

08/24/25 - Psalm 98 - "One Psalm, Three Names: Savior, King, Judge"

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Preacher: Carman Arroyo

[0 : 00] We'll be reading today from Psalm 98. Please open your Bibles to Psalm 98! He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre. With the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of horn. Make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea roar and all that fills it. The world and all who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord.

For he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness. And the people with equity. This is the Word of God.

[1 : 28] Thanks be to God. All right. Sing with me if you know this one. Joy to the world, the Lord is come.

Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room. And heaven and nature sing.

And heaven and nature sing. And heaven and nature sing. Joy to the earth. What's going on?

What? Oh! Joy to the earth. The Savior reigns. Let men their songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains.

Repeat the sounding joy. Repeat the sounding joy. Repeat, repeat the sounding joy. Good morning, church.

[2 : 27] Good morning. My name is Carmen Arroyo. I'm one of the elders here at Steel Valley. And it is a delight to open God's Word with you. And for most of you already know, we've lifted Isaac Watts' hymn, Joy to the World, which was drawn and inspired by this very psalm, Psalm 98.

It's a psalm that turns a sanctuary into a tuning fork and invites the whole of creation to join into the chorus. So, here is the heartbeat and one line of today's sermon.

Saved by grace, ruled by Christ, and awaiting his righteous return. So we sing. Today, we'll be continuing our summer in the psalms.

And through a sermon I've titled, One Psalm, Three Names, Savior, King, and Judge. And we'll be following Psalm 98's three stanzas.

With first diving into stanza one, God is Savior. And looking at verses one through three, that his marvelous deeds, his right hand and holy arm, have set the key of grace for our song.

[3 : 39] The second stanza, God is King. We'll be looking at verses four through six, with trumpets, strings, and loud voices. Rise, because Jesus reigns now.

And worship is our royal proclamation. And the third and final stanza, God as judge, we'll be diving deeper into verses seven through nine, where rivers clap and the hills sing.

For he is coming to set the world right with righteousness and equity. So, whether you've arrived today in a major key bursting with praise and laughter and joy, or a minor key heavy with sorrow and pain, you are seen and you are welcomed.

Let the spirit tune what is flat, warm what is grown cold, and thicken hope where it is thinned. This hour isn't just a pause from life, it is the pulse of life.

We are not just an audience. We are a choir, voices, hearts, and hands, ready for the King. So, open with me, if you haven't already done so, to Psalm 98, and prepare him room.

[5 : 00] Lift your heads, and church, let us sing. But first, let's pray. Savior, King, and coming judge, tune our hearts to your new song.

By your word, remind us of what you have done. By your reign, make us bold in worship. By your promised return, steady us with hope. Lift our voices, cleanse our conscience, and align our lives to your righteous melody.

Today, and all week long. For your glory, and our joy in Jesus' name, the church says, amen.

All right, so we're going to start with stanza one, and start looking at verses one through three, which open up and say, Oh, sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

This psalm isn't asking us to fake feelings. It's pointing to real acts of God. And in Israel's ears, this new song meant fresh deliverance, that God has acted yet again.

[6 : 12] His right hand and his only arm, This echoes the song of the sea in Exodus chapter 15, verse 6. The Israelites could almost smell the sea wind, and hear the chariots sink.

That opening line pulled their whole story into the room. They were a small people on their big empires, yet they were carried by a covenant God that keeps his promises.

Verse 2 says, He made known his salvation, revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

This is a public display. It's not something private.

Like the way that Jericho had already heard what God had did at the Red Sea, and to the two kings of the Amorites, in Joshua chapter 2, verses 9 through 11. And like Isaiah promises, that all people would see the Lord bear his holy arm, in chapter 52, verse 10, in the book of Isaiah.

Verse 3 nails this foundation of his oath, saying, He remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness. And in the Hebrew, it's esed and emet.

[7 : 25] It's the very words of God's self-proclamation, in Exodus chapter 34, verses 6 through 7. It's the essence of his covenant care as described in Deuteronomy chapter 7.

These words just weren't merely a fictitious story. It was their history. For they were saved again and again and again with God as the victor and keeping his holy covenant promised to their fathers. This history echoes forward when Zechariah blesses God for remembering mercy in Luke chapter 1, verses 72 through 75.

And when John says that the word came full of grace and truth, in John chapter 1, verses 14 and 17, it says, hesed ve'emet in human flesh that he's describing.

He's describing. So, the new song that we see here in today's passage, we see it time and time again all throughout the Psalms, in Psalm 33, 40, 144, and even in Isaiah chapter 42.

