

# Psalms

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Let the Lord be pleased to help me. I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in Psalm 46.
- And the fourth and fifth verses. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
- God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God shall help her. And that right early.
- Psalm 46 verses 4 and 5. The Selmist is speaking very feelingly about an experience that he had known and felt.
- And as the outcome of it, the Selmist is very, very definite in his statement.
- [ 1 : 34 ]     There is a river. I have drunk of the streams of it. I can speak feelingly about the virtues of the water that flows therein.
- I have known what it is to be made glad in drinking. And you and I must have something in our religion like that.
- To evidence it to be that which God is the author of. I believe. Therefore have I spoken.
- Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. I like how this is worded. I do love decision for the truth.
- Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay, lest ye fall into condemnation. There is a river.
- [ 2 : 44 ]     The streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
- And you all know that drinking water is an experience. You could never write an essay on water and put down much about it and you could not give anyone who read it a real understanding of what the nature of water is.
- And yet, to drink the water in a few moments will tell you all there is to be known of what is the nature of water.
- Refreshing. Refreshing. Soothing. Cheering. Stimulating. Essential.
- I want to look at the subject, if the Lord should help me, from three or four viewpoints. The setting of it is very suggestive.
- [ 4 : 13 ]     The opening words of the psalm are very familiar to you. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- And then the psalmist, whoever he was, no preacher can tell you. It would be only conjecture. The Spirit of God does not name the psalmist who penned this familiar psalm, which is so well known to all of us.
- But whoever the psalmist was, he looked round the world in which he lived and moved, and he saw everywhere instability, uncertainty.
- And he saw chaos and confusion. And he looks on the picture of the world and viewed it.
- And then he sums it up with a selah. Think upon it. Mark well.

- [ 5 : 29 ] If you were helped to do that, you will come to a conclusion like this. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.
- And it will be your concern to be numbered with them that are his. Is that your concern? Is it what you were exercised about before God with whom you have to do that you should be confirmed in your soul that you are his?
- With wonderful mercy to be his. Not all chapel goers, the church goers, are his. Quite a few of them go to church and chapel too, as the case may be.
- And at the end of life's journey, go down into eternal misery, do not call the preacher narrow-minded. I am not narrow-minded. I'm just telling you the truth.
- I saw the wicked buried who had come and gone to the place of the holy. Yes. Straight is the gate, narrow is the way that leadeth on to life, and few there be that findeth.
- [ 6 : 58 ] And as you go down into life's evening time, like some of us, you have many solemn searching questions as to whether you do after all that you have hoped and professed to be belong to the few.
- And it brings you back to the starting point. Show me a token for good. And you want to know yet again there is a river as you are favoured to drink of the streams whereof the city of God is made glad.
- Yes. And now the psalmist, as I view it, as he makes a pause, and you know that is what Selah is for, more especially to do with the music whereby the psalms were sung in Old Testament times.
- Selah bids the music rest, pause in silence, soft and blessed, is what godly scholars tell us is the meaning.
- And now, having made such a pause, the godly psalmist looks round the world with all its commotion and conflict and then he looks at the city of God which was Jerusalem and he thinks about other cities which were not cities of God and they had for their defence great rivers.
- [ 9 : 02 ] Babylon had its Euphrates. Egypt had its Nile. And if what is possibly the setting of the psalm when it was penned was when Hezekiah, Judah's king, with his people were besieged in Jerusalem, then, when Sennacherib's hosts were round about and God sent forth one angel and destroyed the hosts in a night and Jerusalem was delivered and King Hezekiah and Judah's kingdom could rejoice therein.
- if it was indeed penned at such a time and that is the circumstance referred to then you can see the enemies who came and besieged Jerusalem thought it was its weakness that it had no river like the Euphrates or the Nile which in those olden times was looked upon as a means of defence.
- And now the psalmist says although in Jerusalem as a city there is no river to boast about as a means of defence, there is a river nevertheless and a ten thousand times better river than any earthly stream can be as a means of defence.
- The river of God there is a river yes the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God in Jerusalem as you all know there were only the waters of Siloah which ran softly and could be no means of defence in a time of war.
- But there is a beautiful opening up of this in Isaiah's prophecy where you will read about this river and it will help you to a proper understanding there and that is in Jerusalem according to the context there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.
- [ 12 : 04 ] you might think on those illustrations remembering it was Old Testament times no galley with oars there you see you cannot have any benefit of blessing from this river through the doings of the great eye.

