

Sermon – David's Song of Thanks 20-2-22 (SD)

1 Chronicles 16: 8-36

Here's a Psalm that did not get into the top 150 when it should have done!

In fact, most of it did, in Psalms 105 and 96. Whether David called to mind what he had already written as he rejoiced before the Lord, or whether when he was writing the Psalms later he called to mind the words he had uttered, we do not know. (Or perhaps it was the Chronicler who added it in!)

Regardless of this, let's look at when David was caught up in celebration and sang these words to the Lord.

When did this all happen?

When the Ark was being brought into Jerusalem - it had been captured by Israel's enemy, the Philistines, but it had brought them "bad luck" so they put it on a cart and sent it away, back to Israel (1 Samuel 6 & 7). After some interesting events, David eventually brings the Ark into Jerusalem in a proper manner, being carried by the Levites (priests) on poles, lest anyone touch the Ark, to a tent that David had prepared for it.

Now, what was the Ark and why was it so important?

The Ark was a wooden box, covered in gold. It had been made during the wanderings in the Wilderness in Moses' time and it contained the tablets of stone on which were inscribed the 10 Commandments and also Aaron's rod and a pot of manna. But above all it represented the presence of God. At last it was coming to a proper resting place in the capital city. No wonder David was rejoicing! And what a song of praise!

But it did not go down well with everyone! His wife watched him, *And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart.*" [Enlarge & comment]

So let's turn to this song of thanks:

It begins with an account of the faithfulness of what God has done for his people - the descendants of Israel: vv8-12:

*Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.
tell of all his wonderful acts.
Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced*

Then on into the detail of what God has done, vv15 - 22.

For the Jewish people, today as in the time of David and in the time of Jesus, their history was important. They could look back and see the hand of God working in them and through them and for them down through the ages, from generation to generation.

How often do we make this our starting point for prayer and for worship?

Reminding ourselves of what God has done for us, how we have witnessed his hand at work and his power displayed in events that have taken place in our lives as individuals and as a Church.

This is so appropriate as we celebrate our 150 years as a Church, and next Saturday in particular, to share together and be reminded of what God has done - how he has led us, inspired us, challenged us and corrected us.

I have had the privilege on a couple of occasions of being one of the Church Representatives when choosing a new Vicar. The first time when Keith and I met Vince for interview - I will tell you now that initially we did not feel that he "ticked all the boxes" for the person we were looking for, but by the end of the evening I heard/thought/felt very strongly the Lord saying, "This is the man." (A bit like Samuel when he anointed David as king!) And again, when Bidy & I first met Simon, for a lunch "outside of the parish" in Wrotham, something within me said, "Yes".

God has been good and faithful, and has led us forward as a Church.

There is also the Ignatian practice of *Examen* in prayer. When at the end of the day we pause to look back over the day as see where God has been leading us, what he has done for us, how he has helped us. And to give thanks.

Does anyone remember the Argus posters that were produced in the 1970s?

I had one that had a beautiful picture of forests and hills and on it were the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the creator for all I have not seen."

There's a thought to carry with us.

And so, David's Song of Thanksgiving moves on in verses 23 - 36 to focus on God himself.

When we consider what God has done, it makes us realise something more about who God is and what he is like. We then find that we cannot but sing out in adoration: "You are an amazing God!!"

Look at some of the language that David uses:

*great is the Lord and most worthy of praise
Splendour and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his dwelling-place
Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness
Tremble before him, all the earth!*

How often do we pause and just wonder, adore and praise?

I find that when I get a glimpse of the nature of God that I run out of words and just want to revel in his glory!

*Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let them say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!'
Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!
Let the trees of the forest sing,
let them sing for joy before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures for ever.*

It is no wonder that, as David came to the end of this great song, the people responded with a great "Amen! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"

Herein is a lesson for us, in our private prayers, and in our worship -

All too often when we pray, we come with a "shopping list", of what we want God to do, either for us or for other people and situations.

STOP

First of all -

Look at what God has done

Look at who God is

Then things will fall into the right perspective – then we will realise something of the power and trustworthiness of God to deal with all the problems that we face.

In fact, we have even greater events to reflect upon than David and the people of Israel -

We stand this side of the Incarnation

We stand this side of the Cross

We stand this side of the Resurrection

In Jesus we see God

At Calvary we see God's love supremely demonstrated

At the empty tomb we see the power of God demonstrated and have the promise of a new, living relationship with our risen Lord and Saviour.

"Worship is always a response to revelation, and the Cross is the most perfect revelation in all Scripture of who God really is. When we behold the love of God in the Cross, therefore, we can't help but soar on the winds of worship."

The Next Wave - Bob Sorge

So let us too be caught up in wonder and in worship as we recognise what God has done and who he is:

***Praise be to the Lord, our God,
from everlasting to everlasting.***

Then all the people said 'Amen' and 'Praise the Lord.'