[8 : 38] This new song wasn't just a fad. It's the next verse in a long, faithful melody rooted in the promise carried out by the one who doesn't break his promises that he has done, he has made known, and he has revealed, he has remembered.

It is his mercies of yesterday that fuel Israel's songs. But church, now I want you to lift your eyes from Israel's choir to a hill outside of Jerusalem.

another sea stands in the way, not of water, but one of God's holy wrath against sin. And once more, God makes a path where there is none.

The arm of the Lord is bared not in a sword, but in a Savior. At the cross, God's righteousness doesn't only speak, it acts. It doesn't just diagnose guilt, it removes it.

In Jesus Christ, righteousness is revealed for our justification. He who knew no sin became sin for us so that in him we may become the righteousness of God as it is written in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21.

[10 : 06] That the verdict, you could never earn is written in his blood that you are forgiven, counted righteous, and brought near.

Church, if Israel can sing on the far shore inside of the Red Sea, how much more can we sing on this far side of an empty tomb? Let's keep this plain.

Grace is the spring and obedience is the river. You don't make a river flow by staring at the banks at it.

You kneel and you drink and salvation is God's work alone. His arm, not ours, is described in Jonah chapter 2, verse 9 and Ephesians chapter 2, verses 4 through 9.

And because we are justified by faith alone, Christ's righteousness is credited to us. This new song isn't a trend. It's what happens when God gives you a new heart, a clean record, and His Spirit is within you.

[11 : 09] It's like thinking that you've stumbled and pocketed a dull stone and instead you pull it out and you realize it's a diamond reflecting light from every angle.

And when the gospel lands like that, praise stops becoming a chore and it starts becoming a reflex. and it's as easy as breathing the very air that He has provided in your lungs today.

Now Christian, some of you may notice that your reflex needs rekindling. I want you to start your mornings this week with this very Scripture's own sentence and remember He has done marvelous things and name one marvelous thing that you've seen at the cross and one in your life today.

No matter how small it is, remember it. Remember the cross. Remember what He has done. And slowly, you'll start to see the fog lift.

I want you to ask yourself in the quiet moments of your day, whether it's early in the car as you drive to work or late at night when you lay your head down to try to fall asleep or when you're tossing and turning and you can't.

[12 : 35] What tune hums under your thoughts? Is it worry's buzz? Is it the achievements droning?

I need to do this. I need to do that. Or is it the steady cadence of Christ crucified again and risen?

And when these accusations start to crowd in, when shame struts like Goliath, we answer with David's sling, He has done.

Your assurance is an afraid thread. It is a steel cable anchored in Christ alone. I want you now to also picture your heart like an old record where sin cuts ruts of fear and pride and the needle keeps falling into the same grooves again and again and again and again.

Grace is the hand that lifts the needle and sets it into a new groove. Christ for us, Christ with us, Christ in us until the music changes.

[14 : 04] Church, we're going to do something and when I say saved by grace, you're going to say so we sing. All right? So, we are saved by grace.

Fantastic. That is Psalm 98's initial key note that these past grace sets the key for present praise and with that key set, we're ready for the second stanza, how all the earth answers the Savior with a loud praise before the King.

we'll move on to stanza number two as God is King and look at verses four through six. And seeing what we just reviewed in verses one through three of what God has done, Psalm 98 turns and tells us how to answer Him.

Here, it reads, make a joyful noise to break forth to sing praises with the lyre, with trumpets, with the sound of the horn before the King. the Lord.

Hear how the imperatives pile up and how the sound grows. Voice strings to brass is an auditory crescendo for the coronation of our Lord and the Lord reigns.

[15 : 25] In Psalms 96 through 99, this cluster, also known as the Lord reigns cluster, it's a steady drumbeat that the King is not waiting to be crowned.

He reigns now. And that worship is not wallpaper on our week. It is the public proclamation. Jesus reigns.

I learned this afresh one day as I was actually struggling with this portion of the text and running on fumes going from flag football to cheer to a summer splash party to then a birthday party.

My tank was absolutely empty. My brain was fried. I was ready to go home and I was ready to go to sleep. However, in God's providence, someone started talking about 1 Chronicles 25 where David appointed Asaph, Haman, and Jedethon.

They were singers that were set apart to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals. They were a company trained and skillful, serving in ordered courses for the house of God.

[16 : 37] That is Psalm 98 with its sleeves rolled up. You see, church, music isn't supposed to be a mood machine. It's not supposed to create an atmosphere.

