

This is My Day, I Was Made for This

Ps 137:1-6

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

I. Introduction

1. Just think of the “back in my day” tales the young people of today will have to tell their kids.
2. Back in my day, the bread shelves were empty and meat refrigerators had nothing but ground turkey.
3. There were no potatoes or canned vegetables to be found.
4. Grocery stores put a limit on the amount of milk, eggs, and sugar you could buy—when they had any to sell.
5. You could buy gas for \$1.73 a gallon.
6. School was cancelled for months, graduation ceremonies were canceled, and people had to stay home for days and days.
7. We had to have church online.
8. My favorite one they will have to share that their kids won’t believe, and I still don’t believe, will go like this: Back in my day, people were hoarding toilet paper because you couldn’t find it anywhere.
9. In fact, I would recommend that you start a journal of the daily events you are experiencing right now. What may seem boring and monotonous right now, you will find very interesting in years to come.
10. And for you young people listening, you children who study this period of time in their history class will find your journal very interesting and might be able to use it for their research and an exhibit in a class presentation in 20 years.
11. Who knows, they might make a movie based on your diary.
12. Somebody needs to say, “This is my day. I was made for this.”

II. Something I can do

1. But remember church, this is your day! It is the current state of affairs. And even in the midst of such a day as this, we are finding that we ARE cut out for this. We CAN do life on pause.
2. And you will remember this period of time for the rest of your lives. But what memories are you creating? That your life was shut down? Or that you lived life during the shutdown?
3. This morning I received an email from YouVersion, my favorite Bible app that I use and highly recommend to you as well. The subject line of this email was: “4 Ways to Choose Love in Difficult Times.”

4. The email started with that story of the day the disciples were in the boat with Jesus and the storm arose. The worried disciples asked Jesus the question, “Don’t you care for us?” And Jesus arose and calmed the storm.
5. We are in this boat with Jesus just as they were, but the email pointed out something I had not thought of: the disciples were also in the boat with each other. And how we choose to react in the boat can either point people to the panic all around us, or to Jesus.
6. The YouVersion email continued with four practical ways to point people to Jesus during our present storm:
 - a. Encourage one another: call, sent a text or email, post an encouraging post, invite them to your online church service. Deliberately offer someone hope.
 - b. Support each other: check on your neighbors, share what you have, give some food, pay for the person’s meal behind you in the drive through.
 - c. Love each other: ask God, “who is my neighbor?” and what it means to love your neighbor right now.
 - d. Point each other to Jesus: It is up to us to remind others of God’s promises, so point someone to Jesus and pray for them.
7. Remember this is my day and I was made for this.

III. Sing your songs in Babylonian exile

A. How can I sing?

1. This brings us back to the passage we started with.
2. In our Search for Truth lesson yesterday morning, we were talking about the parallels between the period of the exile that Israel and Judah experienced after the Jews were taken captive by the nations of Assyria and Babylon.
3. Their way of life was terribly interrupted. They were carried away as captives to a strange land. People were crying out in despair because of their conditions. Many who had forsaken God were now searching for God and comfort from His promises that they had so willingly disregarded during better times.
4. And this passage in Psalm 137 was written by one of those who were desperately crying out after being carried away into captivity as a prisoner of war—a war refugee, an exile, taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.
Ps 137:1-4
1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
5. We well remember what life was like before this week. Why it was only last Sunday that we sat down in church together. It was only two weeks ago you could go into the grocery store and see full shelves.
6. But the next phrase is what I want to focus on for this message as we consider our response to our present period of exile and captivity.
7. We have got to do more than weep over our memories:
2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?
8. Of course, there are times when we don’t feel like singing, and there is a time when crying through our feelings is a helpful response to grief.
9. But as we progress through this time, what will our response be to those around us?

