

Psalm (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Humberstone, George (1896-1977)

- [0 : 00] If the Lord will enable me, I would draw your attention to the text that we had this morning. You'll find it in the 111th Psalm, verse 2. The second verse in Psalm 111.
- The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
- The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. As we were enabled this morning feebly, we looked at the greatest work of God in this world.
- We quoted as Hart puts it in his beautiful hymn, One strange work exceeds them all.
- [1 : 16] And that work is the salvation of the election of grace. Oh, what a wonderful work that was. And if the Holy Ghost, the third person in the glorious Trinity, has revealed anything of this salvation to us, if he has brought us into a condition of experience that we need it, and if he has gone further and in his own time revealed Christ to us in his salvation, what a great work this is.
- It is only the Holy Ghost that can make this work great. All the study of humanity, all the education, all the refinement of this world, can never, never give a poor sinner to see the greatness of this work, and will never give him to seek it out for himself, nor to have pleasure therein.
- He might have a certain amount of pleasure, naturally, in these things, in a mere profession of religion, but oh, it is only the work of the Holy Ghost, quickening the soul, bringing about a new birth, and revealing the beauties, the loveliness, the preciousness of Christ, that wins the soul over to him, and gives them a sweet hope in his eternal salvation.
- It is only this that can bring them to search these things out, and to have pleasure therein.
- What a mercy if we know anything of this. Well, this evening I would like to look, as the Lord may enable me, at these works of the Lord.
- [3 : 42] You notice, as we said this morning, the word is in the plural. It is not just one work. Oh, these works are too numerous to mention.
- If we start at the beginning of this blessed volume, and go to the end, all the works of God that are manifest in it, and how great they are, why it will fill all eternity, forever, resounding the praise of this God for his works.
- But oh, what a solemn thing it is if we don't know them. It is a wonderful mercy if you can trace back in your life not only a hope in his salvation, but if you can look back in your life, your experience, and trace his hand in great works, in deliverance from many, many snares, many temptations, and many deliverances from affliction, trial, and the tribulation of the pathway.
- It is, you know, as we are enabled to look back over the way that we can see his goodness, his mercy, and we can see all the greatness of his works toward us.
- Why were we not left in sin? Why were we not left either in the world or in just a mere profession of religion?

[5 : 36] What a great work it was to quicken our souls. But further, in your pathway, as I mentioned, oh, are there not many, many wonderful works that he has done?

If you look back in this blessed book at the people mentioned and their lives narrated in the scriptures, oh, what great works he did for them and how they were sought out by them and what pleasure was taken in them.

But I repeat, it is only as we look back over these things that we see them. whilst you are in trouble, whilst you are in affliction, and whilst you may be in temptation, and the Lord may be hiding his face from you, and your troubles abound, you can't rejoice, can you?

And you can't feel anything of these great works of the Lord. and they're not sought out, and you have no pleasure in them.

Poor, sinful nature left to itself can only complain, murmur, repine, when the hand of God is against us, either in providence or in affliction of body or soul, and his hand seems continually against us, perhaps for a long season, and we wonder where the scene will end.

[7 : 32] Sometimes, you know, we pass through the language in that beautiful hymn in our book, my earthly joys are from me torn, and often absent God I mourn.

Ah, yes, temptations everywhere annoy, sins and snares often make me mourn. Do they?

Do they? It's a mercy if they do, you know. That springs from life within. But oh, what a wonderful thing it is when the Lord mercifully appears and he delivers.

He puts away all your doubts and fears, your apprehensions concerning the end of these things. You know it is in the word, surely there is an end, and there is an end to everything here, but oh, to know that latter part of the text, thine expectation, shall not be cut off.

And if you and I are exercising concerning these things in our pathway, for it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom, that tribulation you will either have in your pathway, or you will have it in your heart, in your internal experience, yes, and there is no straight, easy way to heaven.

[9 : 18] No, no, it is not promised in this word. And none of the saints mentioned in this word have had an easy, straight pathway, no tribulation in it.

No, no, no. But what a mercy it is if we see the works of the Lord in these things. we read that beautiful 107th psalm, and how the works of the Lord were manifest in that psalm to those people who were exercised.

And you notice that every one of those trials or distresses brought them to this. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them.

And what follows? Oh, that men would praise the Lord. For it was then that they saw his hand and saw his work.

The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. If you are in trouble, if you are in trial, if you are walking a path of tribulation, oh, you will want to seek out and find, if you can, the hand of the Lord in it.

[10 : 49] You will, if you are rightly exercised. If you are not exercised this way, and if you are, as it were, slothful, settled on your lees, it won't trouble you, but you won't see the works of the Lord, no, no, and you will have no pleasure in them.

