

God appearing in His glory to build up Zion

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- [0 : 00] Psalm 102, verses 16 and 17. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.
- He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. Psalm 102, verses 16 and 17.
- As we began this morning, so we may reiterate what we then said, that God's ways and our ways are so very different.
- God's thoughts and our thoughts equally so. But then, the ways and thoughts of God are much higher than our ways and our thoughts.
- The projects of the natural mind may come to nothing for no other reason than that we cannot penetrate the future, nor calculate the effect of unexpected circumstances upon our projects.
- [1 : 13] Thus God's work is perfect, and whatsoever he desires, that will surely bring to pass.
- His special desire is towards Zion, is towards his own people, towards those whom he has chosen to enter salvation, to be brought safely through this life, to receive the grace of God, and ultimately to enter into the glory of the saints in light.
- And thus, in this time state, the children of God are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.
- How striking it is that where reference is made, he shall appear in his glory, that we should read in the next verse, he will regard to the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.
- A sight of God's glory will make us feel destitute if we never felt destitute before. Isaiah speaks of his own personal experience when he saw the Lord, and describes it in the sixth chapter of his prophecy.
- [2 : 43] I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. And the sight that he saw must have been most moving.
- But what effect did it have upon him? Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and shall I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.
- Was this the prayer of the destitute? You see, the prayer of the destitute sometimes is contained in no words at all. Here was a man that could only say, Woe is me!
- And people may say to you and to me, if we should be just, as it were, stuck upon this point, Woe is me! Why don't you ask for something? But you have no power to ask for anything.
- May we therefore be encouraged by what we have in this prophecy of Isaiah. Woe is me, for I am undone. And as far as that goes, nothing was asked for.

- [4 : 00] But there was something asked for, And God understood the groanings and the sighs of Isaiah under these circumstances. For we read, Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.
- And he laid it upon my mouth and said, No, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged. And there you see, perhaps you are thinking in your own mind, I know what woe is me.
- I can understand it. I feel it. Woe is me. But then, if the question should be put to me, Have you asked for anything? Have you asked this impediment to be removed?
- This sin to be removed? You may say, No, I haven't. I don't seem to have the power to ask. I'm too destitute to ask for anything. Does that mean to say that God will not grant you that which you have requested?
- You say, I haven't requested anything. But you have requested it. The Lord heard the prayer of Isaiah, this confession, Woe is me.
- [5 : 16] And he knew all that went with it. This is the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You may not well be able to express yourselves, but God knows what your heart desire is.
- And therefore, he sent this Jesser of him with a live coal to purge him. And not only so, but to tell him what he had done.
- Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged. No praise to Isaiah, and no praise to you or me either.
- If we should utter the prayer of the destitute, perhaps we could take another case, that of Hezekiah.
- Here was the prayer of the destitute, O Lord, I am oppressed. Undertake for me. Now you see, we can see Zion being built up when God, as it were, takes the doing of it out of your hands.
- [6 : 24] How many have been a hindrance to the building of Zion because of what they have wanted to do? We are reminded in Psalm 127, Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain to build it.
- Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.
- For so, He giveth His beloved sleep. Now what glory would Hezekiah see? And what glory would Isaiah see?
- When, in all their destitution, in all their weakness and personal inability, God heard their cry, answered their request, even though that request was not easily traceable in the words that they uttered.
- But God was building up Zion. God was building up Zion in the days of Hezekiah, when the truth was settled down on a sure foundation.
- [7 : 42] In respect to Hezekiah, the truth laid just in this, it is the living, the living that shall praise thee, even as I do this day.
- so then, when the Lord appears in His glory, you will know that you are living or not.
- If you are dead, then the glory of the Lord will have no effect upon you. But if you are living, if you are numbered amongst the living in Jerusalem, then the glory of the Lord will have the same effect upon you as He did upon Isaiah.
- And especially so, when your destitute prayers are so inadequate, yet God gives you answers of peace, and comes and touches your lips, causes your iniquity to pass from you, and causes you to feel that you're clean inside.
- And God has begun His great work of building up Zion. Zion is not composed of just a congregation of people.

[8 : 59] Zion is composed of living souls. And therefore, there are congregations, and in the midst of a congregation, we find that there are some living souls.

And these are the ones that God will build up and make manifest representatives of His Zion. They will confess that it is the Lord that does all things.

It is very solemn for us to consider that in the church of God, as men consider it, the people.

There are many that walk around the walls without design, and we have to count them down among the nine that return not to give glory to God.

Now, it is important for us to know and to feel this evening that we are amongst the living, because it is only the living that will be contained in the heavenly Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and for that matter, the Zion which is upon the earth.

