

This is the day the Lord hath made

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Preacher: Rev W.R.Mackay

[0 : 00] The words for meditation for a short time this evening you will find in the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms, the 118th Psalm, at verse 24.

Psalm 118 at verse 24, where we read, This is the day which the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day which the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

It is true, of course, that every day has been made by God. For he created the earth and the heavens and all that they contained.

And among the works of his creation were the sun and the moon and the stars. And so every time the sun rises above the eastern horizon, it is the dawning of a new day.

[1 : 23] And of that day we can say, this is the day which the Lord hath made. But it would appear that when the psalmist uttered these words, he had some particular day in view.

Some day which stood out as distinct from every other day of the year. We cannot be sure which day it was because we are not told.

Perhaps it may have been the day when the temple was dedicated to God. That was an outstanding day in the history of his people Israel.

A day when the worship of God had been established in the land. Where there was a place to which the tribes could gallop. And they could truly say, I joyed when I went up to the house of the Lord.

Or perhaps he might have had in mind one of the feasts which came round from year to year.

Perhaps the feast of the Passover.

[2 : 36] Or perhaps the feast of Tabernacles. Or some other feast. But if we cannot be sure which day it was that the psalmist had in mind.

There is one day which the Lord Jesus Christ made undoubtedly his own. And that is the day in which he rose from the dead.

The day when he triumphed over death and over sin. The day when the grave was robbed of its victory. When the tomb was found empty.

By the women and by the disciples when they visited it. And of that day. That day of resurrection. It could truly be said.

This is the day. Which the Lord has made. And we remember. That every Sabbath day as it comes round.

[3 : 36] Reminds us. Of the resurrection. For it was on the first day of the week. That Christ demonstrated his power.

That power by which our Savior rose. Victorious o'er the grave. It was a day therefore. Which he made peculiarly his own.

And so. For all believing people. The day of resurrection. Must needs be a joyful day.

And that was so in the experience of the disciples. When they came on that memorable day. To find the tomb empty. And we find.

That there was on their part. A joyful reaction. From anxiety. And from sorrow. You see somehow or other.

[4 : 38] The disciples never seemed to grasp the fact. Although Jesus had made it abundantly clear. On more than one occasion. They never seemed to grasp the fact.

That their Lord had to suffer. And had to die. They had a vision of him setting up his kingdom on earth.

And no doubt they had a vision also of themselves. Occupying very important positions in that kingdom. And so it came as a tremendous blow to them.

When they saw him crucified in weakness. On that cross on Calvary. And that is borne out by the conversation of the disciples on the Emmaus road.

When with sad hearts they were making their way back from Jerusalem to Emmaus. And the wondrous stranger drew nigh.

[5 : 41] And immediately he realized that there was something wrong. It was not a couple of happy men who were making their way. They were sad at heart.

And he said what's causing your sorrow? What's the reason for it? And in astonishment they said to him. Have you not heard the news? You must be the only person that hasn't heard the news.

That Jesus of Nazareth was crucified in Jerusalem. And he was laid in that tomb. And we trusted. We fondly hoped.

We anticipated. Without the shadow of a doubt. That he was to be the one. Who was to have redeemed Israel. And now all our hopes are dashed to the ground.

And here we are. Disconsolate. And downcast. And afraid. And the wondrous stranger had to reveal to them.

[6 : 42] The purposes of God. He had to interpret the writings of the prophets to them. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?

He said. That was planned from all eternity. That the Son of Man should come. That he should suffer. And that he should die. Before he should enter into his kingdom.

And then they brought him into their home. And at the breaking of bread. There was something familiar.

Their thoughts went back to that upper room. Where the New Testament Passover was instituted. He broke the bread.

Having given thanks. And he gave it to them. And immediately their eyes were opened. And they recognized him. And instead of sorrow.

[7 : 38] There was joy. Instead of there being downcast. And tired and weary. They got new strength into their limbs. So that immediately.

They were able to make their way back to Jerusalem. To tell the glad tidings. Which they had just heard. And to tell the other disciples. That they had seen the Lord.

It was a joyful reaction. From sadness and from sorrow. And is it not true to say. My friends.

That this same joyful reaction. Is experienced by everyone. When they realize. That Jesus Christ has risen from the dead.

And that he is the Lord. And that he is the redeemer of mankind. And that moreover. They can have a part.

[8 : 39] In that resurrection. Because Jesus is willing and ready. To enter into their hearts. And into their lives.

You see the Christ. Who we worship today. Is not a dead Christ. He is a living Christ. One who has risen. And who is alive forevermore.

And how wonderful it is. That the one who is alive forevermore. Has promised to give that quality of life.

To you. And to me. I am come that they might have life. He says. And that they might have it more abundant. A quality of life. Which shall not only carry us.

Through the scene of time. But which shall bring us. Into eternity. A joyful reaction. From sadness.

[9 : 36] And from sorrow. But we notice here. Secondly. That we find here. The joy. Of a great certainty.