It's the ministry of the word set to melody. Truth rides on strings. Hope speaks in harmony. And the spirit uses ordered, word-shaped praises to lift people before their king.

I want to pause here to stress how we worship on Sundays at home with our families and in the quietness of everyday life. with so much music available today, we sometimes get lost in everything, but Scripture gives us clear guidance.

God has already provided us in hymnal, 150 psalms, plus countless other songs found throughout His word. Lord. And the thing is that what we have to do is our singing should glorify Him and not center us.

In today's church culture, some popular songs drift toward self. I implore you to be wary and ask yourself as you're listening to this new popular Christian song, is it putting God's work in the subject line or is it putting mine or someone else's?

[18:10] I want us to especially think of this as we're raising children in the Lord. Songs shaped by Scripture sink deep. You never know how a psalm learned today will have an effect on a loved one later in life, whether it be tragedy, whether it be a situation that they're crying out for help, whether it be during their final moments on their deathbed gasping for life, you never know how that song is going to come back.

Jesus reigns. And our King is no candidate hunting for votes.

He is the crucified, risen, and enthroned Lord. Installed as both Lord and the Christ, the Messiah, exalted above every other name, and as a mediator, He rules His church by word and by spirit and all nations owe Him homage.

That's why Psalm 98 piles up these action words to make noise, to break forth, to sing, play, and blast. This is not hype. It is holy clarity.

We don't sing to conjure joy. We sing because joy has been put in us. the gospel has cleared our record. The spirit has made our hearts new.

[19:46] The King truly reigns. So we let the word of Christ dwell richly as we sing. Lyrics full of scriptures, hearts full of grace, mouths full of courage.

We avoid the theatrics, but we do not starve joy. we worship as God commands in reverent joy that befits the throne as described in Hebrews chapter 12 verses 12, 28 through 29.

And our sounds, and with our sounds, what it says to the heavens and to the earth and to our own soul is Jesus reigns.

Church, I have another loving challenge for you. that if your main reason for coming here is to get a mood boost or to a pat on the back or a jolt to your emotions, friends, you're aiming far too low.

This, this singing, this gathering, this word is a preview of heaven's throne room where the lamb is praised without end. How will you enjoy forever in God's presence if you will not enjoy his presence with his people now?

[21:07] The Lord's day today is the weekly rehearsal. And so if you skip the rehearsal, the performance is going to feel strange. So I implore you to come, come early, come hungry, come ready, and your heart will learn what part it was made to sing.

So what does this look like on the ground, this corporate worship? Let corporate worship sound like Psalm 98, fueled in truth, Christ-exalting, and congregationally loud.

Take all the earth that we see in verse four seriously. That mission isn't optional. And practice everyday liturgy. scripture and song in the morning with your family, prayer at the table, and maybe a psalm to end the day.

Now, I know there are works of necessity and mercy, and we're not all able to be here for whatever reason on this day, because seasons may vary.

but as you are able, we should try to set this day apart. Begin with worship and let it ring through shared meals. Have word-shaped conversations.

[22:26] Conduct family prayer and care for the hurting. If David's singers have prophesied with strings and cymbals, our guitars, pianos, and playing voices can declare that the grave is empty and the king is alive.

We don't sing to get God to move. We sing because he already has. And we don't sing to find joy. We sing from it.

So lift your voices like a trumpet before the king. Let your homes become little choir stalls. Read a psalm. Sing a verse. Pray a mercy. Let your street hear that we believe the tomb is vacant because church, Jesus reigns now, and we are ruled by Christ.

So we, so we, all right, you're getting it. Remember that this world we're singing in, it's fallen, it's frayed, it's heavy with darkness, there's chaos, there's death, there's despair, yet those who belong to Christ keep singing.

Our hymns become banners, our gatherings are royal procession, and this room is a chorus in the chaos ringing one clear note throughout the night. The king has come, the king is risen, and the king will come again.

[23:52] And if that song is obscure to you or sounds weird and a little bold to you while we're in the dark, here's why. Because the third stanza awaits, and the king we praise is the judge who is coming, and the creation itself will rejoice in his return.

And so we go to my final stanza of today's sermon, and we'll focus on verses seven through nine as God is judge.

God is judge. All right. So starting off verse seven, we see that let the seas roar and all that fills it. Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the earth with righteousness and the peoples with equity. Before you hear the word judge, I know I have a short memory, so I don't want us to forget what we just did in stanza two as crowning the king. So the world is established.

[25 : 05] It shall never be moved. We see this in Psalm 93 verse one. Yes, the floods snarl, evil swells, chaos hammers the shore. Psalm 93, three, but the Lord on high is mightier.

