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Sermon 19 July 2020

Psalm Beach 6: Been There, Done That, Got the T-shirt (Psalm 93)

- 1 The Lord is king, he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed, he is girded with strength.
He has established the world; it shall never be moved;
- 2 your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting.
- 3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.
- 4 More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters,
more majestic than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord!
- 5 Your decrees are very sure;
holiness befits your house,
O Lord, forevermore.
- *Audio intro:*
- *Female voice: Your attention please.*
- *Male voice (Mark): We at LargsNaz Travel would like to thank you for joining us on this memorable 6-week excursion. We know that you have a choice when it comes to holiday destinations, and we're grateful that you chose to travel to*

Psalm Beach, the Gateway to the Tehillim, with us. It's been an exciting journey, from those early days of orientation, marking out your territory in the sand-- and who could forget that starry night by the campfire as we looked up into the majesty of the heavens? (Pause) We do apologise for any disorientation or inconvenience caused in Week 3 by Storm Shoshanim, but we trust that the opportunity to join that great congregation who took part in the exciting 40th Anniversary Psalm Beach Festival brought reorientation and restoration to you. If you enjoyed the daytrippers' group that explored the magnificent Psalm Beach Cornerstone last week, be sure to tell your friends to come along with you next year. It seems as though we just started our voyage, but today brings us to our final port-of-call. Take some time to reminisce about all that you've seen and heard, and don't forget to visit the imaginary gift shop for Psalm Beach souvenirs, t-shirts, and face masks. Be sure to follow us at largsnaz.org to learn about upcoming events and outings with LargsNaz Travel, where we say, "Jump in, the water's fine!"

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- Been there, done that, got the t-shirt. Have you ever heard anyone say that? I'm old enough to remember when folks would just say "been there, done that" when they wanted to tell you that they had experienced something that you were talking about. You might say, I was up all night working on that term paper, or I spent all day in a queue at the Department of Motor Vehicles trying to get my address changed, or --I walked 3 miles every day last month and I still gained half a stone (that's 7 pounds for our American listeners) —

and someone listening to you wants to sympathise with you, to let you know they share your experience—and they would say, oh yeah, been there, done that. And at some point—I’m not really sure when it happened, but at some point in the last 20 years or so, maybe, people started adding those words at the end—so they would say, Oh yeah, been there, done that, got the t-shirt. That puts a little extra information, a little extra emphasis on what they’re saying to you—it adds a degree of depth to the experience that they had. And it usually seems weird because most of the time when people say “been there done that, got the t-shirt,” they’re talking about something negative, something they don’t want to do again—like staying up all night working on a paper or standing in a queue at the DMV, or exercising and still not losing weight—something that they’d rather forget—and the whole point of buying a t-shirt is so that you can remember what you did or where you went—you know, you don’t spend two weeks with dysentery during a hurricane in Benidorm and then think, “Boy I want to make sure I get a t-shirt so I can remember how miserable this past fortnight was”—no, you get a t-shirt to remind you of all the fun you had on a GOOD holiday, when the weather was just right, and you had good company, and did exciting things and saw beautiful places—and then when you wear that t-shirt, it reminds you of all those things, and every time you look in the mirror you smile because it brings back those good memories—and anyone who sees you wearing a t-shirt that says on it, Benidorm, or Ibiza or Orlando or Beech Island, South Carolina, or Largs—some exotic destination—then they know something

about you, because you've chosen to communicate something through your choice of attire. And maybe someone who sees you wearing that t-shirt has been to that same place, and they might tell you about it—oh we went there just last summer—beautiful place, I remember we went rock climbing and we bicycled for miles along the beach, and we saw the most beautiful rainbow, and I had never eaten octopus before that, but now I just love it—because your t-shirt, your souvenir, your memento, has brought to their mind all of these things and they want to share them with you. When that happens, your attire has communicated something, something about you, about who you are and what you've done, and it has caused them to think of things they've seen and heard and been through as well. It's funny how clothing can have so much meaning like that.