[10 : 31] There are no dead sticks, no dead people, in the true Zion of the living God. They may be dead on the outside.

God goes round the outside, so to speak, and speaks to this one and that one, cast out in his own blood, and says live. And immediately that person is brought in to the living in Jerusalem, and God has begun this work of building up Zion.

Now, where God works, we can be assured that it will last. Oh, it will last. And if God is working in your heart, and if God is working amongst us here, we can be assured that it will last.

And this is what we want to see, continually, that God is working amongst us, that God is building up this part of Zion, and this is the way he does it.

He will appear in his glory, not necessarily will he appear in his glory always in the sanctuary. We find Manoah was threshing by the winepress, and the Lord appeared in his glory, which represents to us just this, you may be pursuing your own duties in the ordinary course of the day, and the Lord may appear unto you in his glory.

[12 : 11] And you can see that it had exactly the same effect upon Gideon as upon others. He felt destitute. He felt that he had nothing.

The Lord said, go in this thy might. And this might was absolute weakness and intensive dependence upon the mighty God of Israel.

but God was to build up Zion in Gideon's day to revive Israel, to deliver them from the myriads of the Midianites.

God was to do it. If you follow through the life of Gideon when he gathered his army together, we find that he gathered 32,000.

And God said there are too many. All those that are afraid or are weak or are in sickness, allow them to go home. 22,000 went home.

[13 : 13] And God said there are still too many. And God may say that to you and to me sometimes when he's about to build Zion. You've got too much of your own possessions.

You've got too much strength. He says bring them down to the water side. And then there was to be a sorting out. And it was to be a secret sorting out.

Gideon could not have told from the outside those that God was going to use. God was going to set forth as being the people that he would use to build up Zion.

You will doubtless remember that Israel was to be saved by the 300 that lacked. what a reduction. Do you think that God needs to reduce you?

Do I think that he needs to reduce me? Well, what are our thoughts? Just a little. But God says you've got to be brought down to nothing.

[14 : 18] Because until we are, we are being hypocritical if we say I want Christ to be all in all. You see, Christ cannot be all in all in your heart and you still be something.

And you say, well now, how is that going to come to pass? It's going to come to pass in God's way, that when he appears in his glory and you will shrivel to nothing, and maybe some of you will understand what that means, you will shrivel to nothing when he appears in his glory.

Because of his majesty, because of the light which is impossible for us to approach unto, because of the magnificence of his appearing.

When the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus in his glory, you will remember that he saw a light from heaven, which virtually blotted out the noonday sun.

Now that is strong enough, especially in those countries, but no, the light from heaven was so great, that it blotted that out.

[15 : 40] And God was going to build Zion. And it began by appearing unto a rebel. a rebel. Do you think that's the way God's going to build Zion? By appearing unto a rebel, and bringing him down to his feet, and changing his heart, imparting to him that divine nature, giving him a desire to pray.

That's where God begins to build Zion. See, we live in a day when we have to ask ourselves the question, do I pray? And maybe we have to confess our sin because we do not pray enough.

Oh, deficiency. Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak, but pray with faith in Jesus' name. When God builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory, and this will be the effect of it.

You will want to pray, but you may say, well, if I see him in his glory, surely my mouth will be shut, and I shall be so confused that I shall not be able to pray.

Well, he didn't confuse Saul of Tarsus, and he might well have been covered with shame and confusion of faces. But on the other hand, he didn't pray a long prayer.

[17 : 11] What wilt thou have me to do? You see, Saul of Tarsus had been in his way, trying to do what he could for God.

He said, I thought I did God's service. And then God showed him that he would build the house. He would build up Zion. And the first thing that had to be done to Saul of Tarsus was to bring him low.

And if God is to build up Zion, then that's the first step. And when we are brought low, then we shall pray. We find one of the reasons why the church at Lodicea was in such a bad state was this, that they were not low.

I know thy works, thou art neither cold nor hot. I would there were't cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have needed nothing. Now we shall never pray when we're in that state.

[18 : 26] It may be a formal prayer, just a textbook utterance, but we shall never pray in that way where we can hope to see God building up Zion.

And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Now you see, here was the actual state of these people at the church of Lodicea and they knew it not.

But if they did know it, know it, and when they did know it, then they would pray. And here God would be showing the first signs of building up Zion.

They would pray, and certainly the prayer of the destitute, because they would realize that they were wretched and that they were miserable and that they were poor and that they were blind and that they were naked.

How pliable are these people in the hand of God? You see, if you are blind, you will say, Lord, hold me by the hand and lead me on.