nothing of a free will propensity will avail you to drink of the streams of this river which flows in the city of God no galley with oars nothing to do with what human might may attempt will avail no nor gallant ship with high flying sails none who are like the Pharisee I thank thee oh God I am not as other men are I do this I do not do that eh no gallant ship shall pass thereby none will ever drink of the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God but those who were brought down at Jesus feet empty and saying leave not my soul destitute my soul thirst for

God remember that there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high looking at this river from one or two viewpoints I read to you a lovely scripture from the book of revelation and there you get down to bedrock in learning what is true and he showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb and he showed me what does that mean revelation revelation open thou mine eyes margin reveal to mine eyes that

I may behold wondrous things out of thy law the eyes of the blind shall be open and he showed me a pure river of water of life have you been shown it do you know what it is to go up and down on the banks of it longing to drink of the waters flowing therein I want you to weigh these things up because one or the other of you might be under the turf next sabbath day and if you have never yet drunk of these living waters and you never do you will be lost and of all the calamities I can conceive no more terrible calamity to contemplate than to go down into eternal misery with the sound of the gospel trumpet ringing in your ears which tells of salvation and you do not want it how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation a pure river of water of life what a wonderful adjective that is pure and now it is pure because of its origin from whence does it flow proceeding out of the throne of

God and of the land what does that mean the throne of God God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoso ever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life but how can it be that this pure river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God can reach poor sinners like you and me there is one God and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world and thus the Spirit of God reveals it proceeding out of the throne of God and of the

[ 17 : 40 ] Lamb not only is this river of water of life pure in its origin do remember this it is pure in its influence on our lips and lives if we drink of it it makes a wondrous difference in a man's lips and life when he drinks of these living waters coming from this pure river he looks at a scripture and he wants to be inside it wonders if it can ever be possible such a mercy can be his blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God and he says create in me a clean heart oh God renew a right spirit within me let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight oh

Lord my strength and my redeemer pure in its influence yes and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus I might just make a further comment in as much as it says that this river pure river of water of life was clear as crystal and that is in the doctrine of it clear as crystal and what is the doctrine by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast clear as crystal in its doctrine salvation is of the

Lord I am the way the truth and the life no man cometh unto the father but by me clear as crystal yes let us come back to the starting point there is a river the streams where of shall make glad the city of God we might liken this river to the love of God it is rather surprising if you like to look through the hymn book or any hymn books worthwhile looking at sounding doctrine you will find that different hymn writers give a different interpretation to this river of God and yet they all tell the truth in what they say this river is its heavenly love proceeding from the throne above and so it is but then later on in the hymn book another one says it is the word of

God which all our raging fear controls and so it is another one says that this river is the covenant of grace and so it is but when you think that there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams it is all that Jesus Christ is as the sinner's friend whether it be his love or his covenant which he signed and sealed and ratified with his own precious blood or whether it is the word of God which tells of him the incarnate word but in every instance it is to be remembered it is water living water yes what did you sing though sin and sorrow make you sad yet drink and let your hearts be glad and there is one thing about it that you ought to sing the doxology for and that is the lovely simplicity of it oh I do admire the gospel of the grace of God in its simplicity there is nothing speaking with great reverence nothing elaborate about the gospel and that which could be said to be hard to be understood if you listen to

Jesus Christ preaching it if any man thirst let him come on to me and drink there you see lovely simplicity there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God thinking of this illustration as a river there are two or three thoughts I would put into words one is it denotes fullness this and in a psalm of David there is a sweet figure where he speaks about the river of God which is full of water I like that word in and if you ponder in your hearts how many hundreds of millions of sinners saved by grace have drunk of this river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of

