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## PSALM 97-98

Psalms – Book IV – Series

Let's go before the Lord and pray together.

[PRAYER] Father, we come before you humbly, recognizing our weakness. It doesn't take long for us, even when we think we're strong, to realize how weak we are, how much in need we are, and how frail we are. So we struggle regularly with our own weaknesses and our own challenges in our lives.

We know, Lord, that it's in the midst of that humility that you give us grace. It's that grace that we need so much that you provide for us. So we're grateful for that grace that allows us to continue on every day. That grace that allows us to be gracious with other people, that grace that allows us to enjoy who you are and what you've done for us. So, Lord, I ask that you'd give us an ever-present sense of humility in our lives and a gratefulness for a graciousness in our hearts. I pray that you would put that into practice in our lives this week as we do the various things that we do. Some going to work, some going to school. But the various tasks that we have we ask that you would allow your grace to permeate our lives in such a way that other people see that grace in us and see the reflection of who you are.

Lord, we want our lives to be meaningful, we want to make a difference in this world. I know that's a real desire of a lot of young people. They want to do something that has an impact. So we're asking that you would make that happen, first, by having us be the people you want us to be, and then revealing to us what you would have us do, each of us, in our lives.

Now Lord, as we come before your word, as we open it up, we do so with anticipation knowing that you may say something small or you may say something large. But we know that you're going to speak to us today. So as we open your word we ask that you would do that and teach us. Reveal yourself to us. In Jesus' name, amen.

I want to ask you a question. This is a question you can respond to. I know we don't respond a lot in this church, but I'm going to give you a question and I'd like you to maybe respond to it. When you think about God, what is the quality of God that you think about? So if you were to fill in the blank – God, you are...what? Good. Awesome. Love. All-powerful. Compassionate. Merciful. Okay, lots of words that describe who God is. He is all of those things.

I want to draw your attention today to one word, one aspect of who God is. I want to draw you to the attention to His holiness. In fact it's really interesting in the scripture that holiness is

probably the base quality about God that makes Him God. He's holy or separate (that's what holy means – to be separate). The holiness is there.

We don't sing "awesome, awesome, awesome." We sing "holy, holy, holy" when we come before God. There's a reason for that and it's because of God's holiness that we understand all the rest of the qualities of who He is. I think that as we understand this one quality of God, the holiness of God, it opens up some things inside of our hearts that we need to hear.

As we look at Psalm 97 today, I would suggest that the big idea of Psalm 97 is this: the reign of a holy God makes the righteous glad and the wicked tremble. I'm going to say that again. It looks to me like the big idea of Psalm 97 is this: the reign of a holy God makes the righteous glad and the wicked tremble.

Let's look at Psalm 97:1. *The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice.* The idea here is that the Lord, Yahweh, is reigning. That means He's sovereign. That's another one of His qualities. He's sovereign.

When we understand the sovereignty of God, it has a practical impact on our lives. So studying the sovereignty of God will help you. It will help me because as I study the sovereignty of God I'm able to deal with my own anxiety in a better way, my own worry, my own fears, because God is in control. He's reigning. That's what it says. *The LORD reigns.*

It helps me with my anger when the scales aren't balanced and I'm getting the bad end of the deal. Because the Lord reigns. When I am weak and I don't know where to go, I need some guidance in my life. The Lord reigns and I can go to Him for guidance in my life. So the sovereignty of God is important and then He's drawing attention to that first here as he says, *The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice.*

Now I want to take you to the last verse of the psalm, Psalm 97:12, because it's in that verse that we're drawn to His holiness. We see the words justiceness and righteousness used all the way through, but here we have the word holy in the last verse. Verse 12 says, *Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.* So we're drawing attention to that idea of holiness.

Now it's important to understand that when God is described in the Bible, He's described in very sober and sobering terms. Among the names that God has we have words like a consuming fire, Lord of hosts, or judge over all the earth. Those are names that He has. Sometimes I think we might think about God as this divine superman, that He's like us but He has all these great powers. I think we do ourselves an injustice to think that way because God is radically different than us. He's not like us in any way. He is holy, distinct from us. He's dangerous, He's alien, He's wild, He's holy.