Psalm 93, four. The one who made the world and holds it together will return to put it straight. That is why the whole cosmos warms in song.

Earth below and the heavens above tuning up for his appearing. So I want you to now feel the weight of two words as we dive into these verses.

Judge and equity. judge in scripture. Hebrew, Shafat, is not a cold sentence from a distant bench. It is the good king stepping into the ruins to govern, to rescue, to set the crooked bones of the world made right. The Lord is our judge, our law giver, our king.

[26 : 15] He will save us, echoes Isaiah 33 verse 22. judgment is salvation made public, the mending made visible, and God has already appointed the man for the task, Jesus risen and radiant and entrusted with the gavel.

That gavel rests in pierced hands, is justice with scars. He will judge the peoples with equity equity as we move on to the next word.

And in today's culture, that word equity can feel pretty loaded. But Psalm 98 uses it in a different key.

The Hebrew meshurim means level, straight, even. The firm ground under everyone's feet is justice justice with no bribes, no crooked scales, no backroom whispers as described in Leviticus 19 and Proverbs 11.

It does not find favor with the strong or forget the weak. Deuteronomy 10, 17 through 8. This is God's even-handed rule.

[27 : 35] Truth without favoritism, mercy without compromise. I want us to picture a rutted road like many of the roads.

It's probably if you leave today, if you go through the gravel lot and you take a left to get back onto Wick, you'll notice it. I want us to imagine that road over there. I want us to imagine the city coming and paving way, removing the ruts, filling in the potholes, making all the debris away.

that is what equity is like. So, we have to ask ourselves, no wonder why creation can't remain silent as we move throughout this passage.

It's the seas that have swallowed up the refugees, the rivers that have carried tears, the hills that have been watching wars.

They will roar, clap, and sing when the king raises his baton and the world falls into tune. At his first downbeat, righteousness becomes the melody and equity keeps time.

[29 : 00] This church is our already and not yet. already salvation bursts into history at Christ's first coming, but not yet the last wrong righted and every tear wiped away.

Already there is no condemnation for those in Christ, but not yet the full vindication that hushes every lie. The thoughts of the judge does not rattle the believer.

It steadies us. So church, let this land. I ask you this question, does judgment day make you flinch or does it make you sing?

If you are unrepentant, hear mercy pounding on the door. Run to Christ. The one who will judge is the one who was judged in your place. Come now while the door is still open.

If you are his, be confident and reassured that we do not obey his commands to purchase heaven.

[30 : 10] Salvation is a gift. It's not a wage. The God who saved you has worked in you and grace now propels you. Your obedience becomes a sweet aroma and a steady melody to the Father.

Father, so keep singing at the grave sites of those that you've lost. Telling the costly truth at work even though it may cost you your job.

Closing the laptop. Shutting off your phone instead of clicking on sin. Forgiving the slanderer.

Showing up to worship even if your grief is so strong that you would rather just stay home in bed.

Blessing the Lord after yet another hard doctor's call. Negative pregnancy test. Anything.

[31 : 21] Anything. We do this because we're not trying to be saved.

But because we are. And the Spirit's song is rising in you, church. None of it is lost.

The judge sees it all. Keep your hand to the plow. equity is coming. I also want us to hear this. That holiness, this obedience to his will, to his law, to his word, isn't some gray drudgery, something that we should feel like we have to do.

it's color flooding back to the face. It's winter cracking, fields greening, surf answering with thunder, stars ringing like bells because the king is near and where he draws near, dead things live.

[32 : 37] and just as Paul said to the Philippians, to live is Christ and to die is gain, so too will nature sing for their passing because the old heaven and earth will give way to the new and the holy city will descend like a bride.

God will dwell with us. We will be his people. He will wipe away every tear and make all things new. Church, we come to that time again, you know the drill.

Jesus is coming. He will set the world right. So, so, so, all right, so let the seas roar, let your soul roar with them, let the rivers clap and let your hands learn the rhythm of praise, let the hills sing and let your heart find the harmony.

The king we praise is the judge who is coming and all creation will explode with joy at his righteous and equitable return. Amen. So, before we close today, I want us, I want to speak to the saints that are in the shadows right now, to the ones drowning in doubt, to the one who can't stop staring at that empty chair where their loved one used to sit, to the one white knuckling sobriety, to the one walking through the gray fog of depression or the electric hum of anxiety, the one that's so tired, you've whispered, I don't want to be here anymore.

Hear me. The Lord sees you. the very ache you feel that you can't sing is a sign itself that you are alive to God.

