



St Ninian's Uniting Church

Wednesday Words

November 27th, 2024

Based on Psalm 98

Quiet prayer: My Lord and my God, I offer you praise today as You are God, the great and almighty Lord. I sing there is none like you because it's true. As the commandment says, there are no Gods before me except You. You are holy, mighty, glorious and good. I will make a joyful noise in Your presence. In Your goodness I pray amen.



Prayer points of thanks and praise:

- For clean and nourishing water to refresh even the most tired and weary soul.
- For the sounds of joy in my heart which replaces the darkest, and most harrowing experience.
- For the clear air I breath in and the stars I see in the heavens
- For the fairest judgment that comes in the name of the Lord.

Prayer points of Confession

- Being blind to the marvelous blessings of God each day.
- Refusing to see the point of view of others
- Refusing to learn or experience new things
- For giving up!

Words of grace

Our Lord knows what's in our hearts and minds. God's presence is with us and enabling us in our ministries of teaching, prayers, pastoral caring, and hospitality. God's grace is love and eternal, Jesus says: 'Your sins are forgiven' our response is thanks be to God amen.

PSALM 98 NRSVUE

Praise the Judge of the World

¹O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory. ²The Lord has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. ³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

⁵ Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. ⁶ With Trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

⁷ Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it. ⁸ Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy ⁹ at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Reflection

When speaking with people who aren't part of a denomination or faith community, I often hear the opinion the scriptures have nothing to say about the world in today's era. My response is that it does and there are many examples of where it does. This psalm is one of them. Psalm 98 offers us an invitation to take the pressure off ourselves and to reflect on God's sovereignty of us and our role in proclaiming what God has done, is doing and will do for us in all stages and ages of our lives. Our psalm calls for us to be joyful; to worship not in hum-drum way but with gladness and I may add with an expectancy that change will happen because of Christ's love for us, to remain hopeful, and a commitment to justice. In this century we can resonate with each of these things.

In a wonderful way the psalm begins with a call to sing a new song to the Lord. This call to sing a new song is another invitation to allow ourselves to be bold and creative in our worship as well as our mission and ministry. We are being encouraged to take steps into a new world of music, ritual and worship practices without being judgmental. In our time being the people of God means embracing diverse forms of worship that reflect our various cultures as we expand our faith experiences where we can feel free to express our diversity in worship experiences. We can do this and still celebrate the goodness and grace of God. By cultivating a spirit of joyful praise, we are gifting ourselves and the faith community an understanding that sits at the heart of our psalm.

When our memory fails us, we can turn to our psalm which recounts God's marvelous deeds and Christ's salvation (v2). Speaking in our context a simple acknowledgment of God's saving grace can be heard through a personal testimony as we heard a few months ago where we heard the transformative power of faith from those who shared their experiences with us during our worship. We each have a story which can be shared with children, families, friends, and even in our workplaces. Through engaging in conversations about faith and sharing its impact through our actions, we invite others to encounter God's love. The offshoot of this can also translate into acts of kindness and social justice, reflecting Christ's compassion, as we continue to be bold in our sharing of the good news not only with words, but also with our actions.

Within these 9 verses we can also hear the presence of God's righteousness and the importance of justice. As Christ's ambassadors in the here and now many people advocate for justice in our community and see it as a vital expression of being part of the body of

Christ. This can manifest in numerous ways, from supporting the various charities supported by the Uniting Church – the Christmas Bowl appeal which will be starting soon, Uniting World, the Uniting Social Justice arm of the church and other NGOs. Changes in the social realm don't happen by accident, they occur through people actively participating in initiatives that foster justice. Through the various activities, we are witnessing the character of God and God's transformative work in the world.

At present we have a great concern for the environment and protecting it from harm. I am encouraged the psalm supports and embraces us as stewards of the earth, the importance to care for creation has never been more critical than it is today. Environmental degradation, the changing climate and habitat loss are pressing issues for us today. I praise God that after being missing from Canberra for a very long time a Koala colony has been found in the northern part of Canberra– this land should now be protected from development. Being God's people means advocating for sustainable practices, supporting policies that protect our environment rather than destroy it. It will take reeducating ourselves, and others about environmental stewardship. This holistic approach honours God's creation and aligns with God's desire for harmony between humanity and the environment.

One last thing to mention about the psalm, is it's urging of all the earth (v4) to participate in worship. We are being called to be a united body of Christ. This isn't so easy given we live in a digital age where divisions can easily arise. So, it's important that nurture our community and acknowledge the necessity to be inclusive and find ways to work together for the common good is essential. This may involve participating in various and continuous conversations to avert conflict and broken relationships. We are called to be a source of encouragement and love within our local church communities. Building connections reinforces our identity as the body of Christ and exemplifies Jesus' command to love one another.

Psalm 98 involves joyful worship, acknowledging God's salvation, advocating for justice, caring for creation, and nurturing unity among Christ's followers. Through these actions, we are enabled to faithfully reflect God's love and greatness in a world that so desperately needs hope.

Amen

Prayer Points of Intercession

- Gratitude for the gift of joyful music of all kinds, the gift of worship, social justice warriors, encouragers, and the faithful body of Christ.
- For peace to return to the places where war and conflict exist
- For the environment, God's critters, the waterways,
- For St Ninian's Uniting Congregation to grow

- Further mission in our community.
- For good health in members of St Ninian's

'None Like You' live at the Tower of David Jerusalem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk5KHyEbDFc>