No, it is these people who are exercised and who need the Lord to reach out his arm and do a great work in and for them, who really value these works of the Lord and to whom they are great, great.

well, if you look back in the word of God, if you go right back to the case of Moses, oh, how tried he was.

He supposed that the children of Israel would have known that he was raised up by God to lead them out of Egyptian bondage into the promised land, but they didn't know, did they?

No, when he slew the Egyptian, he had to flee for his life, and afterward he was 40 years at the backside of the desert.

[12 : 16] What must have been his thoughts and his exercises of mind when he was there? He must have sometimes thought, well, I thought the Lord was going to do a great work by me.

I understood in my heart, thought it was revealed to me that the Lord would do a great work, that he would bring his people out of Egyptian bondage by me.

Instead of that, here I am, just watching these sheep, and you know it was 40 long years. what was it for?

To humble him, to bring him to an end of all his own strength and wisdom, and to bring him down to be absolutely dependent upon the Lord, for his leadership and all concerning it.

God Oh, I dare say, in his younger days, he thought that he was quite capable of leading them. But here we find him, after 40 years in the wilderness, more capable.

[13 : 36] Why? Because he was weakened, his own strength brought down, and now God was his strength.

He had none left of his own. Oh, he says, send by whom thou wilt send, but don't send by me. And you know, this is often the feeling of God's ministers, if they're rightly exercised.

Sometimes in their, perhaps in their young days, in their early exercises, perhaps they think they could do something. They may feel they have a gift, but, oh, if they're rightly exercised, and the Lord is dealing with them, he'll bring them down, down, and their language will be a bit like Moses in the end, send by whom thou wilt send, but not by me.

Lord, oh, how the Lord strips us of all our own wisdom, strength, but why? To show forth his great work, that he will do it, and who shall let it.

He will wear the crown, not you, and, but as we, as we're enabled to look back over these things, oh, how we see the work of the Lord was great, great, and after all, Moses was raised up, wasn't he, and brought them out, with a high hand.

[15 : 16] you can go further on. Look at the case, for instance, of David. I'm just mentioning these things as they come to my mind.

David was anointed before his brethren to be king over all Israel. Ah, but not long after, Saul, in his enmity and jealousy, murder in his heart, chased him like a flea upon the mountains or a partridge, and would have taken his life if he could.

Oh, what a strange thing. When David was favored, for the Lord had taught him his truth in his youth, I believe, while he watched the sheep near Bethlehem, the Lord taught him, favored him, revealed to him salvation.

And I believe he sung many of his psalms to his harp as he watched the sheep around Bethlehem. But oh, now, the Lord seems to hide his face and his chest and his life is in jeopardy every day.

Where is the throne? Where is the promise of God? Well, it looks as though it can never be. And I do believe that the Lord brings his people into these trying cases to bring down all their own independence, that big eye that we brought into the world with us must be subdued and brought down.

[17 : 14] And we must be brought to be absolutely nothing but a poor, helpless sinner in the sight of God. And if the thing that God has promised you and me, whatever it is, if it is to be brought to pass, you will give him that promise back many a time and you'll wonder if it can ever, ever be completed, performed, but it will be.

Oh, yes, if God has spoken it, it must essentially come to pass and it will. But oh, how it is trying, grace, though the smallest, shall surely be tried.

Why? To bring down human help, human aid, and everything belonging the sinner, as I have said, so that God, God alone shall be exalted.

But what a solemn pathway this is. Not easy, is it? No, no. Flesh and blood would rebel against it. It would rise up against it.

And in our puny judgment, would condemn God. We may believe that our times are in his hand, but when they're all against us, and when they're all painful, and when his hand seems all together against us, and Satan seems so powerful, unbelief is powerful too, and the iniquity in our abominable hearts rises up, and we seem left to nothing but rebellion, where are we then?

[19 : 06] But oh, oh what a mercy. It is afterward, as the Lord delivers, gives you to see his hand, you see then, oh the work of the Lord was great.

why didn't he leave you in your rebellion? Why didn't he leave you there? Ah, sometimes we have been unable to say, with David, the Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death.

No, no. Why? Why? Because he loves his people. His love is unchangeable.

Ah, it never varies, and it is out of his love that he teaches them, but the teaching is exactly the opposite to the natural mind.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, their foolishness to him, neither can he know them.

[20 : 20] They are spiritually discerned, and only as the Holy Ghost enlightens us to look over these things, to search them out.

Oh, what a mercy it is to be one of these blessed people who can look back over your little life and see at times where the work of the Lord has been great.

Where would you have got to if he hadn't put forth his hand sometimes, if he hadn't stopped you in perhaps rebellion, and if he hadn't brought down your idols that you worshipped, oh, if he hadn't hedged up your way sometimes, where would you have got to?

Where should I have got to? Ah, but the Lord, mercifully, his works, the works of the Lord are great, great.

