told Jeremiah, *“I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way”* (Jer 6:27). Three, the Scriptures are a tower, as David's armory was, to furnish us with spiritual armor and weapons (So 4:4) Four, the ordinances—baptism and the Lord's table—are called towers, keeping us in constant remembrance of Christ's broken body and shed blood (So 8:10) Christ has fully provided for us! He has, is and shall save us.

So why does God tell us to mark well these things? So that our resolve will be *“that ye may tell it to the generation following.”* Therefore, beholding our great King and all he has and is doing for his city our resolve is to bear witnesses of him in our generation, fearing none but our great God, *“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.”*

**Amen!**