You see. It is the resurrection. Which makes the intelligent. Christian. Sure. Of his creed. If Christ be not risen.

Says the apostle. Working it out. So logically. And so carefully. If Christ be not risen. Then is our preaching. Vain. Your faith is also vain.

In other words. We might give up preaching. Because we would have no message of hope. To proclaim to mankind. But Christ is risen. And because he is risen.

It is so wonderful. Now every truth. At some time or other. Has been challenged. But no truth. Has probably been challenged.

[10 : 36] To a greater extent. Than the resurrection. Resurrection. And yet. Let us never forget. This fact. That the resurrection.

Is one of the best attested facts. Of human history. Now there are certain points. About which. There is no Jubiety.

We know. For example. That Jesus Christ died. That he died. Upon a cross. Outside the city wall. In Jerusalem. And that after he died.

He was laid in the tomb. And the tomb was sealed. And a guard of soldiers. Was placed over the tomb. These are facts.

Which are accepted. But then. When we come to the third day. The tomb was found empty. And rather than believe.

[11 : 33] The fact that. Jesus Christ. Had risen. And that the tomb. Was found empty. All sorts of theories. And ideas. Have been put forward. In order to.

In order to explain away. This extraordinary miracle. It has been suggested. For example. That what actually happened.

Was. That the soldiers. Having been given permission. To. To place a guard. To place a guard. Over the tomb.

In case the disciples. Should come and steal the body. Had been told by the Pharisees. To take away the body. Themselves. And then the disciples. Could never come.

And claim it. But surely. If that was what happened. When the disciples. Made the claim. That Jesus Christ. Was risen from the dead.

[12 : 29] all the Pharisees had to do was simply to produce the body. And there would have been an end to the argument. There would have been proof inconclusive that Jesus had not risen, that his body was there.

But that was something which they were not able to do because they had not taken his body. Then others have suggested that it was the disciples who took the body away.

That somehow or other they had managed to overpower the soldiers, to unseal the tomb, and to take the body away.

But we are raising all kinds of difficulties when we suggest such an idea as that. To begin with, would you imagine that if the disciples were to have taken the body of Jesus away, that they would have taken the time to unwind the shroud which was around him and to neatly leave it in the place where he had laid.

They would have been in a hurry to get out of the way. And moreover, if they had taken the body away and were able to conceal it so successfully that it has never been found to this day, then what would the outcome have been?

[14 : 06] these men would have been guilty of believing something which they knew to be false.

They would go forth to proclaim that Christ was risen for that was the message which they proclaimed following the resurrection.

And that was the message which went to the New Testament church and which brought such blessing in its trade. And all the time that they were proclaiming that message, they would know that they were proclaiming something which was a falsehood.

And we cannot believe for a moment that that was what happened. But yet again, rather than believe that this truth of the resurrection story, there are those who say, well, you know what really happened was Jesus didn't really die at all.

He swooned after he was taken from the cross. He went into deep unconsciousness and he came to himself in the grave and he was able to push the stone away and he made his own way out.

Now let us look a little more closely at that. Do you honestly believe that a person who had died in such great weakness would be able and remember Jesus was human in his nature as well as divine?

[15 : 49] Can we believe that a person like that having come to, having been bound with grave crows from hand to foot was able to summon up enough strength to push away a stone which it had taken seven people to place there it was so great?

That would be postulating a miracle in order to get rid of a miracle. And if even that was actually what had taken place, where was Jesus going to go when he came out of the tomb?

surely it does not bear thinking about that such a thing should have taken place. Now there are many other theories I'm just going to mention one and that is what they call the hallucination theory which briefly speaking may be put in this way there are those who say that what actually happened was that the disciples of Jesus were so sure that he was going to rise from the dead that somehow

or other they imagined that he had risen from the dead and that they didn't really see him at all that it was a hallucination they just imagined that for a moment.

But as I said a little earlier the disciples hadn't believed truly that he was to have risen from the dead they hadn't believed that he was to have died and so that idea it will not court favor either and so we find that no matter what man may say the fact remains the indisputable fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead he triumphed mightily over death and he triumphed over sin and so the joy which we have today is the same joy which the disciples had of old it's the joy of a great certainty that Jesus Christ is alive and that we can come to Jesus Christ and we can find in him our saviour and our lord the joy of a great certainty but we notice further that we have here also the joy of a glorious hope in other words we are reminded that death is not the end what a difference there is between a believer and an unbeliever at the hour of death for the unbeliever there is blank despair nothing to look forward to no life beyond the grave nothing but darkness and doubt and fear and doom but how but how different it is with the child of God

I know that my redeemer liveth one could say I know whom I have believed another said and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day my saviour is alive my saviour has triumphed victorious over death and over the grave he died for my sins and he has gone to prepare a place for me and because of that he brings peace and joy and happiness into my heart and it reminds us that the partings of earth are temporary those who love the Lord Jesus Christ never say farewell for the last time remember that those who love the Lord

