

Make a Joyful Noise

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Date: 03 September 2000

Preacher: Phil Meulman

[0 : 0 0] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 3rd of September 2000 the preacher is Phil Muleman his sermon is entitled Make a Joyful Noise and is based on Psalm 95 Our Heavenly Father we pray that you open our hearts and our minds help us to understand your word to be better servants and to be able to worship you in full honour and glory for Jesus' sake we pray Amen Well we're doing Psalm 95 we're preaching through that today and it's on page 479 of the Bible the black Bible is in the pews there so you may like to have a look at that turn to those pages Well as people we are a pretty amazing lot look at the way the human race has learnt to survive over the thousands of years that we've been alive if you look at the Aboriginal people of this land Australia although we were inclined as Westerners to call them savages at one stage they were and are highly skilled at living they were hunter-gatherers and also conservationists they looked after their environment a message which we would do well to learn ourselves and look at our modern technology it blows our minds we can communicate with someone on the other side of the world with a mobile phone if you have a mobile phone turn it off soon

I saw an ad this week that there is going to be a mobile phone coming out that will have a camera in it so that you can see what the other person is doing when you ring them up to talk to them in Scandinavia or wherever they may be that is amazing that is mind-blowing that from this very room I could talk to my parents for example who are in Fiji at the moment and see them and enjoy them watch them enjoy their sailing well in our health industry as well we are continually at the forefront with technology it's amazing look at the good things and the good that has come out of that technology for example there is eye-saving surgery available to people nowadays which will prevent blindness a thing that in the past if your eyes started to fail you were just going to go blind today that can be largely prevented and life human life is prolonged for many people more than ever before because of the advances that we have made in technology in the arts and the entertainment industry we have also turned out some very, very talented people there are some great musicians around today and there are some fabulous musical talent that has come about in days gone by and today there is an enormous variety of music for our ears to hear and for our lips to sing or hum along to or to dance with and so on there is some music that we like some music we love and there is much music that we don't like either isn't there but overall you would have to say that in the arts and entertainment industry as with all the other things which I've just talked about you would have to say there are some pretty amazing things that have gone on through human beings well I could rave on and on and on about our achievements and I'm sure you too can think of many people who have done fine things in this world but should we give those people all the praise who do we render then if it's not them who do we render then all this praise to who is it that we worship is it ourselves or those who have the talent to enhance our lives in one way or another is it them according to the writer of Psalm 95 and as we've sung the praises of Psalm 95 our praises should be directed to God in all of our worship not only in just our praises with our lips and our voices and so on which is what we tend to think of when we say the word worship but we also worship God we also ought to worship God in our obedience shown toward him as well well it's pretty obvious as you look at this psalm that we are called here to worship God but what is it that this psalm tells us about

God who is God there are five things that I think that we can learn about God here if you look at verses 1, 3 and 6 in those verses it describes God as Lord capital L capital O capital R capital D Lord and when you see that word the word Lord in the Bible in capital letters that is translated Yahweh which is the personal name for God that is who we are talking about Yahweh the Lord the creator of everything Yahweh is the God of Israel he is the God of Abraham he is the God who promised to Abraham that he will have many descendants as numerous as the stars that is the God the Lord who we are talking about here the second thing that we see here in verse 1 is that the Lord

Yahweh is described as the rock of our salvation now rock is a symbol of God's power he is a firm foundation on and in whom we can rest because he brings about salvation now the great saving event for the nation of Israel is the rescue that God did when he brought them out of Egypt he rescued them from the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians he brought them out of Egypt and eventually they were to go into the promised land and that saving event is sung about through in many passages in the Old Testament and sung by his people and recounted again and again and again as his people look back to what God has done for them but salvation is also a future event it's an event for God's people that we look forward to in the future and we'll have a look at that as we get towards the end of this psalm and friends those who have God as their rock and have God there as their foundation will have that salvation that we can look forward to in the future so the Lord is the rock of our salvation the third thing that we learn about God is that in verse 3 we are told that the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods now in the pagan world the popular thought was that there were many many gods and in particular there was a God who would rule in particular areas and here we see three gods that are talked about there was a God who ruled the depths of the earth in the pagan worship that God was called

Molech and there was a God who ruled the heights of the mountains that God's name was Baal and then there was a God who ruled the depths of the seas and that God's name was Tiamat three separate gods who had three separate areas but the God that this psalmist is talking about here and is calling us to worship rules over all of these things he is the king of kings this is the God that we are talking about who has made the heavens and the earth from the very beginning Genesis 1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth that is the God that we are talking about and everything that God has made is his it doesn't belong to separate little gods they all belong to God the depths of the earth the heights of the mountains the sea and the dry land they have all been formed by his hands by God's creating hands he is the king above all kings the fourth thing that we see is if you look at verse 6 the Lord is our maker not only is God the creator the rock of our salvation the king above all gods but he is our maker he has made everything he created you he created me