- Well, the writer of Psalm 93 wants to tell us something about God, about Yahweh, about the Lord, and to do that, he tells us about God's attire, God's clothing, what God is wearing. In verse 1 the Psalmist writes The Lord is king, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed, he is girded with strength.
- Now quite literally what those words tell us is that Yahweh reigns—he is King—he is the monarch, the ruler—and as such he is robed, he is clothed with majesty, he is robed with strength—now the psalmist uses that word for robed or clothed, twice here—it is **labesh**—and it only ever means to wear, to put on, to be clothed—and what God is clothed with here is strength and majesty—another word for majesty here is triumph—the Hebrew is **geuth** (gay-ooth) and like the word for majesty that we learned back in Psalm 8

(that word was **addir**) it refers to being great and big and huge—the word geuth refers to splendor and grandeur—it us used to describe the swelling of the sea—and if you notice here in Psalm 93 just a little bit later, the Psalmist refers to just that—the lifting up of the waters—but higher than the rising waters of the sea is God’s geuth—that majesty with which he is clothed—but it’s not JUST majesty with which he is clothed, it is also strength. He is girded, equipped, surrounded by, enveloped in, strength and might and power.

- And when we look at what God is wearing here in the Psalmist’s description, it is not surprising that we might say, “That reminds me of something. I have seen and I have heard and I have been through some things—I recognise what this clothing is pointing to, it has meaning for me.”
- And so this morning I want us to look back at the last 6 weeks, and remember some of what we’ve seen and heard and been reminded of—sort of like we might do on the last day of a holiday, when no matter what else we’re doing or seeing, we’re bringing to mind other things that have happened—things that we want to put in our scrapbook and return to again and again—things that we want to think about when we wear that t-shirt or look at that souvenir, things that others might think of as well.
- Psalm 93 is only 5 verses long. Only 5 sentences long. That’s not much, is it? But I hope that one of the things we’ve learned during this sermon series is that the Psalms do not speak to us in isolation, they remind us of other Psalms, they speak to us in new ways in new situations. One Psalm leads to another, like memories.

- Because they are prayers, the Psalms function very much like the prayers that we might hear when we're in a prayer meeting, like the one we have on Zoom on Wednesdays—where when you hear a prayer, whether it's your own or someone else's, it may put into your mind something you're thankful for, or a situation you've been delivered from, or a person you're concerned about, or a petition you want to bring, a problem that needs to be solved.
- And so a Psalm of orientation might remind us that even though we're living in a time of disorientation, God is still on the throne, he is still clothed with majesty and strength—or a Psalm of reorientation might remind us how thankful we are for our salvation, for deliverance. One psalm leads us to another, and another, and even into the fullness of the entire story of God's relationship with creation, God's redemptive history, the incarnation and crucifixion and resurrection—from orientation to disorientation to reorientation. From the ancient Psalmist's quill all the way through the ages to our ears this very day by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We began this sermon series by looking at Psalm 16, a Psalm of orientation about the way that God watches out for creation, like a lifeguard on a beach, and in Psalm 16 we found the Psalmist asking God to keep doing just that, to protect their situation, because things were well-oriented--
 - In Psalm 16 the psalmist says, The LORD is my portion and my cup—my PORTION—he is saying that God is his inheritance, it is God who sustains and provides for him—the equivalent of saying God is all I really need

- He goes on--The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places—I have a goodly heritage—
- And he describes the intimacy of his relationship with the Lord, and the way that God provides counsel and direction—God is before him and at his right hand—I SHALL NOT BE MOVED, he says
- Therefore—because of all this, my heart is glad, my soul rejoices and my body also rests secure—
- And the Psalmist in Psalm 16 proclaims that not even death can touch him, but that God will show him the path of life, and in God’s presence there is fullness of joy and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- And here in Psalm 93, we find that kind of orientation as well—God is enough—in fact, in the whole 5 verses of Psalm 93 there is no mention of anyone but God—this is a Psalm about the sufficiency of God, who is clothed in strength and majesty, whose throne is established from of old, who is everlasting--who, the Psalmist tells us in verse 1, has established the world, **it shall never be moved**
- In Psalm 16 the Psalmist told us that because the Lord is at his right hand, HE shall not be moved—because he is connected to the immovable God, he has that same stability, and why was that?
- Because he takes the Lord’s counsel and instruction, which we read about in verse 5 of Psalm 93, where the Psalmist declares that God’s decrees are very sure—like God himself, they are secure and

unshakable—there the Psalmist continues—holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore—holiness.