[34 : 56] A dead heart can't grieve its silence. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. Bring him your minor keys.

The Psalms make room for your tears, not only for your triumphs. There are songs for the long nights, Psalm 13, how long, O Lord, for the cast-down soul in Psalms 42 through 43, for the sleepless torments in Psalm 77, even for the pitch black where no dawn seems to come, there's Psalm 88.

There are Psalms from even the depths in Psalm 130. And our Savior, bruised, spat upon, stripped, and crucified, cried from the cross the opening line of Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It was the true lament of the sin bearer, evoking the whole psalm's ache and its hope and God's providence.

So do not wait for brighter weather to sing. Lament is worship. Anger, fear, and sorrow can be carried into his court and handed to the king.

[36 : 31] he is still here. He still reigns. Now I want us to gather the music of Psalm 98 into one melody.

As we went over stanza one, God is Savior, the beat begins with grace, he has done these marvelous things. The cross and the empty tomb fix our past in mercy and our present in assurance.

Couple that with stanza two, God is judged, the rhythm drives towards hope, he is coming with righteous, oops, stanza two, God is king, the key modulates the proclamation that Jesus reigns now.

We don't hum background music, our hymns, our banners, our gathering, a royal procession. Now stanza three, the rhythm drives towards hope, he is coming with righteousness and equity.

Creation will clap, wrongs will be made right, the world will stand level under his hand. We pull these together and the beats, the keys, the cores and the textures resolve into one harmonized truth.

[37 : 43] Saved by grace, ruled by Christ, awaiting his righteous return, church, we are made to sing. But before we go, I want us to ask you a little bit more.

What does your heart sing? Are you still tuned to the world's playlist, chasing the touch that fades, the applause that evaporates, the glitter of riches that rust?

Is your soul set to the news cycle, the algorithm, the next purchase, the next like? Why stake eternity on princes who perish, on idols that cannot speak, save, or love?

Why deny the one who has never failed, never lied, never broken a promise, who bled for enemies and keeps his covenant to a thousand generations?

Next, to whom does your heart sing? If it has been singing this old song, I want you guys to lay the record at the foot of the cross, let the spirit lift the needle and set it to the new groove of Christ for you, Christ over you, Christ is coming for you.

[39 : 08] If you belong to him, lift your lament and your praise together. If you do not, I pray that his words do a work in you to come to him now.

He is savior enough to pardon, king enough to keep, and judge enough to make all things new. So saints in sorrow and saints in sunshine, young, old, weary, strong, sing.

Sing because the savior has finished the work. Sing because the king is on the throne. Sing because the judge is at the door. Sing because joy is on the road and let our hymns be banners. Our gathering, a royal procession, and this room, a chorus in the chaos, ringing one clear note. Throughout the night, the king has come.

The king is risen. The king will come again. Church, stand with me. We are going to close in prayer, but this is something that's a little bit different.

[40 : 25] We are going to lift one voice. We are going to lift one prayer and one song to our almighty God as we pray a day new. And after each blessing, I want you to respond.

It will be on the screen. It would have been enough for us. So let us close in this prayer. If Elohim had only spoken light into darkness, it would have been enough.

God would have been done. If Yahweh had only made us in his image, if Yahweh had only called Abram and promised blessings to the nation, if Yahweh Jireh had only provided the ram at Moriah, brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, if Yahweh the Lord who sanctifies you had only given his law and his presence at Sinai, if Yahweh had only raised David and promised an everlasting throne, come on.

Let's go, church. If Emmanuel had only come, born of the virgin, God with us, louder, church, if the Lamb of God had only borne our sins upon the cross, if the resurrection and the life had only risen on the third day, if our great high priest had only ascended and now intercedes, let's go, if the Lord of glory had only poured out the spirit at Pentecost, if the head of the church had only sent the gospel to all nations, if the Son of Man had only promised to come again riding on the clouds and make all things new, but in Jesus Christ the Amen, he has done all this and more, grace upon grace would have been enough for us, Christ is enough for us, therefore by sovereign grace we shall glorify God and enjoy him forever in the new earth before Yahweh Shema, so we sing out, we cry out, come

Lord Jesus, our Savior, our King, our Judge, you have done marvelous things, make us loud with thanks, your reign make us fearless with praise, you will come again, make us steady with hope, by sovereign grace record our hearts until our lives are in one psalm, glorifying you and enjoying you forever, amen, so church, the sermon is ended, so we sing, lift up your joyful noise to the world, so for he has come and he will come again, so church, sing with me now.