[9 : 11] Genesis 1 and 2 again remind us of that fact and in that book in Genesis 1 and 2 we are told that what he made is good and the creation of humanity is a really good thing and he looks back and he rests and says it was very good and he made us you and me in his image however we are not God we are made in God's image but we are not God and the psalmists repeat on many occasions that God is our maker and we see in the psalms that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by him and we would do well to remember that at all times not just occasionally well having established who God is as he writes the psalm the psalmist then proclaims of God that he is our God this God that I have talked about this is our God the God who made everything this is our God well is this the God you worship is this the God you worship or do you worship some other God one God in our culture is the God of materialism and in materialism people worship their money they spend it on themselves and things to benefit themselves they see something they want it they go and work towards getting it to benefit themselves things like houses things like cars our health our family and so on now it's not that these things are bad in themselves it's just that we can become so obsessed with any or all of these things and pursuing them making them a God if you like that the God who made everything gets neglected or given very little priority in our day to day living and as a result therefore the God who has made everything is not given proper due by his people in worship in fact the God the creator of everything becomes ignored and we make gods of our cars or whatever that God of materialism may be at the moment so that's one God of our culture another God of this age that has been around for thousands of years is astrology people turn to their horoscopes they turn to their star guides consulting them for guidance and daily living what will happen with my next relationship people might be asking will my lucky numbers come up this week in lotto and so on what begins as harmless fun for some people can turn into an obsession for them and lots and lots of unnecessary problems and furthermore again it diverts attention away from the true and the living God the God who made the sun the moon and the stars if we turn to astrology and so on we were in our Bible study group this week we were reading we're doing

Genesis and in Genesis 1 we're told that God made the heavens and he made the big lights and the little lights and for those people who thought that the sun and the moon and the stars were things to be worshipped there's this little footnote in the book and it says well God blows a raspberry and all of those things because he made everything it's a God who made everything and that's the God who we're called to worship the God who has made everything not the gods that are man made and cause people to look at star guides and all those sorts of things so how should we worship the God who has made everything including you and me how should we worship him again this psalm gives us three indications of how we should worship him first of all knowing that God is the creator of everything we are called as his people as verse one tells us to sing to the Lord use our lips praise the

Lord with our lips and so on and in verse two it says come into his presence with thanksgiving make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise not the BBC songs of praise but songs of praise that come from our lips and our hearts extolling God's greatness notice here in this psalm that this isn't to be done on our own though we can praise God as individuals there's no doubt about that but this is to be done as God's people verse one says come let us sing to the Lord verse two let us come into his presence with thanksgiving let us make joyful songs to him with songs of praise and we do this in the knowledge of who God is that's why we come and praise God because he has made us and he's created us and he's created this world and we stand in awe of him in a sense now I think it's important that as we come to worship God in so on and so on that we have different styles and variety of music in our worship because as God's people we are all wired differently I'm wired differently from you and so on some people like classical style music others like more contemporary style music and regardless of what the style of music is what's important is what we are singing in the words and as we come to worship God in song then it's important that our words are words which have substance about who

God is and what he has done for us especially as Christians we ought to be singing songs which give praise to God for rescuing us through Jesus Christ and it's also important that our songs are songs of thanksgiving for what God has done not necessarily songs which say what I could do for God but what God has done for us so as God's people we are called to worship him with our praises the second thing that we are called to do is worship God with reverence verse 6 oh come let us notice that corporate idea again let us worship and bow down let us kneel before our maker the idea here the idea here is that we get low before our maker we know who he is and get low before him the standard word for worship in scripture means to prostrate oneself and

Abraham did this when the Lord appeared to him in Genesis 18 in that chapter he bowed to the ground and accepted his place before God he knew where he was before his maker do we get low before our maker do we accept our place before God not only when we come together as God's people but also on our own do we get low before God God who has made us knows our every step and our every action are we aware of that in our daily living and our daily behaviour you know it's really easy to come here on Sunday morning and show your reverence toward God in front of other people but what was our attitude toward God on the way here in the car I've got to come to church again were you having a fight were you arguing was you know was something distracting you how have we shown our reverence to God in the past week how has our attitude been to our workmates and our colleagues and the people whom we're at school with and so on our reverence toward God is more than just getting down on our knees at a set time it is living out daily in the words we speak it's lived out daily in the words we speak and the actions that we do and so on and that leads to the third thing that we are called to do as we worship the

