

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: But I trust in you, Lord;

All: I say, "You are my God."

The wise man built his house upon the rock

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Living God,
a place of refuge and safe travel,
you listen, and create a place for us to be.
To you we commit ourselves,
not just this day, but all days.
All our days are in your hands,
but this day we wait on you:
we wait on your word: your living Word;
we wait on your spirit: your truthful Spirit;
we wait on your life: your Gift.
Fill us with hope as we wait on you this day,
that we might be built up and be strong
and know that we are your holy people.
We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Children's address – Sarah Finegan

1014

These are the days of Elijah

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Psalm 127 (OT page 624)
Reader: Stan Menzies

Background to the reading

There are a few things I would like to emphasise in our text this morning.

Our reading is known as a wisdom Psalm which means that it was written to instruct humanity regarding its relationship with God. In the case of our Psalm it is wise to include God in all human activities and foolish to ignore Him. The Hebrew word for build can also mean to start a family.

In our reading the writer emphasises two things namely that God is in control of all things and secondly that the Lord provides on four levels of life namely: the household, the city, in human labour and the future. Without God's existence, all else fails.

In verses 4-5 the writer stresses that God also determines the future. When this Psalm was written sons were indeed regarded as a blessing of God to ensure their future. The oldest son could take over when the father died and provide in all the needs of the family especially those like the widows and the orphans. In times of war the sons could defend the family. Even in cases of the law and business the sons could stand together and ensure the stability of the family's honour. Sons were like a modern day "life's policy". And the more sons you had, the richer you were.
Amen

MP 32

An army of ordinary people

Sermon

Psalm 127's meaning became as clear as daylight with the birth of Jesus Christ to the world. Indeed - if it was not for God our Father who sent His only Son to die for our sins then we would have still been contaminated by sin. If Jesus Christ was not resurrected, we would have still been condemned to death. If Jesus did not ascend to heaven, we would have still been condemned to hell. And if God did not give us His Holy Spirit, we would have been delivered to all ills of this world. Indeed if it was not for God's mercy and grace, everything would have been in vain.

God built an eternal house in heaven through Jesus Christ.

He commanded all his disciples to go and make fishers of men, showing them the love and hope that is in the coming of God's kingdom. He told them to bring them into the safety of His arms of love. God wants us to do the same. God wants us to show His love everywhere we go. He wants us to tell people of the permanent "house" that awaits all who has faith. He wants us not to be tormented by death's agony. He does not want us to suffer. He wants us to look beyond any and every grave and see Him standing. He wants us to remember what He has done for us. He wants us not see death as an enemy but a way to enter into His house for evermore.

He wants us to build houses of faith that can withstand the storms of this life. He also wants us to help others to build houses of faith. He gave us all the material and tools to do it. He even gave us a plan namely His Word to build from.

We have to build our lives with the help of God. God gave each one of us a skill to build - architects, bricklayers, plasterers, joiners, electricians, labourers, plumbers and interior decorators. We are the instruments in His Almighty hands.

But typical of our nature we question God's building all the time. We like to be in charge. We do not want to be instruments in the hands of God.

We like to rebel saying: Oh this is a terrible life? Why do have to pray? Why did God make me so small, so ugly? Why did He take my son, daughter, wife, husband, partner? Why did he allow all this hurt to happen in my life?

We like to moan saying: I am too tired to pray and read from the Bible. I cannot help the church now because I am too busy or I cannot help because I do not have the means or the talents to help? I cannot help my sister or brother in Christ because I am not able and not trained to do so? I cannot

We like to question saying: Where are the plans? Who is the architect, the engineer and the interior decorator? Is God really in control?

We like to quit even before we started building, saying: To build a house of faith is too costly, unrealistic and not my style. I am just quitting!

Where do we stand as members of His flock on this earth? By ways of speaking, are we willing to stand with broken shoes in wet cement? Are we willing to build in the rain and through storms without a raincoat? Do we use the instruments He gave us?

If we have houses of faith – we will have windows large enough to see the permanent dwelling of God in heaven. Everyday will be a joyous occasion as we look out and see this kingdom that was not built by human hands. If we have houses of faith we will have a strong foundation that is Jesus Christ's salvation. It will give us the surety to go through life holding on to God's presence everywhere we go. But the front door will not have a key. It will remain open, ready if we are called by God's house - to His Kingdom. And this is enough reason for us to help others as well to have houses of faith. God commanded us to love and by this He meant that we help others and He has helped us.

God's house is equipped for everyone. There are enough room for each one of us. No-one is excluded. God invites all of us who has faith in Him to enter His house. For those who has faith, Life is a journey from the cradle to heaven.

Are we willing to sacrifice in life for our faith in Him? Are we willing to walk the extra mile for our faith in Him? Do we have the living hope to let our loved ones go into His house once they close their eyes for the last time? Are we willing to look beyond our blisters, sore hands, scarred feet and sore backs and see what the Lord is achieving through you and me?

We have houses of faith when and if we confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and saviour. We have windows of hope when we hold on to God's merciful hands. We have a foundation namely the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Yes, we have God's Spirit convincing us each and every second to build our lives of faith.

May we not get discouraged when the storms of life wants to rip our houses apart. May we not lose hope when our loved ones die, when we see suffering and struggle all around us. May we encourage each other and lend a helping hand while we build our houses of faith. It is amazing what a few more hands can achieve in a short time.

Amen

Responding to God's word

Our offerings are given for the ministry and mission of the church while we sing **MP 54: "Bind us together"**.

Prayer of thanksgiving: Sarah Finegan

MP 25

All to Jesus I surrender

Benediction Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

Go and build barns of hope and trust.

Go and share the treasures of
understanding and friendship.
Go and receive the blessing of God,
who, as Father, created all,
who, as Son, gave all,
and who, as Holy Spirit, brings life to all.
Go and be kingdom people, today and always.

Sung TREEFOLD Amen