In the scriptures when we look at them, when people see God and they're actually in God's presence then they cower or they tremble, they go mute. Daniel, who was able to stand before lions, the Bible says, swooned or appeared to be dead as he was in the Lord's presence. Ezekiel was overwhelmed when he saw the vision of God, so much so that he fell down as if he were

dead. When Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of the Lord was so obvious that the priest couldn't even do their jobs. Something amazing about God's holiness.

In the New Testament we have similar things. You remember John. John gets this vision in Revelation of who God is and sees Him in this holiness in the temple. It's just a beautiful thing that he sees as the heavens open and he gets to see God. And he falls down. Saul, as he's in his conversion, on his way to Damascus falls down before the Lord. When Jesus became white as lightning in the transfiguration, Peter, James, and John fell to the ground.

It's amazing to think about the awesomeness of God, the holiness of God. I want you to ponder that with me this morning for just a little bit. Because as we do it starts to affect us in some significant ways.

I'm going to read verses 2-4 now from the same psalm, Psalm 97. *Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles.*

Are you getting the picture here that there's this awesomeness about God when we see His holiness that shakes us. Now I understand why these kind of accounts of God are foreign to us because the media often portrays God in some rather odd ways. We see angels as teddy bears with wings and we see Morgan Freeman playing the picture of God. So when we think about God we think about Him as an old guy that is a lot like us. He is not like us. He is very different. In scripture the encounters with God were terrifying, frightening for people.

Perhaps the best story that illustrates God's holiness is when Isaiah was commissioned. If you were to look in your Bible at Isaiah 6, you'd probably have a title above it that says *Isaiah's Commission*. However, before he was commissioned there was this experience that he has of seeing God. I want to read part of it to you.

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings. So there's a picture being painted in our minds here of the throne of God that's massive and amazing, with these angels, seraphim.*

Let's just see how the seraphim are described. If you're going to try to draw a picture of an angel, this is how you might draw one. *Seraphim, with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

Now the word *seraphim* comes from the Hebrew 'fiery, burning ones.' This is a magnificent view of God in His magnificence.

Isaiah is drawn to this tremendous humility and he cries out, *"Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips* (he's drawn to his own weakness, he's drawn to his own sin, he's drawn to

his own problems), *and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.*”

Now the seraphim don't do very much to lower the fear level. They are, in essence, just part of this picture and it is not safe to be in the presence of God at this moment. In fact, it comes to the conclusion, I think, for Isaiah that it's either death or cleansing. One or the other. To his relief, I suspect, it was the latter, the cleansing, as the seraphim come and put a coal on his mouth to cleanse his mouth. Terrifying.

It is true in the New Testament and our understanding of theology that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He died to satisfy the holiness of God. Out of the holiness of God comes the wrath of God and God satisfied all of that by the cross of Jesus Christ. So when Jesus Christ died on the cross, we can experience the other side of God. We can experience His love and His mercy, the fatherhood of God, as Jesus introduces us to Him in the New Testament, because the holiness of God was satisfied.

But I think it's important for us every once in a while to look back at who God is and the holiness that God has. The healthy appreciation of the holiness of God has an impact on how we relate and how we live our lives. As each one of the qualities of God impact us and change the way we live, holiness does the same thing.

In Leviticus 19:2 it says, *'Be holy,'* God says, *'as I am holy.'* In other words, because God is holy, we should live holy lives. There's something that happens to us. We recognize the holiness of God, we want to be like Isaiah and have our lips cleaned or purified.

In the New Testament, 1 Peter 1:15 says, *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.* We'll never be perfect as God is perfect. We are always in process. But as we have this vision of God and His perfection and His holiness, our lives start to move in that direction. So He ends up calling us holy ones or saints. We are called out ones; separate, to be like Him.

As we go on in the psalm, verse 5 says, *The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the LORD of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all peoples see his glory.*

Glory is the shining of His holiness, the brilliance of that so much so that when we get to heaven there is no need for a sun or a moon because we have the presence of God which lights up everything. Fascinating.

Now we go to great lengths in our worship services in churches around America and around the world to create an atmosphere that's conducive for worship. What we want to do is we want to encourage people in their worship and so we create an atmosphere as much as possible in order to do that. There are books published on worship, there are worship conferences that people can go to in order to understand how to do such things. Lots of money is spent on PA systems and instruments and décor. The goal is to lead people into the presence of God. I think all of that is great. It's valuable because it accomplishes a valuable thing in our worship experience.