- B. But our faith is being mocked
1. In this psalm, it was their captors, the Babylonians, those soldiers who had battered down the walls of Jerusalem, and who had burned down Solomon's temple and had stolen all its golden vessels used for worship.
 2. And who knows what happened to the golden Ark of the Covenant that had been a symbol of God's presence in Israel for around 800 years?
 3. These mocking Babylonians were responsible for all their present troubles! Actually, the prophets had warned that their rebelling against God and setting up idols to false gods in that temple, would lead to this—and it did.
 4. But now, the soldiers who brought about that destruction were mocking them. Now that their city was an ash heap and piles of rubble, they were tormenting them by asking us to “sing one of the songs of Zion!”
 5. Their response was like this: “What Zion? It is no more!”
 6. We hung up our harps—we put them away. We don't sing any more. How can we sing the Lord's songs in this strange land? How can we worship in this new environment? Especially before those who mock us?
 7. Just maybe, just maybe the world needs to hear a song of Zion right now.
 8. Even those who mocked you before, just might discover the reality of the God you serve, and that He is just alive and real now in this strange land, as He was back when we worshiped Him at the temple.
 9. What if our neighbors hear that we are still singing to the Lord?
 10. What if someone hears that you are still participating in a church service in this strange land?
 11. It just might be that they will want to join you and listen.
- C. People need hope where they are
1. You see, hope is needed everywhere right now, and if we hang our harps and quit singing, the sad stories of this world's despairing condition will be all they hear.
 2. How can we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? Well to start with, take out your harp from that place you hid it.
 3. Pick up that guitar again. Pick up your mic again. Raise those hands again. Sing it out loud again. Read those precious promises again. Pray through again!
 4. Just because we are in strange new territory does not mean we must quit singing. Just adapt your song to the new situation.
 5. Just because you have to change a few things, the message is eternal and unchanging that Jesus transforms lives.
 6. And right there in your living room, kitchen, or bedroom, Jesus can come into that place with a very real presence and bring you to tears of repentance from a hungry heart, not just tears of sadness from the captivity.
 7. You see, Jesus is just as present in this day, as He was the day you were filled with the Holy Ghost.
 8. And how about those who have not received the Holy Ghost yet. You can receive the Spirit in your living room, kitchen, or bedroom.
 9. When our daughter, Naomi, was seven years old, we had been watching the Jesus of Nazareth VHS video in our VCR (remember those?), and after seeing Jesus crucified, she disappeared into her bedroom for a while.

10. And when she came back out, she was crying because of the sacrifice Jesus had made for us, and she said, “I love Jesus, and I want the Holy Ghost.”
11. She came and knelt down beside our couch in the living room, and prayed until she spoke with tongues and the joy of the Holy Ghost filled her.
12. In a little while, we will enter into a time of prayer, and Jesus will be just as present in your home just as much as He ever was in any church building or tent revival.

D. Remember and sing

1. Yes we are in a strange land, but this is my day and I was made for this. I am going to pick up my harp and sing the songs of Zion.
2. I am going to pray until I pray through.
3. I am going to remember what used to be:
Psalm 137:5-6
5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning [or its skills].
6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.
4. My relationship with God will be a higher priority over any other pleasure, it shall be greater than my highest joy.
5. We haven’t forgotten those experiences we had before, but as our situations have changed, we are going to transform our methods so we can sing the songs, pray the prayers, study the Word, claim the promises, all in a strange new land.
6. For this is my day.
7. Don’t get caught saying, “Back in the day...”, or “Back in my day...”
8. Today IS your day! You were made for this.

IV. Do your job in Persian exile

A. Crippled by fear

1. You remember the story of Queen Esther, whose family was among the captives of war. This time, it was not the Babylonians who were in charge now, it was their conquerors, the Persians.
2. As a side note before we look at Esther’s story, consider that the present captor, the corona virus, will one day be conquered, and all this will be a distant memory with other things will be governing our times.
3. So don’t dread your present times. Remember, this is my day—I was made for it!
4. Esther was in a position similar to those who had hung their harps on the willows in Babylon.
5. She was in a strange land, but she was placed in a unique position to use her influence to change the course of events for many people.
6. Yet she was paralyzed by fear and found herself trapped in a do-nothing panic.
7. Remember last week we spoke about Noah who in the face of fear, moved into action for the purpose of saving his house:
*Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear**, prepared an ark **to the saving of his house**; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*
8. We need to consider what we must do to save our household and be moved, not paralyzed by, fear.