- In verse 2 of Psalm 16, the Psalmist told us: I say to the Lord, You are my Lord, I have no good apart from you—
- The psalmist then compares the holy ones in the land, in whom he delights, with those who worship other gods, who multiply their sorrows, whose sacrifices he will not participate in and whose names he won't speak.
- The Psalmist in Psalm 16 is reminding us that the God who is spoken of in Psalm 93, even though He is the only one mentioned, even though he is sufficient and unmoved and everlasting—He is a God who calls us to participate, to follow his decrees, to pursue holiness—holiness that can provide that everlasting stability, that perfect peace—no matter what our life's situation may look like, no matter how disoriented it may be, we can say, I shall not be moved—that's the kind of holiness and assurance that allows Paul to say I have learned the secret of living in plenty or in need, I can give thanks in all situations—I shall not be moved
- On our second Sunday of this series we looked at Psalm 8, where we found the Psalmist looking up into the Heavens and asking “what are humans that God is mindful of them? That He would give them a place in the scheme of creation—and more than that, that he would pursue them and bring redemption and salvation and restoration? The Psalmist in Psalm 8 reminded

us of God's majesty, God's GREAT, BIG, HUGE, BROAD, WIDE name—written in BIG LETTERS—all over all of creation

- And the Psalmist in Psalm 8 reminded us of God's elevation above all things, reigning with majesty over all
- And here in Psalm 93 the Psalmist refers to that same majesty—God is clothed in majesty and strength, his throne is everlasting, He has established the world—but look what the Psalmist says in verses 3 and 4:
 - 3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.
 - 4 More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters,
more majestic than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord!
- Here the Psalmist is echoing the image of the God who moves on the surface of the waters at Creation, bringing order from chaos,
- But look at the image that is used—the waters RISE UP, they LIFT up their voice, they LIFT up their roaring
- But more majestic than the high waters—higher up than the waters can rise, majestic ON HIGH is the Lord
- This is about elevation—and the Psalmist is saying, as the Psalmist in Psalm 8 did, that God is above everything, and if he's above everything, then no matter how high the waters may rise, God remains above them—and when the flood waters rise, who are you going to call out to for rescue? The one

- who is more majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, the one who is more majestic than the waves of the sea, the one who is majestic on high.
- And that's exactly what we saw in Psalm 69, that Psalm of Shoshanim, that Psalm of disorientation where the Psalmist cries out to the one who can bring deliverance and says, the flood waters are getting higher, they're up to my neck—I'm in trouble here, Lord save me!
 - The psalms often remind us of the power of rising waters to destroy, but they remind us also of the power of the God to whom we can cry out. And as we have said before, lamentation, complaint, crying out for rescue, these are not evidence of a LACK of faith, they are ACTS of FAITH—because you do not cry out for rescue to one who is powerless to do anything—you cry out to the one who can transform the situation—the psalmist in Psalm 69 cries out “Save me, O God,”—because the Psalmist believes God can do just that.
 - And so when the Psalmist in Psalm 93 reminds us of the rising waters and God's position above them, we hear the echoes of all the instances in the Hebrew tradition when the power and majesty and strength of God was demonstrated over the power of the waters --the **MAYIM**, you'll remember— from that foundational event for the people of God in the Hebrew tradition, the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, when God opens up the sea and the people pass through on dry land but the Egyptians are swallowed up by the water--- back to the story of creation, where God moves upon the surface of the dark deep waters, bringing order from chaos—to the story of Noah where God's

wrath is demonstrated through the sending of floodwaters, and his redemption through His promise to never again send such devastation—

- And you'll remember that we suggested that as Christian readers surely we are reminded that Jesus demonstrates his power and his identity as the Messiah when he calms the storm at sea, he shows his mastery of the forces of chaos when he walks upon the waters, and Peter demonstrates his faith and his lack of it in the same way, when he walks, and sinks, with Jesus
- And so the Psalmist in Psalm 93 reminds us that God stands above the destructive force of the waters

- But notice the way that the waters are described here in Psalm 93

- The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up **their voice**;
the floods lift up **their roaring**.

4 More majestic than **the thunders** of mighty waters,

more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord!