But no matter how much money we invest, unless we get a picture of who God is and His holiness, then our worship at best is superficial and maybe even momentarily moving. What we want to do is understand God's holiness because it draws us into worship. When we glimpse God's holiness we begin approaching God with a reverence and an awe. Because we see Him as a consuming fire. When God is revealed, worship doesn't have to be manufactured or drummed up. It's a natural reflex of seeing God, who He is. So the more we dwell on this idea of God's character and this understanding of who He is then we are drawn in our hearts to worship.

Matt Redman puts it this way: "Worship thrives on wonder. For worship to be worship, it must contain something of the otherness of God. A vision of God's holiness rescues our worship from superficiality and makes it passionate and profound."

To go back to the story of Isaiah in Isaiah 6, we see that Isaiah responds to this vision of God's grandeur and His holiness. I think the response that we see in Isaiah is the response we end up when we actually experience worship the way God designed us to experience it. The question is asked, "*Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?*" Isaiah's response is, "*Here I am. Send me!*"

I would suggest when we truly get a glimpse of God in the midst of worship then we walk away saying, "I'm going to serve the Lord today. I'm going to dedicate myself again to the Lord this week. I'm going to be the person God wants me to be."

Verse 7 of our psalm says, *All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols—worship him, all you gods!*

I think in some cases our worship in America (in some cases) has been reduced to entertainment. Sometimes we even say to ourselves, "I am going to go to church" or "I'm going to enjoy church" or "I'm going to get something out of the experience of going to church" when really those are byproducts of what happens when we're committed to the Lord. We don't go to church to get something out of it or to enjoy it, although those are byproducts of something else.

Our target is we go to church (number one) to honor God and to bless Him and to worship Him, and (number two) to have an impact and serve those around us. So the fellowship time is an important time. In fact, I would suggest that it's during the fellowship time that maybe the most important words of the day are said. The time we hang out afterwards and you talk to someone else may be the most important things that are said are said during that moment. We come to church with a goal, not of being self-edified but edifying others. As a result then we enjoy church, and as a result then we experience and get something out of church.

You hear sometimes that church is a performance. I would say that church is a performance, but it's not a performance of people on stage and all the rest of us watching as the audience. Rather it's worship leaders leading us into the presence of God in a way that all of us become the performers, so to speak, and God is our audience. The greatest applause that we could hear is the appreciation that God has for the worship that we experience together.

Verse 8 as we continue: *Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, LORD. For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth* (so notice we've seen words like judgment, righteousness, justice – all outgrowth of His holiness); *you are exalted far above all gods.*

Verse 10: *Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*

Evil isn't a word that we hear very much of today. Wouldn't it be great if in the news you would hear the word evil? That this movie star and this movie star engaged in adultery and that is evil. That we would hear reports that evil was even mentioned. That Congress passed a bill that will make evil a little bit easier for some. The word evil is an important word, again tying into the holiness of God, because it draws a distinction separating God from evil.

When we're drawn to this idea of worshiping God and understanding how He would have us live then we're drawn to a passage like this one in Psalm 119:9-11. Especially appropriate for young people because it's talking to young people there.

*How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

The holiness of God draws us to holiness in our own lives and a movement in that direction. It's a powerful understanding of who God is and the psalm is drawing us into the presence of God to understand worship from the perspective of God's holiness.

Verse 11 and 12. Let me read the rest of this particular psalm. *Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.*

Once we rediscover the holiness of God and it becomes so meaningful to us, then we understand the qualities of love and mercy and compassion. In fact, then we understand the gospel. Because the scriptures tell us that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, the curtain in the temple to the Holy of Holies that protected people from the actual presence of God's holiness was torn in two, providing us now access into the presence of God. When we understand the holiness of God then we're drawn into this great appreciation of what He's done for us, and then the gospel becomes so meaningful.