And these works, let me tell you, are mostly the very opposite to human nature, and the works that nature considers as great.

[21 : 37] Oh, they are. They are indeed. and they are sought out of them that are of pleasure in them.

Have you ever known this pleasure in your heart as you look back over the way? Perhaps you've had a season, it may have seemed long, when the Lord has tried you with various things, Satan's power has been manifest in you, your unbelief has prevailed, doubts and fears regarding his love and mercy to you have prevailed, and you couldn't see love inscribed upon these things at all.

Indeed, everything seemed against you, and you were ready with good old Jacob of old to say, all these things are against me.

He couldn't see any different, neither can you at times, but, ah, when Jacob came at last into Goshen, and he had nothing to do at last but to gather his feet into the bed, his children around him, and he said, I've waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

Don't you think he'd look back over the great works that God had done, both in providence and in grace. He would look back over the life of Joseph.

[23 : 17] He would look back the trials concerning him, regard to his Joseph, when his hard-hearted brethren came to their poor father with that blood-stained, torn coat of many colors, and said in the hardness of their heart, See if this be thy son's coat, or no.

Ah, poor Jacob said, It is my son's coat. Some evil beast hath devoured him, and down he sunk in his feelings.

He says, Ye will bring my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, but they never did. No, no.

No. Oh, I repeat, when he got to Goshen and looked back over these things, how the dreams of Joseph had come true, how though there had been much trial in it, much temptation, many doubts, perhaps many fears, oh, as he comes to the end, he looks back over it, and he says, The works of the Lord are very great.

Oh, how great. Well, now, you can look at all the characters in the scriptures, and how many of them are similar.

[24 : 50] The works of the Lord, as they look back over them, as they take a retrospective view of these things, oh, the works of the Lord are great.

They're sought out. Your mind will search. In your troubles, in your trials, if you're rightly exercised, you'll want to see God's hand in it.

You won't take anything like the worldling does, as if some chance had befallen you. No, you know better than that, if you're rightly taught.

You know that your times are in his hand. You know that not a single shaft can hit till the God of love sees fit. And you know that you're in his hand all together, all the affairs all around you are in his hand, and that he controls all, absolutely everything.

You know it, but oh, how it is tried at times. And now your puny mind and sinful heart repines and rebels and wishes it was different, don't you, when you're in the dark and in trouble.

[26 : 17] But oh, what a mercy it is to be brought many a time to this in your life and mine. You know we read, don't we, in Hebrews, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.

Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Who to? Everybody? No. But to them that are exercised thereby.

And as these look back, sometimes they can say honestly before God, oh, I needed thy rod. Lord, I needed it.

Where should I have got without it? Oh, I would thank thee for it. I would be thankful for thy mercy in ever dealing with me at all.

I deserve to be let go as my wretched fallen nature wanted. But oh, if thou hadst let me go, where should I have gone to?

[27 : 27] But the Lord says, no, I love you too well for that. you're mine, you cost me wounds, agony, blood.

Ah, you caused me suffering to redeem your soul from a well-deserved hell. Do you think I will let you go?

No, no, no, that wouldn't be like him, would it? no, his love is strong, stronger than death, and that love will manifest itself sooner or later, and you shall say, the works of the Lord are great, great.

But for these works you will see in yourself, you will see a thousand pitfalls, you will see, oh, you will wonder the Lord's mercy and goodness to you, and you will say many, many times, the works of the Lord are great.

Oh, what a mercy he put forth his hand there, he helped me here, and in this temptation and that trial and that affliction, oh, how he helped me, his works are great, great, and they deserve all my praise, ah, what a wonderful mercy it is to be enabled to see now and then as you look back over your path, for I believe that this is more retrospective than perhaps a present experience, the works of the Lord are great, we know that his work in creation and all that is great, but I'm speaking of the experience of God's people that will bring this language out of their hearts, the works of the Lord are great, they're sought out, searched out, for there will be that in you that will want to get to the bottom of these things, as it were, to use a common expression, where you'll want to see the why and the wherefore of all these things, and you'll search them out, and I'll tell you this, if you're exercising these things, you'll search his word, and you'll say within, let me see if there's been anybody in this blessed book from one end to the other who has been as tried as

[30 : 15] I am, who has passed through the same things as I am, and who have been brought to the same end that I'm brought to.

Well, here you have it. The psalmist could say, the works of the Lord are great. He wouldn't say this, would he, when he was tossed up and down, when he was, when Saul was after him for his life, when he was, as it were, cast off from the Levitical round of worship.

Oh, how he envied even the sparrow and the swallow, when he saw that they made their nests upon the altars. It is as though he was turned away, turned adrift, Saul continually after him.

