

God of the Chaos

Recap:

- Genre: guides our expectations – helps us read the psalm better
- Hymn (a psalm of praise): used to celebrate a well-ordered world, when all is well.
- The structure is usually:
 1. Call to worship
 2. Reasons for praising God
 3. Renewed call to worship

Psalm 33:1-22

1. Call to worship (vv. 1-3)
2. Reasons for praising God (vv. 4-19)
3. Renewed call to worship (vv. 20-22)

¹ Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

² Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.

⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were
made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;
he puts the deep into storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the people of the world revere him.

⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

¹⁰ The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

¹¹ But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all
generations.

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he chose for his inheritance.

¹³ From heaven the LORD looks down
and sees all mankind;

¹⁴ from his dwelling place he watches
all who live on earth—

¹⁵ he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.

¹⁶ No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.

¹⁷ A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.

¹⁸ But the eyes of the LORD are on those who
fear him,

on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

¹⁹ to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

²⁰ We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.

²¹ In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.

²² May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.

1. Call to worship (vv. 1-3)

¹ Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

² Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

- An invitation to the community (the righteous, the upright) to join the psalmist in worshipping and praising the Lord. Our Christian faith is to be expressed and shared together with the community that God has blessed us with.
- The focus of the hymn, the main character is God. In these 22 verses of Psalm 33, the psalmist referred to God 39 times.

A new song	Doesn't necessarily mean writing new melody and lyrics It means with a new attitude of praise
Play skillfully	Excellence, giving the best to God
Shout for joy	Passion, joy and excitement

2. Reasons for praising God (vv. 4-19)

a. God is right and true (vv. 4-5)

⁴ For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.

- God's word and works are inseparable. God's actions match his word. He is who he says he is in scripture.
- The God who did all the things in the bible, the God who was always part of his people in the scriptures; guiding, leading, speaking to them, is the same God that is with us, who is also guiding, leading, speaking to us. God is doing his work in our midst. We must be assured and confident that God would act the way he did in scripture, because that is who he is.
- "The word of the Lord" (the Torah, the law, the instructions, that many psalms urged the people to meditate his word day and night): is right and true. There is no evil intent in God and his word. God is faithful and his word is good.

⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

Righteousness	God calls his people to be holy as he is holy.
Justice	God is the righteous Judge who would bring vindication to the righteous and punishment to the wicked.
Unfailing love	God is love. God loves his people.

b. God is sovereign (vv. 6-19)

⁶ *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.*

⁷ *He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;
he puts the deep into storehouses.*

⁸ *Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the people of the world revere him.*

⁹ *For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.*

- God created the heavens and the earth by his word. What God said came to pass in creation. “He spoke and it came to be, he commanded, and it stood firm.”
- V. 7: “He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses.” In the Ancient Near Eastern, the nations surrounding Israel have their own creation account. In their creation account, the waters of the sea were depicted as a force of chaos, because the sea was unpredictable. It is dangerous and cannot be controlled. Israel’s creation account speaks of the God of Israel subduing the sea, the chaos, depicting Yahweh’s superiority over nature, over the chaos that is uncontrollable, and in that sense, also more superior than the gods of other nations who couldn’t subdue the sea. Verse 7 tells us God gathers the waters of the sea, the chaos, and put it in its boundaries, into a jar, into storehouses.
- The people of Israel have gone through much chaos in their lives. Eg. The tower of Babel, the slavery in Egypt, the battles and wars, the rivalry between the Northern and Southern kingdoms, the invasion of Assyria and Babylon leading to the exile.
- In the New Testament, the Jews were still under the Roman empire. They were also suffering under the selfish and arrogant leadership of the Jewish leaders. Jesus himself went through a lot of chaos, and eventually the early church was persecuted for their faith in Christ.
- In all this chaos, God was in control. Through the darkest hours, God did not abandon his people. There is always a message of hope. God was always there. The chaos that they went through is held in its boundaries. God did not allow it to overcome them. Through the darkest seasons that God allows us to go through, we are still under his sovereign care.
- V. 8: Therefore, fear and revere the Lord, not the chaos.

*10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.
12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he chose for his inheritance.*

- V. 10: chaos in the form of plans and purposes of wicked people. Psalm chapter 2 (part of the introduction of the whole collection of Psalms) introduces us to the wicked plots that the nations of the world have against God. The evil one is constantly at work to gather people to reject, disobey and go against God and his word. He is causing more conflicts and trouble into the lives of every person, especially those who have committed to pursue God, to hinder people from following God. But, God frustrates and hinders the plans of the wicked. The plan of the wicked will not succeed.
- In contrast, God's plan is not affected by the plots and purposes of the wicked. His plan stands firm and his purposes last forever. From the beginning, God's plan is to bless people of all nations by revealing himself and bringing them into communion with him. The devil and his followers tried to stop God's plan, but nothing they did could stop God from doing his work. God achieved his purposes through Jesus. God revealed himself to all nations through the person of Jesus, and brought salvation and redemption to all mankind through the death and resurrection of Jesus, bringing us into communion with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And he continues to bring people into this communion, by sending his people into the world to preach the good news of Jesus Christ.
- God is right and true, God is faithful to his word, he is faithful to his promises, and to his plans and purposes. No one can come against him.