- When we looked at Psalm 40, we heard the Psalmist's song of thanksgiving, the Psalmist's praise to God—the psalmist's testimony. A first-hand account—the psalmist was saying, "let me tell you what happened to me." And what happened to the psalmist in Psalm 40 was that, as the psalmist puts it-- God drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.
- Now you may remember that the word that is translated as "desolate" there in English, the "desolate" pit, that word in Hebrew is **shaon**—and it means

- literally, a big noise, a lot of racket—it’s used to describe the roaring of the sea, and the rumbling of destruction, the uproar of riots and turmoil—it reminded us of the “flood of criticism” that the psalmist spoke of in Psalm 69—the cacophany of harmful words and of mockery and unrest—
- And what characteristic of the rising waters does the Psalmist in Psalm 93 choose to emphasise? The floods have lifted up THEIR VOICE, the floods lift up THEIR ROARING, but God is more majestic than the THUNDERS of the waves
 - And it is this God who is MAJESTIC ON HIGH who reaches down and draws the Psalmist out of the noisy pit and sets him on a rock—from the depths of a pit of noise, bogged down in the mire, to the heights of the cliffs where one can see clearly, and hear clearly—and God opens the psalmist’s ears
 - And you’ll remember that the noise of that pit was important because the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 40: He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God—a song that the psalmist shares with the great congregation, so that many will see and fear and put their trust in God
 - And that’s what Psalm 93 is—a song of praise to the God who is clothed in majesty and strength, who is higher and more majestic than the noisy rising waters, who is from everlasting and whose decrees, his declarations, his testimony, his words, are very sure, in whose house holiness is found forevermore.
 - We might say that God’s majesty and strength and His word and his holiness endure forever.

- Last week we looked at Psalm 118, and we talked about God’s steadfast love, God’s **hesed**, his mercy, his covenant love, his loyalty, his kindness, and we saw that the Psalmist in Psalm 118 proclaims that God’s hesed lasts from beginning to end. It is not temporary, nor is it occasional, nor is it sporadic-- His hesed endures forever. That’s a proclamation that is intrinsically connected to saying that God’s majesty and strength and His word and his holiness endure forever as the psalmist does here in Psalm 93.
- In Psalm 118 we read of a procession, a king, a cornerstone and a sacrifice, and these reminded us that God’s steadfast love endures forever. And we also saw as we looked further into the gospels, that it is that steadfast love, that hesed that endures forever, that we see in action, lived out, in the incarnation and sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus.
- And we realised that in the gospel narrative we were also hearing about a procession, a king, a cornerstone and a sacrifice, as Jesus entered Jerusalem, entered the temple, was reviled by the authorities and put to death, but whose resurrection served to confirm his place as the cornerstone that was rejected by the builders who had forgotten what the temple was supposed to be about—This was what Jesus was saying when he told the parable of the tenants, a parable that Jesus explains by referring to Psalm 118: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”—
- See, the Temple authorities were not producing fruit in the vineyard—in fact, they had allowed the temple to become defiled, to become unholy. And nowhere is that fact more clearly shown than in Jesus’ very first action upon

entering Jerusalem when he forcefully clears the temple courts of the money changers and merchants, saying “My house will be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.”

- “My house will be a house of prayer. My house is a holy place” Jesus says.
- And how does Psalm 93 end? Your decrees are very sure (your hesed endures forever)—and then what? holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.
- And so Psalm 93 ends by pointing us to the conflict between Jesus and the temple authorities, between the earthly temple and heavenly holiness, to a time of disorientation that will culminate in a new reorientation, a fulfillment of the Law and the prophets, God’s hesed, God’s steadfast love that endures forever, worked out in the salvation and deliverance of all creation.
- Psalm 93 is just 5 verses, just 5 sentences. But these 5 verses, like all of the Psalms, like all of Scripture, are intimately connected to a larger narrative, to a story of God’s steadfast love, a story of orientation, disorientation and reorientation, a story of deliverance, of salvation, of hope and assurance. And it’s a story that we can be a part of, each and every one of us.
- I hope that you’ll continue to study the Psalms, I hope you’ll pray the psalms, and I hope that you’ll allow the Holy Spirit to remind you of all that you’ve seen and heard each time you return to them. And the Holy Spirit will show you new meanings as you diligently engage with the written Word, and as you engage with the written Word, I pray that you will more deeply come to know the Living Word, the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

- I hope you'll join us next week for our final Big Faith Sunday—we'll be looking at Mary Magdalene. Look for an announcement this week about that.
- May the Lord bless you this next week, may the Lord give you opportunities to proclaim the good news of the gospel in all that you say and all that you do.
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