If you're here today and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you want to ask Him to come into your life because not only are you a brother and sister in Christ (as I'm trying to teach the children), but you're also freed from the wrath of God that comes from His holiness. You are paid for. So now you have access to God. And then this understanding of God becomes the Father who cares for us and who knows the number of each one of our hairs on our head. He cares for us like the birds of the air or the flowers. There's a nurturing sense of God as Father that we enjoy because of what Christ has done on the cross for us. Powerful psalm about God's holiness.

I want to take you into another psalm, Psalm 98. The big idea of Psalm 98 is God is constantly delivering us from the various imprisonments of our life. If you've got a problem, you're stuck, you're imprisoned in a particular part of your life, God delivers us and then there's a result that comes from that, and that's the result of worship. The worship is described in verse 1.

*Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.*

The main idea of this particular psalm is that we can sing a new song with shouts of joy because God has done something in our lives. He's saved us. Now this salvation speaking here isn't about the New Testament salvation we know, although that's one of the things God saved us from is sin through Jesus Christ. He's talking about salvation that's provided for us in a number of different ways, often rescuing us from particular situations in our lives that we need. We need the benefit that God provides through that salvation.

Notice it says *for he has done marvelous things*. So the new song comes out of marvelous things He has done. Do you see that? *We sing a new song, for he has done marvelous things*. So in order for us to sing a new song we have to see the marvelous things of God. I think some people are singing the same old song over and over again, the song they've been singing for a long time. There's a new song that comes and you can only sing the new song when you see the new things that God is doing. It's a fresh experience that we can enjoy in our lives.

What is God doing in your life right now? What is something marvelous that He's doing, something dramatic that causes you to sing a new song?

I'm studying this psalm and, as often is the case, God is doing things in my life and I'm looking, "God, what do you want me to sing a new song about this week?"

I have to tell you this story. Last week (not yesterday, but a week ago) I was speaking in Dallas just before the last time I was to speak on Saturday before getting on the plane. So I'm getting ready to speak and I get a text message that says my flight is canceled home.

Now you know here at Calvary Chapel we have a backup plan if I can't be here because of travel. That's the only reason I'm not going to be here pretty much is because I can't get back here because of some flight problem. So Ed Miller is dutifully waiting to help out in those cases and he will speak. His sermon is ready. It's James. He's refreshed it. He even refreshed it last night thinking I wasn't going to be here last night. But it's ready to go. So you'll be blessed when you get to hear him.

But in this case, last Saturday, Ed was with me in Dallas. His goal was to finish up the conference. Well, I left and I was going to get back. So I get a text message that says that the flight is canceled. So right away I get on the phone and I rewrite myself on another flight direct to Philly on American Airlines even though the weather is bad in Philadelphia. So now I've got a flight, get up and I speak.

We're done speaking, we get out of there, and leave right away. We get on the plane. We're heading back to Philadelphia. But as we're getting on the plane, the pilot gets on before we even leave Dallas and he says, "Folks, I want you to know that all the other flights are canceled to Philadelphia, but I have an idea. I'm going to reroute us through Charlotte and we're going to get up to Philadelphia that way. So I have to go upstairs." (I didn't know if he was going up to heaven or he was going upstairs to talk to dispatch in order to get the word.) He comes back and he says, "Okay, I've got enough fuel for us to get to Philly and if we have to we'll end in Charlotte." So we take off and everything's fine.

We're almost to Philly and he says, "I've got some bad news, folks. We're here at Philly, but they've closed the airport because there's a quarter-inch of snow on the runway, so they've told us they're going to clear that snow and we're going to circle for a half hour, and then if we can't land we're going to land in Charlotte." I'm thinking Charlotte's a little closer. Maybe I can drive from Charlotte here. But in thirty minutes they cleared the runway and we landed.

I got here last week and so I was really grateful because although the pilot didn't know it, there was a preacher on that plane that needed to get home. So all the other flights were canceled, but I got here. I was really grateful. That was a marvelous thing that God did. I was really grateful that that pilot took the extra effort to go out and do what he needed to do.

Now last night I was in Chicago yesterday and I get to the airport for my two o'clock flight. The flight before me and the flight after me have red letters "CANCELED." My flight's still going. I'm saying, "Great!" and thinking I don't think this is going to work. All that snow is coming down in Philly, so I'm thinking, "I don't think so." But I saw let's go, let's get on the plane. So we get on the plane and we take off. I can't believe we're taking off to go home. I'm going, "This is great!"