[19 : 48] Lord, and if we are poor, then we shall be glad of the mercy of God to be our neighbor. Who then is my neighbor, says one.

And this was a description of the neighbor, a man that was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves.

thieves. And whatever he was before, he was unquestionably wretched and miserable and poor and naked and so on.

And is this the way God will build up Zion? Well, he appears in his glory. And when the Samaritan went to that man, he appeared in his glory.

And will he not appear to you in his glory? When you feel that you are where you are through your own foolishness and by your own fault.

[20 : 55] And God comes where you are. And he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

What glory must have been set before the eyes of that poor man? in his utter destitution when the Lord came down.

What do you say? The man didn't say anything. He didn't pray. Ah. pray. It is not recorded that he did. But if you have been in that place, how did you pray?

You didn't stand up and pray like the Pharisee or like the heathen. But maybe your lips moved like Hannah's did. And you might even be mistaken for being drunken.

the sorrow of heart caused you to pray from your heart. And it was the prayer of the destitute. Maybe we can present it just in these words.

[22 : 02] God be merciful to me a sinner. Now if the congregations were filled with these people, you know we could expect God to build up Zion.

Why? Why is this a sign that God is beginning a great work when the people are crying out God be merciful to me a sinner?

Because they are looking to and at one of the most wonderful of all the bulwarks that stabilizes Zion.

And that is justification. the Lord said concerning that public and I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

Justified. Now there's a lot in that. When the Lord shall build up Zion and Zion he shall appear in his glory. Justification.

[23 : 06] What does it mean? It means that God stands in your place. It means that he lives a life to give to you.

A holy and perfect life. It means that you are justified by his righteousness. And how is this proved to you? Because you see the truth is not received just because it's in the Bible.

The truth is received according to the words of the scripture. Now let us bear this point in mind. He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification.

Now in other words the resurrection is the proof of your justification. Now do you know that Christ is risen from the dead? And he's risen from the dead as the answer to poor lost sinners prayers who cry out God be merciful to me a sinner.

And what can our poor lost sinners say when once they get a view and hear the blessed spirits say all this was done for you they get a view of Christ suffering of Christ ascending.

[24 : 35] Now that's one thing to feel to see but what do we know of the crucifixion and of the resurrection in our own souls?

You see the life of those that are followers of Jesus Christ is summarized by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians.

I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

there was no presumptuous declaration on the part of the apostle it was something he felt and he felt it because he himself was crucified daily came into tribulation daily had to suffer in his flesh daily wherefore I glory in infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon me.

Now how do we suffer in our flesh? We suffer in our flesh in this way of crucifixion we are helpless. You see a person that is crucified is helpless.

[26 : 18] He is taken in the Lord's case by wicked hands by the determined counsel of God but in this sense he was now to the cross and exhibited all the indications of being helpless.

I would just qualify that point because I would not wish to mislead you into thinking that the Lord Jesus was at any time helpless insofar that he was God but he allowed himself to be helpless.

You see there are those words which he uttered in the garden. He said wished he not that I could pray unto my father and he would send the twelve legions of angels and that would have been sufficient to have destroyed all his enemies but he said this is your hour and the power of darkness and in the great mysterious wisdom of God the powers of darkness were allowed to have the ascendancy for that time in order that salvation might be brought about.

A great mystery but in that sense the Lord Jesus was helpless when he was crucified. Now we shall feel our helplessness sometimes when the power of sin works in us.

Is it true? Can you bear this testimony young or old? I have no power the snare to shove. Now this does not mean to say that you will say well there it is I can't help it.

[28 : 21] No. When you have no power of assassina to shun and ever into ruin run you see that will be crucifixion to you because you have no power to stop it.

Well what is it that will deal with it? Is this God building up dying when I feel so much to be overcome by my own sin in the hour of temptation and so on?

We need to look unto our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross smitten as he was stricken and afflicted and seemed at the mercy of men and at the mercy of his father too when he cried out father my God my God why hast thou forsaken me?