[ 23 : 51 ] God yet this Sabbath afternoon it is still the river of God which is full of water there is not the slightest diminution in the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God all they flow as full as ever because they flow from the throne of God yes you can still sing and if you would only believe it how good it would be a fullness resides in Jesus our head and ever abides to answer our need fullness another thought is fertility all the husband men are glad when they have streams running through their fields where they can be sure of water to irrigate and make the crops fruitful yes and wherever this river runs in our soul's experience it will make us fruitful fruitful in our soul's desires it will make us fruitful in good works remember that you read a peculiar people zealous of good works and there should be something of that characteristic making manifest your religion to be of

God zealous of good works are you you may sometimes heal to come very very short in the matter of good works and yet I like Joseph Hart and he says behold the gospel plan trust in the Lord with all your heart and do what good you can and when you drink of this river the streams where oft shall make glad the city of God you will find in your heart a wondrous concern to be zealous of good works and do what you can there is one more thought here not only fruitfulness fertility and fullness but there is also what is the best news of all preemies there ought not to be any charge made for water to drink anywhere on the earth maybe a charge can be made for bringing it to you but not for the water itself there is no man of woman born that's got any authority before God or man to make any charge for water and why he cannot produce it and wherever it flows he cannot make any pretension that he owns it he cannot guarantee any supply of it therefore you find throughout the word of God all everyone that thirst it come ye to the waters and he that hath no money come ye buy wine and milk without money and without price without price bring no price

God's grace is free to Paul to Magdalene to me grace is free grace and what did I read to you whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely yes blessed be God for the provision of it there is a river the streams where off shall make glad the city of God and this water that flows therein how wonderful it is it is refreshing beyond any words to describe it is cleansing to cleansing to our sight sometimes you look on at the dealings of God then you cannot sort things out nor understand the why and wherefore and you are in much obscurity and you say temptation sore obstruct my way and ills

I cannot flee oh give me strength lord as my day for good remember me and when God is pleased to do it and you get just a sip or two of this living water you find your misty sight is cleared and you can see the dealings of God from a right viewpoint and what do you see who so is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord oh this water living water it is refreshing and it is cleansing and it is enlivening and it helps you to feel as you want to feel that matters are right between your soul and God this water of life is softening in its nature and it brings poor sinners who feel at times their hearts to be as hard as adamant before

God with contrition of spirit and a broken heart such a sacrifice God will not despise there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God and these streams I give you just a hint to think on streams of mercy never cease in streams of mercy oh how wonderful to contemplate and I might add there are streams of pardon God is a God ready to pardon and if there is one thing that makes glad the city of God above all other things it is when a poor sinner can rejoice in the forgiveness of sins streams whereof shall make glad the city of

[ 31 : 48 ] God another thought comes to my mind in these streams there is power the water power in England as a nation has never been made the use of that it could be people are just beginning to wake up when some of our rivers have flowed since time was born just beginning to wake up to realise there is power cheap power to be harnessed water power yes eh but that is a power that might fail because earthly rivers do diminish and the current may flow very slow and the river could in certain circumstances dry up and afford no power but this is the river of God and Jesus said when he rose from the dead all power in heaven and in earth is given unto me yes able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even him the power of almighty

God as it is revealed at Calvary's cross yes streams of power available for poor sinners like you and me is there anything too hard for the Lord I might add there is the stream of wisdom if any lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and afraid it not and it shall be given him wisdom to handle life's matters wisely there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God and this gladness there is something about it that is very unique unusual you must understand it as being spiritual in its nature

God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth and this gladness is not just religious excitement it is not just emotion nor is it enthusiasm it is not to do with what is social or sentimental it is spiritual remember that the streams whereof shall make glad in this gladness there is a kind of wondrous mixture of that which is sweet and sober and solemn all compounded together and when you feel it you can say with the hymn writer may I be always thus devout be this religion mine then were the disciples glad when they saw the