We get over Philly and the guy says, "Sorry, I have bad news for you. They've had too much snow come down in Philly so we're rerouting to Norfolk, Virginia." So we landed in Norfolk, Virginia and stayed in the plane there for a little while until the airport opened up, and flew back, and got home to Philly, and then I came here.

I am a happy guy because this is the best place I'd like to be on a Sunday morning! God knew (I don't know if the pilot knew) that there was a preacher on that plane that needed to get home here on Sunday morning. So I'm singing a new song today because I see the marvelous things that God is doing.

But here's the funny thing. I don't know if you looked at the weather report for this week. It's going to be a beautiful week except Saturday it's going to snow again. I don't know what will happen. I want you to know that someday it may be true that I won't be here and maybe Ed won't be here on that same day, but that's okay. We'll still have a worship service. It's not just about me here. People will share testimonies and there will be worship and you'll go away blessed because of what God does. It's the presence of God here that blesses us, not a particular person.



*Sing to the new LORD a new song, marvelous things.* I think we get stuck in some of those old songs, the lamenting songs, the despairing songs, and if we look at this book of Psalms from Psalm 90-106, it's the fourth book of the Psalms tying into the fourth book in the Old Testament, the book of Numbers, where there was a lot of grumbling and complaining. They were despairing when they reached the Red Sea and they couldn't go across, so they are complaining about it and God rescues them. They had a new song at that moment.

In Exodus 15 they had no water, so they were complaining. God provided. In the next chapter they had no food and they're complaining, so God provided. And in the next chapter, again, they lacked water and they're complaining, and God provided. You'd think they'd get the idea. In Numbers 11 they didn't like the menu of manna every day. They wanted something else. God gave them quail. He blessed them. There was a negative report from the spies.

You would think in the midst of this as they're seeing God work and all these things they sing new songs to the Lord. That's what they're trying to overcome in their lives. It's probably why God had them wandering around for forty years learning how to trust Him, learning how to sing a new song, a song of victory instead of defeat.

I would suggest that many of us need to sing a new song, but in order to sing the new song you need to see God at work in your life right now – *the marvelous things that he does*, according to verse 1.

Psalm 98:2: *The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* That's three times the word *salvation* is used. God rescues us. He reveals great things because of His character because of what He's doing in our lives.

What has God done in your life? We could have a testimony time right here and you could share all kinds of things and then we could sing a new song because of those marvelous things that God is doing and has done.

But as we go to verse 4 he tells us how to worship with that and he starts telling us about musical instruments. Verse 4, first of all, he says, *Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music.*

After last week's message when we talked about shouting to the Lord, Rose DeLisi said we should sing that song *Shout to the Lord* because it ties right into the psalm, and it does. It ties right into this one too, so we'll sing that right after the teaching this morning. *Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music.*

Now those of you who are musicians will like verse 5 because it talks about three musical instruments.

When I was in seminary one of the studies I did – you know you do research projects and so on – I chose to do a research project on the musical instruments in the Bible. There are a lot of them, especially in the book of Daniel when they blew the trumpets and all kinds of things. So I

learned a lot about musical instruments. This is one of those passages that shares about three of them.

Notice in verse 5 it says to *make music to the LORD with the harp*. The harp was a stringed instrument; sometimes having ten strings, we're told in the Bible, other numbers of strings. Kind of like the guitar that we have today. So it's a stringed instrument.

Then we also have the trumpets, verse 6 – *with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn*. The trumpet was usually silver, didn't have the curve like our trumpets do. It has just the straight trumpet that opens up at the end and they would blow out of that. That was the trumpet and the blast of the ram's horn, that was the horn from an animal, in this case a ram, the shofar that was blasted. The point is, it's a noisy worship experience with all of these instruments playing at the same time.

And notice if you don't play an instrument you could still shout to the Lord. So there's lots of ways. Either singing (it says in verse 5), shouting to the Lord. There's a sense of lifting up this orchestra to the Lord and these instruments to Him and praising Him.