[20 : 01] Jesus Christ never say farewell for the last time because they can look forward to a bright and to a glorious hope and to a grand reunion beyond the veil of tears the joy of a glorious hope tell me my friend are you possessed of that glorious hope tonight because you have learned to put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ because you are resting on his promises because you believe in the triumph of his resurrection you can face death and afraid you can say oh death where is thy sting oh grave where is thy victory the sting of death is sin but you see Christ has triumphed over sin and he has robbed the grave of its victory thanks be to

God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ the joy of a glorious hope this is the day which the Lord hath made we will rejoice and be glad in it now there are certain days certain days which make us conscious of that joy there is for the for example the Sabbath day because it is a perpetual reminder to us as the first day of the week that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead it is virtually a holy day a holy day it is a day of thanksgiving a day when we meet together in order to sing the praises of our God and to rejoice in the abundance of his love oh yes it may be an irksome day for those who know not the

Lord Jesus Christ but not for those who are his children and then there is another day which reminds us of that joy and that is the day when by the grace of God you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and as your Savior perhaps 5, 10, 15, 20 or more years ago you can remember a day a day when Jesus Christ met with you a day when by his grace you were able to open your heart to receive him there was a day when new life came into you and when you were able to say I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me he is the dynamic driving force in my life Christ liveth in me but do I hear somebody say oh I wish

I wish I could look back to a particular day as some people can when that wonderful change took place but perhaps it may have been that God's dealings were so gentle with you that like Lydia of old your heart was opened and you were able to receive the message of the gospel but you can always put yourself to the test you can ask yourself if you are down cast if you miss God's house on the Sabbath day you can ask yourself if you are sad at heart when you see how wicked men go on and sin and do not love the Lord you can ask yourself whether you take a delight in reading the scriptures and finding out more about him the worldling may make an outward show but it is only those whose hearts have been touched by his grace who are conscious of the fact of his presence as they journey along the road of life and what a wonderful what a wonderful thing it is to be able to look back on some day on some experience and to say this is the day which the

Lord hath made the day when Christ confronted me the day when my life became new in Christ Jesus and then too there is the day of communion that day when our Lord calls us together and when he says this do in remembrance of me and what are we remembering we are remembering that he loved us so much that he died upon the cross for our salvation that he bore our sins on his own body in the tree and so we are guilty and vile and helpless he has paid the price and because he has paid the price therefore we can go free and every time we gather together around his table

and take the bread and the wine which remind us of the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord we are reminding ourselves of his love that love which brought him to the cross and we are reminding ourselves also of his power that power which meant that death could not contain him but that he rose triumphant and that he is alive forevermore we are called upon to commemorate his dying love and then to and this is a solemn thought there is another day which shall remind us that the

[26 : 43] Lord has risen and that is the day of judgment what a joyful day that is going to be for some for those who are found resting on his promises for those who have committed their way unto him and who are rejoicing in the wonder of his love and of his great salvation what a wonderful day it is going to be when the saints in triumphant procession are going to march before the throne of God and lay down their crowns before him and what we have to ask ourselves this evening is just this will I be among them because I am able to say this is the day which the Lord has made and what of today this very day in which we are gathered together this first

Sabbath day in the month of April 1988 wouldn't it be wonderful if at some time in the future someone was able to look back and say of this very day this is the day when Christ met me when I met the risen Christ even as he met with the disciples on the Emmaus road when he opened my eyes so that I recognized him when I accepted him as my Lord and as my Savior and when he became mine in a very real way wouldn't it give you a thrill wouldn't it give you a thrill I repeat if I was to say to you the Lord Jesus Christ is here with us today and he is because he has promised to be present in the gatherings of his people and I wonder if there is somebody in this gathering together tonight who can hear in the stillness of this evening hour the knock of the nail pierced hand that hand which was nailed to the cross for our salvation and you can hear the voice which accompanies it saying behold I stand at the door and knock if any man hear my voice and open the door

I will come in and will sup with him and he with me if you hear that knock tonight are you going to open the door is the king of glory going to come into your heart and into your life tonight and so transform it that you shall be a new creature in Christ Jesus and you shall be able to go from this church rejoicing in the abundance of his love and saying this is the day which the Lord hath made I will rejoice and I will be glad in it and who knows who knows because life is uncertain who knows if this may be your last opportunity avail yourself of it make sure of it and go forth this night by his grace rejoicing in a saviour's love and claiming the merits of a saviour's sacrifice may the Lord enable you so to do let us pray O Lord our God who of old did triumph over death and over sin and who is alive forevermore make thy presence felt tonight O Lord may someone here feel and know that the Lord himself is in the midst that he is here to bless them that he is here to bring them new life and new hope even that glorious hope which comes through the triumph of thy resurrection and we pray that thou will go with us into the days which lie ahead helping us to live more closely to thy sight helping us to do the things which are well pleasing in thy sight and may it be true of each one of us that by thy grace we will be enabled to go from strength to strength unwearied until at length we appear before thee and all this we ask with the pardon of our every sin for Jesus sake amen