Lord I hope quite a few of you do know just a little about the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God the gladness of hope and the gladness of mercy known and felt the gladness of thanksgiving and the gladness of revival in our souls experience when we are wounded by sin and scarcely a prayer can repeat the mercy that heals us again is mercy transportingly sweet and what gladness there is at times when the Lord appears for you when trouble like a gloomy cloud gathers thick and thunders loud all the gladness of deliverance this poor man cried and the

Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles and the gladness to look back along life's way and see wherein the hand of God has been upon you for good oh that is a wonderful gladness then went king David in and sat before the Lord and said who am I oh Lord God and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto yes the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God and the gladness to look forward in life's journey with a sweet earnest yes I to the end shall endure as sure as the earnest is given more happy but not more secure the glorified spirits in heaven gladness spiritual gladness there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high and now we see

[ 37 : 49 ] God is in the midst of her what a blessed declaration Emmanuel God with us God is in the midst of her and what will God be doing God will be doing in the midst of the city of God whatever is for the good of the city itself and his own glory whatever God does is for his own glory and he cannot do anything otherwise remember that and you will understand why sometimes your petitions are answered no and not yes as you would like whatever God does is for his glory and our good

God and he is too wise to her and too good to be unkind God is in the midst of her go back to the setting of the subject it must have seemed that it would be quite a simple business for Sennacherib and all his hosts of Assyrians to undo Jerusalem and conquer it and there were some very scathing remarks made about the little g gods of other nations round about where the Assyrians had conquered but when it comes to that God who dwells in Jerusalem as the city of God he is not a little g God no and so Sennacherib and the Assyrian host had to learn God is in the midst of her and that is to protect the sovereign protector

I have unseen yet forever at hand God is in the midst of her to provide they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing bread shall be given water shall be sure and do remember this God is in the midst of her to instruct the people who are the inhabitants of Zion his word has gone forth and they shall be all taught of God and great shall be the peace of thy children and the wonderful mercy it is to be taught of God to find in our souls experience a little gracious instruction communicated it may be here a little there a little line upon line and precept upon precept God is in the midst of earth to bless the inhabitants of Zion for time and eternity too and one more thought

God is in the midst of her to fulfill his word we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose God is in the midst of her and look at this guarantee she shall not be moved what do you sing how firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in its excellent work yes she shall not be moved eh but when you weigh matters up to do with the dealings of God with you you are solemnly aware that all times you are moved moved with many searchings of heart solemn questionings ifs and buts and hows yes she shall not be moved the word of

God declares referring to the city of God and they that dwell therein what does it really mean not that the inhabitants are not moved in their soul's feelings often but it means the city of God which is the church of God remember that she shall not be moved out of the covenant of grace all to do with the church of Christ is ordered in all things and sure set forth in the covenant of grace and it will be fulfilled in every jot and tittle of what is declared therein it shall be well with them that fear God she shall not be moved no she shall not be moved out of the love of

[ 43 : 23 ] God many waters cannot quench love neither can the floods drown it she shall not be moved out of the love of God for it is everlasting in its nature she shall not be moved out of the faithfulness of God because he is the ever faithful God and his word is he which hath begun the good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ but I must come along to the Amen God is in the midst of her she shall not be moved and look at this sweet proclamation God shall help her and that right early the margin reading is good God shall help her when the morning appears what does that teach us here are you in need of divine aid and here is the guarantee

God shall help and the word of the Lord is I will be inquired of by you all house of Israel to do these things it may be night time with you in your soul's experience but this help for you is very present help the opening word of the psalm tells us very present help can never be too late no God shall help her and that right early when the morning appear it you must think on it like this a time he has set to heal up thy woes a season most fit his love to disclose until he is ready to accomplish his will be patient and steady and wait on him still and oh that you and

I may know more in our souls experience than you and I have ever known yet there is a river the streams where off shall make glad the city of God and live out life's little day with that feeling nor would I from these streams removed till taken to their source above Amen