If you look at verse 7 and following we see the orchestra that creation provides. Do you see that there? Verse 7 (and these are some of the words that inspire the *Shout to the Lord* song that we're going to sing). *Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.*

When you're discouraged, when you're under stress, when you've lost enthusiasm or energy, it's very important to be able to come before God with this praise or this praise experience, this worship experience. There's another kind of a psalm, there's a lament psalm, which says, "God I'm feeling bad because of the bad things that are going on around me." That's an important psalm too, but I would suggest that we get the most out of the lament song when we preface it with the praise psalm. Otherwise we can end up in self-pity and that can be a cyclical problem in our lives. We have to be careful about that in our lives.

The lament psalms are important. I don't want to suggest we always have to be experiencing this exuberance before the Lord. There are lament psalms that really describe what God might be doing in the down times. God works in those down times in our lives. It's a very important kind of psalm, but we won't be looking at it for a while.

But in this psalm we're talking about a praise psalm that's lifting us up to the Lord and looking at the orchestra of creation that even does that for us. Now this Psalm 98 is a very important psalm in this regard. It is the foundation for another song that you know. Psalm 98 is the foundation for the Christmas carol *Joy to the World!* In this song, *Joy to the World* (which is the number one – if you were to list Christmas carols, people would say *Joy to the World* first), it says nothing about a manger, it says nothing about shepherds or wise men, it says nothing about a Baby Jesus. It's really a song about the second coming of Christ.

*Joy to the World*. It's a very simple song with two-line verses and I'm going to read the verses to you from *Joy to the World* just so you can remember them, but they come from this psalm. Isaac Watts wrote this song around 1700; about a hundred years later, Lowell Mason adapted and arranged this song into a melody many believed to have been written by Handel. Now it comes to us as *Joy to the World* and it becomes this popular Christmas song because:

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing.*  
That's verse 1.

Verse 2:  
*Joy to the world! The Savior reigns;  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy.*  
As we have just read in this particular passage.

The third verse:  
*No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And the wonders of His love.*

Psalm 98, the inspiration for a beautiful song that we usually sing at Christmas. I thought about singing it today, but I thought, "Well no, we'll save it for Christmas." But at least when we do sing it again, you'll know that it comes from Psalm 98.

The psalms are a beautiful part of the literature of the Bible, the word of God because they inspire us in our emotions to draw into God's character and who He is. I'd encourage you as you continue to look at the psalms and study them with me over the next few weeks that you would allow God to speak to you in that part of your life, the emotional part of your life, that you'd draw your heart close to the Lord and worship Him in every part of who you are.

If you're here today and you've not trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want to invite you to do that today. It's an opportunity, whether a young person, an older person, whether you are married or single, no matter where you are in your part of life, you need Jesus Christ inside of your life.

If you've never accepted Jesus Christ, you need to understand this: You have a problem and the problem is you're a sinner. The fact that God is holy means that He can't be with you. You can't have a relationship with Him because of your sin. You can't say, "I'm going to weigh out the good and bad, and I have more good than bad." If you have any sin then you've got a problem because you can't be with a holy God.

God has designed a plan for us to have a close relationship with Him and that plan is salvation through Jesus Christ who died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sin to satisfy the holiness of God so that you and I could have a close, personal relationship with God as Father. We can come into His presence and enjoy who He is without fear because Jesus Christ has taken away the wrath of God. Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice on the cross, He's taken away the penalty for that sin. But only for those who've accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

If you haven't made that decision, you want to make that decision today. You do not want to be in the presence of a holy God without Jesus Christ having taken away the penalty for your sin. If God is speaking to you this morning and you want to ask Jesus Christ to come into your life, then I want you to just slip over to one of the prayer counselors that are on the side and they will pray with you and help you come to know Jesus Christ in that very personal way. You don't want to be like this young man on the stage. "Have you accepted Jesus Christ?" "Well, I don't know." You want to know. Have you accepted Jesus Christ into your life?

Let's pray before we continue our worship to the Lord.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, right now we come before you and thank you for your character. Just getting a glimpse a little bit more about your holiness draws us into your presence with a little more respect, a little more reverence. Lord, we thank you for what you've done. Because of Jesus Christ dying on the cross and providing salvation for us and because of the victories you provide us regularly in our lives we have a new song that we can sing. We're grateful for that and we can lift up our song to you today in our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.