

God's Marvelous Works

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[0:00] Well, the invitations of the gospel are invitations to be happy.! When the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds,! You remember what he said to them, Do not be afraid.

I bring you good news of great joy. Gospel is something that is full of great joy. It doesn't invite us to a funeral. Instead, it invites us to a wedding feast.

And the whole gospel call could be condensed to those words of Psalm 98.1 that says, Sing to the Lord a new song.

The gospel calls us away from our old songs and our old lives and the things that we used to delight in. And it tells us to rejoice and delight in what the Lord has done for us.

And it tells us to find rest here and peace here and joy here. Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest affair.

[1:05] The invitations of the gospel are invitations to be happy. And so you see what a wonderful thing it is to be a gospel preacher. But it's not only I who have a song to sing and a tale to tell.

If you've known the joy of the Lord, if you've known the joy of sins forgiven, and known what it is to be loved so perfectly and so completely, then you have something to tell and a new song to sing.

And so if Christ came for you and lived for you and died for you, then tonight is a night of joy.

Because all the things that we do and remember, standing behind that is the great love of God and the great love of our Savior Jesus.

And so tonight we want to remember what the Lord has done. We sang of it and now we want to remember it. And we want to do that by looking at Psalm 98. So if you have your Bibles, turn to Psalm 98.1.

And we're just going to look at the first verse. So sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

[2:29] So what has the Lord done? Well, he's done marvelous things. Saving things. Marvelous, saving things. And so tonight I have three brief points.

And the first is the marvelous things the Lord has done, how he did them, and what we, what you should do. And so what are these marvelous things that we are called to rejoice in and sing about tonight?

Well, he's defeated all of our foes. He's defeated all of our foes. So put yourself back in the medieval times, the middle ages.

And you remember they used to have tournaments where knights fought one another. And so in those tournaments, they would come from all around and they would enter into the lists, as what it was called.

And some with sword and some with joust. They would fight one another. They fought for their ladies, their lady love.

[3:33] And each lady had a champion. And the church is a lady with a champion. And her champion is Jesus Christ. And so he entered into the list for us.

He went into the arena and fought all of our foes for us. So he overcame sin. He overcame sin. It's not going to be very much new tonight.

This is a night that we remember the things the Lord has done. He's overcome sin. He's overcome its guilt and its power. So listen to the story, the old, old story.

The law stood against you. It stood against you. The law of God that is righteous and true and altogether holy and good. It stood against you because you were a lawbreaker.

Because you had broken that law. And not just here or there in this place or that place. You had broken the law altogether. The first commandment is you shall have no other gods besides me.

[4:41] But all of us come into this world bent in on ourselves, curved in on ourselves, worshiping ourselves, trusting ourselves, depending upon ourselves, living for ourselves.

And so instead of living with God at the center and living in the gravity of who God is, we are these black holes that bring everything into the circle and the gravity of ourselves.

people, just by nature, as I come into this world, people are for me. You are for me.

Life is for me. You are for me. God is for me. God could save me from hell. I just didn't want him to save me from me.

I didn't want him to save me from my sin. No, everything was for me. And that's what I loved. And we loved our sin. And we loved our rebellion. And we loved ourselves before God.

[5:46] And so we broke that very first commandment. And with it, we soon broke all the others. And God's law and God's justice said no.

No, no, no. This is not right. This is not as it should be. This cannot be. And so there was a penalty for our treason.

Because there is only one king. There is only one God. And to worship any other is treason. And so the penalty for our treason was death. And so we were guilty.

We were liable for punishment. And we were deserving of punishment. And so we were under the guilt of sin. But we were also under the power of sin. That black hole that was us.

That sin dominated us. It ruled us. It compelled us. We were in the grips of this black hole. And so we were enslaved. And you don't feel enslaved.

[6:48] But you were enslaved. And you could do this thing, this good thing, or that good thing. But you would do them for the wrong reasons.

Because when you are faced inward and curved inward and bending everything to you, you can take anything and everything and tune it to sing to the song of self.

You can make every song come into harmony with this song of self. And so we would go to church or we would be nice or we would do this or that. But we would be doing them not because we love God, but because we loved ourselves.

So we were enslaved to sin. We loved serving sin. And we worked. And we earned our wages.

The wages of sin is death. But then Jesus came. So this is our mighty enemy, sin. We're under its guilt and we're under its power and dominion.

[7:50] But then Jesus came and he entered into the list. He came into the arena. And he overcame our sin. That sin that controlled us. And so in his life, he overcame that sin.

No matter how strong the temptation, no matter how tired he was, no matter how exhausted he was, no matter how persistent the temptation was, he resisted.

And he overcame sin. And he fought on and he threw it down. And then on the cross, he overcame sin again by paying the penalty to the very last cent, the very last drop.