Oh, he wouldn't be able to say then that the works of the Lord are great. No, no, but he would after. It is afterward, and it is in this afterward that he could look back when Saul no longer existed, when he was finally set upon the throne, and finally after seven years in Hebron, settled upon the throne of all Israel, then he could see that the Lord had established him as king.

He could look back over this wonderful deliverance, he could look back to the time when Samuel anointed him to be king, and he would say not one thing has failed.

[32 : 07] No, no, no. Here Joshua looked back, didn't he, concerning the children of Israel, and he could say not one thing has failed of all that the Lord had promised, in spite of all their sins, and all their iniquity, all their wretched waywardness, their rebellion, not one thing of his mercy failed, no, and it won't fail in your case and mine if we're his.

Oh, his love is so great that he will work and who shall let it, and he will bring such things into our life that in the afterward of them we shall see his hand, and at last when we come to lay down our head for the last time, when it is said of us we can do no more, solemn time, when we are to be ushered into a never-ending eternity, what then, what then, what a mercy it will be if you and I can look back over the path, and if we have a hope that he revealed himself to us in the salvation of our soul, that Christ was revealed to our soul in the beauty and loveliness of his person, he gave us a hope in his glorious righteousness, he gave us a hope in his precious atoning blood, he gave us a hope in his intercession in heaven, many, many times there as he heard our poor groanings and prayers and the send-down answers of peace, what a blessing it will be if you and I can say at last the works of the

Lord are great, they've been great in my little life, if you can look back and say so and feel it so, well, it will put the crown on the right head, won't it?

There you won't have anything to boast about yourself, no works of your own, no, no, no, God forbid, you will say, what an unprofitable servant I've been, what a poor thing I've been, but oh, you'll say the works of the Lord are great, and at times I've been enabled to search them out, I've found them, many a time they're hidden, you know, and Satan will cover them up, and your own evil heart together will blind your eyes many a time to these works of the Lord, and he will, why, if he could it bring you into utter despair, but he'll never do that, no, no, no, what a favour it will be at last, if we can say, looking back over our little life, the works of the

Lord are great, great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein, he caused me to seek these mercies in the first place, for the salvation of my soul, and since then as I've walked a path of tribulation in a wilderness, how I hope I have trodden in some of the steps that he trod in, and as you look back over these things, his many, many deliverances, his many helps, his many answers to prayer, how many times has he made darkness, light, crooked things, straight, when you have felt just at the end of everything, oh how true are the words in that beautiful psalm that we read, they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the

[36 : 42] Lord, but you know if you're in a nice smooth pathway, and you've got a religion, so called, with no trouble, no trial in it, neither inwardly nor outwardly, you'll never see the works of the Lord, why, you don't need it, and you'll never search them out, and you'll never have pleasure therein, it was these as they staggered and reeled, sometimes like a drunken man, and were at their wit's end, when at last he brought them into their desired haven, rest, rest, peace, when he stilled the waves that he had risen up, for they were all in his hand, he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves thereof, when he causes it to cease, just like when Christ was in the vessel with his disciples, and that storm came up, do you think it came by chance, no, no, no, was all in the hand of an almighty

God, he raised the stormy wind, he filled the vessel until it was ready to sink, but what was it for, to show the almighty power of Christ, for one moment we see him with his head on a pillow fast asleep, in his wearied humanity, the next moment he stands up in all the infinite power of the Godhead, the second person in the glorious trinity, and said, peace, be still, the disciples might well look upon one another and say, behold, what manner of man is this, that even the waves and the sea, he commanded them, well, but it was to show his work, the works of the

Lord are great, sought out of all them that are pleasure therein, and thus they were delivered from the storm, and that we're told there was a great calm, not just an ordinary cessation, but I believe they really felt a great calm, and he was there, the ruler of heaven and earth, he was there, well, oh, they would, they couldn't say anything but this could they, the works of the Lord are great, great, oh, to be enabled, to search them out, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein, may the Lord in his infinite mercy bless us with these exercises, with this experience, it is the way to heaven, know the way will bring us there, only this way of tribulation, as we have brought off everything here by these things, to rest only and solely upon the work of the

Lord, and as we see its greatness, his salvation, his mercy, his goodness, that here I must close, the time is gone, may the Lord bless his word to us, Amen.

over to subung Uh gentlemen, It's known by St. Peter 397.

[41 : 01] Three, nine, seven. From themselves as weak as were, and from poor believers' sand, when temptation flows and storms, press them close on every hand.

Weak indeed they feel they are, but they know that they are right. And God loves us where? Help them when they see the light.

Three hundred and nine, seven. From both the faith of mine. one, seven, seven.

One, two, three. One, three...

Amen. Amen.

[43 : 13] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Oh, Lord, in thy mercy, do pardon and forgive all that may have been a miss in our service. but do bless thy own word take the friends home