9. But Queen Esther had been in a state of panic and did not want to do anything to address their crisis.
- B. Move courageously against fear
1. That was until she received a message from her elder cousin, Mordecai. Mordecai's immortal words in response to her fear, have rung through the ages ever since as a voice of reason in the face of fear.:
Est 4:14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?
 2. And folks, this is such a time. This is your time. God made you for this day.
 3. Not to hide out in panic, but to take action for the saving of your household.
 4. Don't hide behind that first phrase, that God will just call someone else to do your job.
 5. You need to remember that YOU were called for just such a time because of where you are.
- C. Be the 5th gospel in the field
1. As I was preparing my notes for this message, I was looking at a poster on my office wall of our 2020 theme and thinking of how this could work under these circumstances.
 2. 2020 Vision: The Treasure in the Field.
 3. For the first three months of this year, we have been speaking of ways to take this message out of the church and into the fields to find the treasures God has buried in those fields.
 4. How can we take action on this?
 5. Recently I read a quote from the Irish evangelist, Gypsy Smith, who once said, "There are five Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Christian, and some people will never read the first four." The message is seen before it is heard.
 6. So how does the present situation fit into the 2020 Vision: The Treasure in the Field? Well, since we are stuck in the field, don't stop looking for the treasure there.
 7. We have been talking about getting church outside the doors of the church, and that is all we have right now. Take advantage of being the fifth gospel and represent Jesus and His hope to those you come in contact with.
 8. Parents, maybe you can discover with this extra time, the treasure that your children are. The time investment into them that you have been putting off because of being too busy, is at hand now.
 9. Maybe it feels awkward at first, but talk about their relationship with God. Talk with them about your relationship with God and allow them to ask questions.
 10. Families, take time to pray together. Take time to read the Word together. Take time to focus individually on each other.
 11. I, like most of you, always complain about not having enough time. Well, we have been gifted with time.
 12. Guess what, church? This is our day. We were made for this. We were called to this.
 13. So like Noah, let fear move you to save your household.
 14. Like Esther, your calling to be right where you are right at this moment is to influence your family, your neighbor, a loved one, by giving them Jesus.
 15. There is hope in this day.

16. Make my day. This is the day the Lord hath made. I am cut out for this.
- V. Conclusion
1. Back during a cold snowy day in winter, an advertisement was played that showed a summer scene with green grass, and people in short sleeves outside. I remember thinking, “Boy. I long for that day again.”
 2. Yes we miss what we cannot have. But we don’t stop living in the winter because it is cold outside. We accommodate.
 3. And we don’t stop productive life right now because of a world-wide pandemic. We accommodate.
 4. That message came to me ever so clearly yesterday.
 5. I was taking a bag of trash out to the receptacle and noticed a very loudly singing bird. It was a very pleasant sound and that bird was bold as ever.
 6. The thought occurred to me, “Doesn’t he know what is going on around him?” No, he doesn’t. He’s a bird.
 7. But then the Lord quickened this thought to me. Of course he knows what is going on. Spring is going on, so he is singing his spring song.
 8. Listen, the enemy may want to make this turn into something bad, but the Lord means for it to turn into something good.
 9. Let’s close with a Word and a prayer.
 10. Joshua was facing a new way of living. Moving into the Land of Promise, with many enemies to face in the days, weeks, and years ahead of him.
 11. So God gave him this word of encouragement:
Josh 1:7-9
7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.
8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.
 12. I received emails this week from creditors, my insurance company, and my utility company, all saying, “we are here for you and we won’t cancel your services at this time.”
 13. Well guess what, God just sent you a message. He is here for you. He hasn’t canceled His services either.
 14. Let us gather together in prayer. If you are alone in your home, gather with us in spirit.
 15. If you are in a room with other family members, you can gather in your group and join with us.
 16. This is your day, you were made for this day.
 17. Let us come before the Lord and seek His face.