He paid it all. He paid all that guilt and all that was coming to us. And so now we are forgiven. And so believers, we can sing a new song and we can sing that song that the Israelites sang when they were standing on the other side of the Red Sea.

Remember how they had gone through and now the Egyptians had been thrown under the waters. And they sang, the deep waters have covered them. They sank into the depths like a stone.

[9:04] So imagine that. Imagine every one of your sins, dear brother, dear sister. Everyone as strong and as wicked as Pharaoh.

Everyone as strong, each one of them as strong and as wicked as Goliath. And so march all those sins before you in their crimson armor, each of them armed with death and hell.

Well, where are they? Well, they've gone into the depths of the Red Sea of Christ's blood. The deeps of his death have covered them.

And so Micah 7, who is a God like you who pardons sin? And then he goes on to say, you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all of our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

And so Jesus has trod our sins underfoot and he has cast them into the deepest sea. He overcame their guilt in his death by taking their penalty and paying it down to the last cent.

[10:11] And then he overcame sin's power. So guilt and power, but he overcame sin's power in his death and resurrection.

And so now for you, believer, sin's dominion over you is shattered. It's a thing of the past. Jesus has freed you from sin's power. So just listen to a few verses from Romans chapter 6.

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. For sin shall not be your master because you are not under law but under grace.

Sin shall not be your master. But thanks be to God that though you used to be slaves to sin, you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life.

[11:20] And so sin is a strong power. It has dominion and its dominion was complete in our former life, in our life in Adam. But Jesus has freed us and Jesus has cut our chains and he has rescued us from sin's dominion.

And so while we still wrestle with it and we do still wrestle with it, we do not wrestle with it as slaves but we wrestle with it as free men, as soldiers of Jesus Christ and soldiers of Jesus Christ the victor. So Jesus has overcome sin, both its guilt and its power. but not sin alone. We have other foes and Jesus fought and won against those.

Did you know that sin has a daughter? Sin is a mom. And it's a daughter that follows her wherever she goes.

That's what James says. And sin, when it's full grown, gives birth to death. So sin's daughter, death, follows her wherever she goes.

[12:37] And so when Jesus conquered sin, he conquered death too. And so now, dear brothers and dear sisters, it's impossible for you to die eternally.

Jesus said, because I live, you will live also. He sang it. Because he lives, I live.

And so even natural death is changed. It's no longer the penalty for our sin, but it's our entrance into glory. It's our entrance into glory.

And it's the way we take off the flesh. It's the way that we, it's taking off your weekday clothes and putting on your Sunday best. It's taking off your travel-stained clothes and dressing yourselves in the clothes of heaven.

And so now there's no fear in death for Christ conquered it completely. And he rose again, and because he rose again, one day I will rise.

[13:46] And I will rise with a perfect body, with a body like his glorious body for this flesh and blood of earth.

It has to be changed, and it will be changed. And so he died to rise again, and he tore the bars away from death. We sing that. He tore the bars away, Jesus, my Lord.

And so he left those grave clothes behind, and he went up to heaven to prepare a place for me and for you. And so now Jesus stands as the living one.

Revelation calls him the one who died and yet lives forever. And so he is there in heaven for us, and now we can sing, death is crushed to death, life is mine to live, one by his, one through your selfless love.

This is the power of the cross, son of God slain for us. And then no guilt in life, no fear in death.

[14:49] This is the power of Christ in me. From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. So Jesus overcame sin, and he overcame death, and that totally changes everything, doesn't it?

But then he also crushed Satan. We're talking about the marvelous things that the Lord has done. All of our foes, enemies, he's conquered them all, conquered the devil.

On earth is not his equal. You are not equal to him. I am not equal to him. All of us together are not equal to him.

He's a monster, and he's too strong for any and all of us. But thanks be to God. It didn't depend upon our strength, but Jesus is our champion.

And so he overcame him in the desert, didn't he? And in his ministry he sent demons flying and fleeing away. He overcame him in Gethsemane when he said, not my will, but your will be done.

[16:00] And then he crushed his head on the cross. And so now Paul can say he's led captivity captive. And he can say he's disarmed the powers and the authorities and he made a public spectacle of them on the cross.

And so Jesus Christ has overcome the strong men that controlled us. And even now he's plundering his house. We've seen it recently.

Five people added, baptized, and added to the church. What was that? I'll tell you what that was. That was Jesus. Jesus. That was Jesus plundering Satan.

Jesus has tied up the strong man. And there he is, gagged and bound, helpless on the ground, as Jesus has entered into his house and robbed him blind.

Jesus asserted his power, and he took what belonged to him. And so brothers, he also has plans to put him under our feet.