He was walking yea he was passing through that crucifixion which cannot be measured in the interests and for the benefit of his own church now Paul knew something about this he said I'm crucified with Christ as Christ was at the mercy of people so we may be at the mercy of our own nature she may say well is this so am I always to be at the mercy of my own nature have I no power to overcome the time came when the power of the resurrection delivered Christ from the power of death from hell and the grave the victory was won the conquest was accomplished and through the power of the resurrection the saints of the most high are delivered from the weakness of their flesh as their flesh is crucified when they are so helpless helplessness can be a very terrifying experience and you may well agonize in your soul when you feel so helpless and you feel that you are drifting downwards and there doesn't seem to be anything to stop you but there is this is what the apostle speaks about he speaks about a

Christ that is living not one that is dead he was dead but now he is alive forever more and where does he live he lives on high indeed he does but he also lives in the heart of the contrite ones so does he live in your heart because if he does then you have this witness that Christ is risen from the dead notice what the apostle says yet not I but Christ live within me now this will bring us to this point why do we have the prayer of the destitute why do we come to that place where we have nothing of our own why are we so sad sometimes because our pride is cut back it is that Christ's life may be seen in us so that when you are able to pray and feel that Christ is praying in you that that prayer will be effective and when you are able to praise it is the spirit of

[32 : 17] Christ the spirit of praise which is the motivating force in you you are aware by reason of your crucifixion that you have no power of yourself to do anything how important for us to bear in mind that the Lord Jesus told his disciples that if they were severed from him they could do nothing so then when we think of the crucifixion and when we think of the resurrection we are also thinking of the man and is that man you is he is that man me it may be a woman of course or a child that goes down to his house justified looking at Christ as the man Christ Jesus who has suffered who has died but at the same time who has risen again for our justification and that means that we have a righteousness as some good men have observed and felt which is reserved in heaven reserved in heaven yes a righteousness so that whatever you may feel here below when you come to your dying moments this robe will be brought forth and put upon you and you will stand in clothes in the wedding garment the wedding garment in the eastern custom was a garment that was provided by the person that provided the wedding feast and that is the righteousness that we need to be provided for us when the

Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their cry now you see because we have to be cut back so much we can only think that if we are helpless and well nigh hopeless that God founded his prize our cry well what is your testimony some of you have had some years of Christian experience what is your testimony when you felt destitute when you felt lacking in power lacking in desire absolutely helpless feeling to be lifeless what is your testimony has God despised your whimperings and your just breathings hardly hearable by others impossible perhaps sometimes you know how many prayers of yours a person sitting next to you has never heard it may have been that you groaned out your soul before God perhaps you said here I am sitting amongst all these people and if the people only knew I felt they cannot feel like

I do and you do not know how many people are feeling like you do helpless undone woe is me for I am undone and I dwell in the midst of a people that are unclean and I feel unclean and you have no power to cleanse yourself so it brings us to another view of helplessness something which our flesh doesn't like but which we have to know something about and which must be the case when God builds up Zion and sets us on this good foundation of justification by faith this meant so much to Luther and it has meant so much to many of the people of God justification by faith we sung this morning and we read this evening of the building of the temple in

Zechariah's time and they brought forth a headstone crying grace grace unto it now if we ever cry grace grace unto it it can only be when we are reduced to nothing when we can say well whatever has been brought forth I have nothing to say if I have been an instrument then I have only done that which it was my duty to do and I have only done my duty because of that which God has put in my heart to do has controlled my passions and my own self and made me willing in the day of God's power to do that which he has commanded and how many times when God has been building up Zion and if he has used any in the instrument as instruments in the building up of Zion have they been in this place he will regard the prayer of a destitute how many people realize that when

God's servants are used in the building up of Zion they are in this place destitute they wonder how they can carry on so they're not going to say when God's work appears look what I've done because God will have brought them down to nothing not unto us but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth sake for them we are saved by grace by grace I each say through pain and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God so how poor we are can we start when we have no money when we have nothing to start with by grace are you saved and God gives grace and gives us grace to be poor and to be willing to be poor that Christ's riches might be given to us and those riches will include the riches of his blood as well as the riches of his righteousness and here we have riches which cannot be compared to the riches that this world can give the riches of Christ will take us to heaven the riches of the most wealthy person in the world will never take him to heaven but God builds up

[39 : 39] Zion from the bottom when he brings us into the spirit of humility when we are in that place where strangely and mysteriously God begins to work in us as the heart panteth after the water brook so panteth my soul after thee well now when you have that where did it begin where did it come from was it something that you stirred up in your mind or was it something that you thought well I've looked at that 42nd psalm time and again and I can't feel a single movement well then what's God doing is God sitting back are you saying I don't think I should ever have that panting I can read it I believe other people feel it but I don't and then when you do God will appear in his glory and not a remarkable manifestation that is conjured up by the imagination of our natural mind but he appears in his glory when you suddenly feel as the heart painted after the water broke so painted my soul after thee oh God and you say so do I now isn't it astonishing now this is

