

## **Psalm 108**

<sup>1</sup> *My heart, O God, is steadfast;  
I will sing and make music with all my soul.*  
<sup>2</sup> *Awake, harp and lyre!  
I will awaken the dawn.*  
<sup>3</sup> *I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;  
I will sing of you among the peoples.*  
<sup>4</sup> *For great is your love, higher than the heavens;  
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.*  
<sup>5</sup> *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.*<sup>6</sup> *Save us and help us with your right hand, that  
those you love may be delivered.*  
<sup>7</sup> *God has spoken from his sanctuary:  
“In triumph I will parcel out Shechem  
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.*  
<sup>8</sup> *Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine;  
Ephraim is my helmet,  
Judah is my scepter.*  
<sup>9</sup> *Moab is my washbasin,  
on Edom I toss my sandal;  
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”*<sup>10</sup> *Who will bring me to the fortified city?  
Who will lead me to Edom?*  
<sup>11</sup> *Is it not you, God, you who have rejected us  
and no longer go out with our armies?*  
<sup>12</sup> *Give us aid against the enemy,  
for human help is worthless.*  
<sup>13</sup> *With God we will gain the victory,  
and he will trample down our enemies*

We have read from Psalm 108. Like David we can say “*My heart is confident in you O God*” and lift up our voices and sing praises to Him with all our heart, even though we are going through very difficult times.

It is hard, is it not? When we cannot meet together in person to worship and have to resort to meeting on Zoom. Still it’s better than not meeting at all! That is what Satan would like! He would prefer that we would all just do our own thing and forget about having fellowship with the Lord and each other.

The early Christians knew that fellowship was vital:

### **Acts 2:46 (NIV)**

<sup>46</sup> *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,*

So I believe that it is important that we continue to meet together in whatever way that is possible during these difficult time with glad and sincere hearts just as they did.

We need to remember what scripture promises Jesus speaking in:

## **Matthew 18:20**

*For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”*

So it doesn't matter where we meet as long as we meet in His name, to offer our praise and worship.

Now I, like you realise that it is not quite the same as meeting in person but we can look forward to enjoying that experience all the more when the current restrictions are eased to allow us to do so and let us take hope from scripture as we can read in:

## **Romans 5: 3-5**

*.<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we<sup>[c]</sup> also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Amen*

## **2 Corinthians 4:17 (NLT)**

The New Living Translation puts it like this:

*17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!*

And staying with the New Living Translation in we read:

## **Philippians 4:6-7**

*<sup>6</sup> Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. <sup>7</sup> Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

Yes, it is a sad fact that there have been many deaths because Covid 19. It has had a huge disruptive effect on the lives of people right across the world. Affecting lives in ways, which seem strange. Restricting their freedom in how they (we) all, live our day to day life, how we are able to interact with family, spiritual and social life, in fact almost everything we do has its restrictions, and we don't know how long this situation will go on for, but there is good news, God does. The medical and scientific specialists in various countries are working hard trying to produce a vaccine to deal with Covid 19 and lead us out of this Pandemic.

Our government keep making changes to try and lighten the restrictions on us with updated advice as to how we should act as a society in order to keep the spread of the virus to a minimum.

Now they and we know that it's difficult to know how long this situation will continue.

How then should we as Christians react to this difficult situation? Is there anything that we can do? Well I believe there is only ONE thing we are capable of doing. We know that the Lord is in control and nothing happens in this world without His permission and purpose. We may not know what His purpose is regarding this pandemic, but know that nothing happens without His permission.

One of my all-time favourite hymns is “Onward Christian soldiers” marching onto war with the cross of Jesus going on before. It seems clear to me, if we consider ourselves to be Christian soldiers, we have a duty and a reason to wage war against any problem that effects us physically and spiritually and the current pandemic is certainly a worthy opponent.

If we hope to beat it, we need to take our calling as soldiers of the cross seriously and seek the Lords help by getting down on our knees and seeking His instructions and strength to enable us to face this Pandemic free from fear. To be confident that He has got us safe in His hands, and never to forget His promise to be with us always - even to the end of the age. Let us then look forward to the end of this Pandemic with the Lords help because that is the only hope we can have for it to end.

As I have already said everything that happens in the world can only happen with the Lords approval and everything that He allows has its purpose - that is to refine us into the people we should be striving to become growing into the likeness of Jesus.

During the last ten weeks of lockdown I have had plenty of time to reflect on how difficult this period would have been without the strength of the Lord.

Before I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, when I think back my life may have seemed to have been busy but it was also very empty and meaningless, lacking any true purpose. Life during this present period may seem similar to many who don't know the Lord. Could that be part of the Lords plan? To show those who don't know Him just how empty the things that this world desires are.

There are many reports of people, who, before this Pandemic, never went to church, now having got on-line and joined in and enjoyed services.

I believe that His purpose will be fulfilled, that His church will be built, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

Amen.