[17:07] He's conquered him for us, but he has plans to humiliate him further. Romans 16, the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

For thousands of years, Satan has walked all over us. But because of Jesus Christ, we will walk on him. And not for a thousand years, but forever.

So Jesus is this mighty victor. Jesus has done marvelous things, saving things, things that are so amazing. It takes spiritual power and insight.

It takes the very work of the Holy Spirit to understand them and appreciate them because they're so great. We have a hard time believing that these things could be true for us, and yet they are true.

And so Psalm 98 1, look at it again. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. Marvelous things are things that are scarcely to be believed because they're so amazing and so wonderful, and yet he has done them.

[18:13] His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. So we've seen something, just the beginning of what he's done, of these marvelous things, but now briefly, how did he do it?

How did he do it? Psalm 98 says he did it all by himself. All by himself, his right hand, his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

Jesus was born alone, very unique. God and man, no other being in the universe like him.

And he entered the field of battle alone. He was in the desert alone. For the most part, he was in Gethsemane alone. And he died alone.

He faced Satan alone. He went to the cross alone. It wasn't a group effort. You didn't help him. You didn't do anything.

[19:22] You were the damsel in distress. You're the one that needed to be saved. And he was that mighty knight, and he trod the winepress alone. And so it was his right hand, and it was his holy arm that got him the victory, and Jesus did it all.

And so when it was finished, he cried out in a loud voice, it is finished. It is finished. I've done it. In other words, I've done it.

It's completed. I've done it all. It's over, and I've won. And so how did the Lord save sinners? How did the Lord save you? All by himself.

And so that leads very quickly to thirdly, what should we do? Well, we should do what Psalm 98 says, and rejoice and sing a new song to the Lord.

These aren't necessarily new words, but they're fresh words. They're fresh love. It's a fresh song. It's a new thankfulness for what the Lord has done for us.

[20:30] These mercies some of you have experienced and you've known for years and years, but are they not new every day? Aren't these the mercies that you wake up to new every morning?

I'm forgiven. My death and my future is all taken care of. So there's no fear in life, no fear in death. new mercies.

And so new mercies call for new songs, new songs of thankfulness. And so brothers and sisters, if Jesus has loved you, and he has, and he's loved you with this fierce devotion, and this fierce, bloody devotion, and he rose up for you, he took on a body for you, and he laid down his life for you, and then he took it up again for you.

And he did that all for you, then shouldn't you sing a new song to the Lord and rejoice in him. For the marvelous things he's done for you, they're real today, they're real for you, and they call out for your joy.

Now what should you do if you're still in the power of sin, Satan, you're still in the guilt and the power of your sin? Well, there's only one thing for you to do.

[21:53] There's only one thing that Jesus has left that you could possibly do, and this is it, just to believe in the Lord Jesus. And there's nothing saving in the sense of that you've helped him, you're just merely taking him at his word.

You're merely taking him and letting him be your savior. You don't need to look to any other savior. There is no other savior. And there's no need for another savior.

Because no other hand was raised to help Jesus. No other hand was there to work salvation. He did it and he did it alone. And so there is nothing left for you to do except to trust him and take the gift as it is freely offered to you.

Christ can save you. He can save you. And so come even now.

Let's pray. Our Lord, our God, we truly begin to only understand our poverty and smallness of our heart when we look in and we see so very little love for you.

[23:12] And even at its greatest, our love and our praise is so small compared to the greatness of your love and the marvelous things that you have done.

And we long then for heaven. We long then for the putting away of our flesh and our sinful flesh. flesh that keeps us so distracted and so selfish. And we long for the day when we will be perfect standing before you.

And we will have hearts that are bigger than they are now. And we will be able to say that we truly love you.

Forgive us for not loving you like we ought. Forgive us for taking joy in smaller and lesser things but not taking joy in the greatest of all things that you have done for us in the gospel.

[24:19] So I pray as we go on our way here and we go to our Christmas activities and family gatherings and all the things that we take joy in that we would not walk away from the joy of the gospel and the joy of the Lord that that joy and the goodness and the greatness of your love for us would infect us and change us and change the very things that we rejoice in and how we rejoice in them.

Pray that you would be at work in our lives then. we thank you for this remembrance. We thank you for this time of sharing with you and with one another.

Thank you for the grace that is so clearly evident. My brothers and sisters, thank you for the way you've loved them and cared for them and all of your good plans and purposes for them.

Thank you that you've put us together. Pray that we would continue to encourage one another then as we walk further and further down this road to the celestial city.

We thank you Lord Jesus for your grace in our lives and we ask that you would make that grace to manifest itself in our lives in a gracious and a forgiving and a loving and a gentle spirit.

[25:48] We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.