*13 From heaven the LORD looks down
and sees all mankind;
14 from his dwelling place he watches
all who live on earth—
15 he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.
16 No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.
17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.
18 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
19 to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.*

- Throughout the bible, many people have tried to depend on their army, position, wealth, for salvation. Instead of saving themselves, they created trouble, not only for themselves, but for the people around them.

- Saul thought his position and army can give him the glory he wanted. So, he forsook God.
- David, after committing adultery, thought he could cover up his sin by getting Uriah killed in a battle.
- Judas betrayed Jesus with 30 pieces of silver.
- The Jewish leaders, in order to secure their position and glory, refused to listen to the truth, and murdered an innocent man.

All of them got into trouble that they could not fix. When they were stubborn and unrepentant, it ended terribly for them.

- Compared to the finite plans of mankind, God sees all things, knows all things, because he created all things. Nothing is hidden from his sight. He knows the heart of the people, the thoughts, and motives of each action.
- In contrast to those who depend on what they have, the Lord protects and delivers those who fear him, those whose hope is in him. The great army, the great strength of a warrior and a horse cannot save; the money, positions, achievements cannot save us, it is the Lord who saves.
- The early church was persecuted for their newfound faith in Christ. The persecution could have easily destroyed their faith. It seemed like following Christ brought more pain than blessing to them. Yet, it is through the persecution, the chaos, that they learned to trust in the presence and reality of the Holy Spirit in a tangible way, to depend on the grace and strength of God, and it brought them hope, it sustained them to stand firm in their belief, to faithfully and fervently preach about the Lord that has saved and redeemed them. Even when they face death, they counted it a joy because their hope is in the Son of God who has risen and will raise them to be with him again.

3. Renewed call to worship: to hope and trust in God (vv. 20-22)

²⁰ *We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.*

²¹ *In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.*

- “We”: The psalmist includes the community into the commitment

We wait in hope for the Lord	Anticipates that God will act	Patience
He is our help and our shield	Assurance of God’s protection	Confidence
In him our hearts rejoice	Joy of the Lord while waiting for the Lord	Joy
For we trust in his holy name	The name of God reveals his identity – his attributes	Knowledge of God

*22 May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.*

- Above all, the psalmist yearns for the unfailing love of the Lord. His hope is in God, not what he can get from God. He knows he is under the sovereign care of his God who loves and cares for him.
- The psalmist has experienced God's supernatural deliverance. He knew he could not save himself; he knew that it was God who saved him. Therefore, he could praise God because he knows his God is greater, mightier, and stronger than the vicious and overwhelming sea of chaos that he was in. Therefore, he waits in hope for the Lord, he yearns for the unfailing love of the Lord.
- It is easy to miss out on what God is doing in the middle of a chaos. The overwhelming challenges can blind us to everything else except the problem. But, if we pay attention to God, we will see God working in our midst. He is doing something in every person's lives. He is drawing people closer to him, he is sustaining people as they go through tremendous stress, he is connecting us with his family so we can love and care for each other, he is sending people to provide for the needs of the poor, and he is building our faith through these challenges, to recognize we truly need the Lord, to encounter the unfailing love of God in our darkest hours.
- Let us learn to listen to what God is saying, to focus on what God is doing in the midst of all our challenges. This chaos has not changed or affected God and his plan. God is in control, and he subdues the chaos. Let us learn to praise him for who he is. Let us learn to wait in hope. Let us yearn for his unfailing love.

Prayer

- We will trust in the word of the Lord, for it is right and true.
- We will trust in the sovereign care of the Lord, that God will not allow the chaos to cross its boundaries to overcome us.
- We will learn to praise God for who he is, to wait in hope, to yearn for his unfailing love.

Church

- Hunger for the Presence and the Word of God.
- Transformative work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.
- Church to faithful to welcome and minister to all the people that God sends.
- Church to be a place of healing, restoration and reconciliation.
- Unity based on God's love and truth: breaking barriers between people from different groups.
- Workplaces: labourers to respond to their calling in the harvest field.
- Wisdom to use our resources to help those who are in need.
- Salvation for our loved ones.
- Ministries:
 - Open doors
 - Wisdom and discernment to reach out and minister
 - Sensitive to the needs of the people

Covid-19

- Healing and deliverance
- FMCO lockdown
- Government: wisdom and compassion
- Economy; those who are in need
- Mental health (deprived of relationships)
- India

Healing

- Adri & Ricky: praise God for healing
- Aunty Rachel (Tabitha's mom)
- Carrie: covid

Malaysia

- Leadership: righteousness, integrity, compassion for the people
- Unity: between all people group
- Justice and mercy: care for the neglected group of people (the poor, oppressed, widows, orphans, marginalized, foreigners)
- Salvation
- Church: instruments of love and unity, prophetic voice to the nation