

Psalm 118:1-2,19 to end

Matthew 21:1-11

Psalm 118 is a tribute to God's eternal love for his people. A surety of God's love, unchanging in the midst of changing situations and circumstances.

And, I guess, we are all of us in need of this assurance at the moment as our situations and circumstances are changing in ways we never dreamed about.

Verse 22 of Psalm 118 – the prophecy

The stone rejected by the builders

Has now become the cornerstone.

Acts 4:11 – the fulfilment of the prophecy

The stone that you builders rejected

Has now become the cornerstone.

Jesus, rejected by his own people.

The cornerstone is, of course, the most important stone in the whole building. The cornerstone is the most important stone set in the construction of a new building. All other stones are set in reference to this stone.

Jesus is the cornerstone of the building of the church. Not bricks and mortar but flesh and blood people.

Jesus is the point of reference for all of us who seek to know more of God's work in the world and in our life. Jesus points us in the right direction for a relationship with God.

Verse 24 of psalm 118

This is the day that the Lord has made

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Maybe, to us, rejoicing seems hard work at the moment, so many worrying stories and rumours filling our minds with negative thoughts. The psalms are a good way to express negative energy, so many of them begin by recording sorrow, worry or guilt – but if we persevere to the end they usually end in praise.

No matter how low our mood we are asked to praise God for who he is, falling back on the belief that he is the cornerstone of our life. He is the one who continually strengthens, supports and encourages us to carry on through whatever difficulties or problems arise.

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

The sun comes up  
It's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass  
And whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing  
When the evening comes.

God's Holy Spirit at work gives us the strength to praise and praise gives us the strength to worship.

In Matthew the situations seems to be reversed.

The people begin with praise as Jesus enters Jerusalem. They spread their cloaks on the ground as in Kings 2:13 we read of the people spreading their cloaks on the ground for God's anointed King, as a sign of loyalty.

They wave branches from the palm trees as they did 200 years previously, when a victorious Judas Maccabaeus had arrived in Jerusalem after conquering the pagan armies that had oppressed Israel  
2 Maccabees 10:7

And they sang royal praises:

Matthew 21:9

Praise God for the Son of David

Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Praise God in highest heaven.

But it wasn't long before the celebrations of Palm Sunday evolve into the horror of Good Friday, when these same people, who welcomed him with such celebration, deny him and cheer as he is flogged and crucified.

We must pray that our faith follows the themes of the psalms.

It's easy to praise when things are going well. We are discovering the reality of being called to praise when things look black.

A friend asked me if I thought that this time was of God. Is this virus a punishment for the way we have moved away from God? She referred back to the stories of the punishments in the O.T., stories of destruction and death.

Yes, we all fall short of God's hope for us.

Yes, we are all called to confess our failures and weaknesses.

No, God does not punish us this way.

He is the cornerstone, the one solid and firm truth that we can all hold on to. The one surety that we will come through this time.  
God is with us.

You're rich in love  
And You're slow to anger  
Your name is great  
And Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness  
I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons  
For my heart to find

Bless the Lord oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before  
Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

Bless You Lord.