

PSALM 92: 1-4

A Song for the Sabbath Day.

- ¹ It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
² to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,
³ to the music of the lute and the harp,
to the melody of the lyre.
⁴ For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

There are a lot of things in life that can go wrong and do go wrong all too often, no? There are a lot of things that can throw us off our best intentions in how we want to respond to it all as well. Whether it's the state of the world, the state of our relationships, the stresses of every day, the fears that keep us up at night... whatever way it happens, the wrongs in the world and the many things that can and do go wrong in our lives throw us off all too often.

So what do we do? How do we cope? How do we reset? How do we find a better way forward? Enter the "Sabbath." This psalm, we're told in the heading, is "A Song for the Sabbath Day." This psalm is intended to be sung on that special day and time in the week where people stop what they are doing, step back from the grind of every day concerns and doings, and get grounded again in themselves before God. So what does such grounding involve?

First, there is music and song itself. Music opens up our heart. Music lifts our spirit. As much as we may be buried in the grind of life and all the stress, music unlocks the key to our heart. Music breaks into the fortress of our soul. As much as we build a wall around our heart and soul to protect us from feeling, music allows us to come out of ourselves and feel again. But what feeling? While lament psalms are songs that can bring forth our feelings in the form of sorrow and rage, Psalm 92 is more a psalm of thanksgiving (at least these opening verses). Thanksgiving taps into a different part of our brain all too often dormant. Once awakened, though, with the help of music, positive feelings begin to flood our minds and hearts and we can allow the doors of the heart and the gate of our soul to open again. Life becomes doable again. Grace enters in once more.

Music and song also make something more of our thanksgiving. Our thanksgiving song becomes "praise." What is the content of such praise? "It is good... to sing praises to your

name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night..." We've already encountered the words "steadfast love" and "faithfulness" in many psalms. God will love us no matter what because God's loving is steadfast. And God's love is also faithful and will never abandon us. Even as we will pass through times of life where we will feel abandoned and alone, times when God's love will be hard to feel, Psalm 92 sung as a song of praise is a chemical and spiritual jolt, awakening us once again to the big picture. It's an invitation to step out and above the pit we have fallen into so we can open space for the steadfast love and faithfulness of God to flood our hearts and enter our souls once again.

Finally, the song of praise that is this psalm also becomes a song of "joy." The psalmist is full of joy and "gladness" when they contemplate the "work of God's hands" (when they behold the world around them with fresh eyes and feel how beautiful it all is). If we can come to that place of seeing the beauty of the world, of feeling God's steadfast love and faithfulness, of having a desire to sing praises to God and express thanksgiving, then we have truly experienced Sabbath.

So where, when and how do you experience Sabbath? Do you make space for it in your week and in the rhythms of your life? Does it involve music and worship? Does it involve some form of expression? Is it about moving your body, experimenting with prayer, breathing and silence, opening your heart and surrendering your Spirit before the "Most High"? May you always make room in your life regularly for Sabbath.

PRAYER: Thank you, O God for the gift of Sabbath, for that reminder of who we are made to be as creatures thankful to our creator, thankful for creation, thankful for being part of a larger whole. When we are buried in the pit of despair, frustration or bitterness, O God, remind us that we are beloved and the world around us ought to be loved. Awaken us to our call as your ambassadors of love, the hands, feet and heart of our Lord Jesus in the world. May you baptize the tears of our sadness with the water of your care. May the brokenness that afflicts us at times be nourished by the bread and wine of your compassion and forgiveness. May we embrace ourselves as you embrace us. In Jesus' name; Amen.