God's work and God building up Zion is beginning to move in your soul if you have a desire after God now this is just not this is not to be confined to what we may say the initial stages you see sometimes things come along and they interrupt they draw us aside oh we are get busy with this and that and so we suddenly come to ourselves and we begin to think that we're the hindrance in Zion being built up then God appears in his glory will he contend with me no he will put strength into me strength to fall down we need strength to fall down the strength of grace the power of grace to fall down before him and just to lay there without saying any words people might think your religion is a poor one if you have ever just fallen down before

God and you haven't said any words well what is this that the cry of the destitute and what is happening if God looked down upon you when you just fell down and you haven't felt able to even present a suitable prayer make a plea nothing at all then how great will be that glory of God when he appears to you and maybe speaks a word to you or shall we come a bit lower put a desire in your heart now you see backsliding is a dreadful experience and it can bring us very low I remember a period in my own life when I was being brought very low by a sad fate of backsliding in a very bad way and you see I came down to this

I had no desire oh but you must have a desire people would say you're a Christian you've been born again but I had no desire no desire and God began with me on this very low plane low plane that my prayer and what a prayer of a destitute it was that I might have a desire for a desire a desire to pray a desire to seek the Lord now when that was given what was it it was the Lord appearing in his glory and the glory of his mercy why should he have come down and given me an answer to this lisping prayer for a desire after a desire why did he not let me go well one of the reasons of course is this I believe that all humility

I can say my name is written in heaven and recorded in the covenant of grace and the love of Christ was made known to my soul and but more so afterwards and that's why I could not be let go but I came down to a very low place and then gradually the Lord gave me a desire and a fervency to pursue that desire to return unto the Lord and hope that he would have mercy upon me and then after a period the Lord brought me to that place that I just hinted at this morning the time to favor Zion the set time is come and it had come because it was at that stage that the Lord appeared to me in such glory when this was spoken into my very heart and almost tore me apart there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ

[45 : 40] Jesus to walk not after the flesh but after the spirit and this will be astonishing truth that the Lord built up Zion and appeared in his glory and showed a person his sins and the impossibility of being saved apart from the love of Christ if we not sing I believe this morning the love of Christ how rich and free fixed on his own eternally now this will not make you into a person that will live at you list and say well it doesn't matter I shall be saved in the end no the love of Christ will be fixed upon you and sometimes you will love him and you desire to love him all the time because you have this persuasion that he's loved you and that love is demonstrated by his life and death on earth and by his visit since by the appearing of his glory now sometimes you see we can deceive ourselves by saying well of course there's something I know nothing about now be not too secure be too sure about that has gone astonished you that he should have come down and given you a desire after himself has put prayer into your hearts so that you've said

Lord what will thou have me to do then he's appeared to you in his glory the glory of his compassion the glory of his humility humbling himself that he might come down to where you are that he might save you that he might save you from the pit of despair he will regard the prayer of the destitute this is one of God's wills fenced with Jehovah's shells and will firm as the everlasting hills this is one of them he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer you do you probably disregard it so it's not worth anything at all but God says that he will not despise it that he would ever regard that prayer we have continually to battle with what I might refer to as natural views of spiritual things when we think of prayer well we think of something well ordered don't we we like to fear liberty and it is good when we have spiritual liberty but sometimes liberty is restraint we come down to just a few words perhaps you know the experience where it's come to the end of the day and it's been such a few words maybe it was the same words you prayed yesterday you think nothing of it say well that can't have done any good but God knows where the faith was there and faith is sometimes there when you feel the power of unbelief working there's no need for unbelief to work where there isn't any faith because unbelief is nothing to work on but if you have faith one has so aptly said read not a faith so clear that shuts all doubting out unbelief will attack faith and if you haven't any faith then you won't know anything really of unbelief because unbelief won't bother with you when the

Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory now may we know this experience personally because it's the only way we're going to know prosperity and may we know it as a people and if we go a little further may we see it in our own amongst our own denomination and amongst the world in general but if Zion is to be built up then it all revolves around this he shall appear and here is another important point he shall appear there's no if or but to fail this street no peradventure here he shall appear in his glory and if the days go by and you say well he doesn't appear doesn't mean to say that he won't appear he shall appear God has said so and when he does appear to the children of

God he will appear to their joy and they will rejoice in their covenant head in their accepted sacrifice in the life of our Lord and death of our Lord Jesus Christ they will rejoice in this that he appeared unto them and explained to them ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to have entered into this glory beginning of Moses and all the prophecy expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself and the people's hearts burned within them they knew that God had appeared do you know that God has appeared to you sometimes because your heart has burned within you and you say it is the Lord it is the Lord who God is building up Zion Amen