[17 : 51] Lord our maker we are called to obedience the psalmist here gives a salutary reminder to the people about their forefathers who in the past hardened their hearts towards God look at the second seven verse seven the second part of verse seven onwards it says oh that today you would listen to my voice do not harden your hearts as at Meribah as on the day at Massar in the wilderness when your ancestors tested me and put me to the proof though they had seen my works here the psalmist is reminding his recipients about the ancestors who were rescued from Egypt by God which was the greatest saving event for God's people at this particular point in time now the story of the Exodus today is still a great story and they made a movie about it last year brought out on video the Prince of Egypt and all those sorts of things and it's still a story which is worth retelling about God's saving action and so on it's a story and a reminder of God's greatness in the entire world and particularly of his love for his chosen people the problem for the people of

Moses generation though was that they forgot they forgot about God's awesome power and greatness in the deliverance from Egypt and began to complain to Moses and God when there was no water for them to drink in in one episode throughout the book of Exodus and as a result they put God to the test let me read to you the story from Exodus chapter 17 which this psalm is sort of picking up from the Israel has been delivered from Egypt from the hands of Pharaoh and so on and they're wandering around in the wilderness and at verse 1 it picks up this point from Psalm 95 from the wilderness of sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages as the Lord commanded they camped it refitim but there was no water for the people to drink the people quarreled with Moses and said give us water to drink Moses said to them why do you quarrel with me why do you test the Lord but the people thirsted there for water and the people complained against Moses and said why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst so

Moses cried out to the Lord as he would what shall I do with this people they are almost ready to stone me the Lord said to Moses go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go I will be standing there in front of you at the rock of Horeb strike the rock and water will come out of it so that people may drink Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel he called the place Massar and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord saying is the Lord among us or not these people Israel put God to the test and then of that generation the psalmist goes on and says in Psalm 95 they are a people whose hearts go astray they do not regard my ways therefore my anger therefore in my anger I swore they shall not enter my rest because of the nation the generation which came out of Egypt because of their disobedience and hardness of heart because they put God to the test they were prevented from entering the promised land under Moses leadership and it was eventually to be under Joshua's leadership that the people would enter the promised land it would be a new generation that would enter into the promised land back then those people tested God they refused to take him at his word and in their disobedience were prevented from entering into this promised land and subsequently God's rest now this has application for us today those who disobey God are like Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness and in their disobedience they were prevented from entering into God's rest as I just labored the point and we too if we fail to be obedient to God's ways will also fail to enter into God's rest now the notion of the word rest here is not entry into the promised land of ancient Israel's time rather the notion of rest refers to entry into God's kingdom that is heaven which we talk about and that notion of rest is a future event it's something for us to look forward to if you were to look at

Hebrews chapter 3 and chapter 4 it picks up this idea of rest which is there for God's people and those who enter into God's rest in that future time will cease from their labours just as God did when he rested on the seventh day after creating the world and friends I have to tell you that that notion of rest is something that I am looking forward to I am kind of desperate for it I am looking forward to a day when I won't have to be stressed out by the pressures of life and the pressures of work I am looking forward to the day when I don't have to come and write a sermon when it will be there in my head sort of thing I'm looking forward to the day when I don't have to worry about essays I'm looking forward to the day when I don't have to worry about where my children are or what is going on and all those sorts of things do you know what I'm talking about there will come a day when I will truly be able to rest and you as God's people too will truly be able to rest now we may get a small glimpse of this rest when we have a day off or when we go to men's breakfast at six o'clock in the morning we may get a glimpse of that sort of thing when we have our day off from the pressures of life where we can spend time with family and friends and more importantly worshipping God but that day on that day where rest will finally come that day is a future event it is not here now we have the glimpses of it but it will come in the future and for us to enter into that rest requires obedience from us to God's ways it means taking God at his word and obeying his commands rather than putting God to the test and risking the loss of a relationship with him it means surrendering to the living God the God who has made everything the God who has made you and me he is the creator and the maker of this world and that God has revealed himself to us in the Lord Jesus

Christ in Jesus we can enter into that rest that glorious future where rest and that notion of rest will be in its entirety and when we do trust in Jesus as the one who brings us into God's kingdom when we do place him high above all things whether it be our family whether it be our material possessions or even our tendency as humans to celebrate our great achievements then we are truly worshipping worshipping God this psalm is a psalm of worship and adoration to our maker we are called here to worship our God to worship God as his people together in praise and so on and we are also called to worship God worship God in the way that he calls us to knowing who he is and worshipping him in that form of obedience every moment of our life are you worshipping God in the way that he calls us to let's pray our father we thank you and praise you that you are our maker and we look at ourselves and we do realize that we are fearfully and wonderfully made we look at this human race and we see the wonderful achievements that it has made and Lord as your people we want to praise you for the gifts and talents that you give to many people Lord we pray that as we worship you in song that they just wouldn't be words and songs that we sing but they would be true adoration of you the living God and Lord we pray that we would worship you every day of our lives in obedience following your commands trusting in

[27 : 56] Jesus to forgive us for our sin and hanging on to that promise of rest where we one day will be with you in heaven truly worshipping you truly resting in you secure in your hands Amen Medicineooked Thank you.

Thank you.