

Easter Psalm 118 **Shouts of Victory in the Tents of Those Made Righteous**

**Pastor Deric A. Taylor, Associate Pastor, Village, Bronxville,
Pastoral Asst. to the President, Atlantic District LC-MS**

Psalm 118

A Song of Victory

¹O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever!

²Let Israel say,
'His steadfast love endures for ever.'

¹⁴The Lord is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵There are glad songs of victory in the
tents of the righteous:
'The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;

¹⁶the right hand of the Lord is exalted;
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.'

¹⁷I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Lord.

¹⁸The Lord has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to death.

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²²The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvellous in our eyes.

²⁴This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

As the psalmist says, "His steadfast love endures forever!" Can you think of a better way to come through a Lenten discipline of prayer and fasting, of reflection and repentance? What a way to conclude this season of repentance, when we ask God to open our hearts and minds to see clearly where we have fallen short, erred, and sinned. We have chosen this Lenten season to examine and confess those sins of not only the past year, but the past century! Truly, it was a huge undertaking with a *HEAVY* weight upon us as we reflected on what we have done and have left undone for a hundred years! It's the kind of reflection that can bring us to the end of our spiritual rope! But thanks be to God, that in His wisdom and mercy, He leads us to this victorious psalm, a psalm which reminds us that our journey is not done alone. We are reminded that the Victorious One has walked before us and walks with us, so that we can shout with gladness and joy, "His steadfast love lasts forever!" Yes indeed! Amen!

And what a journey it has been. Not just the forty day period after Transfiguration, but the one hundred year period that we as a district have *Engaged the World with the Gospel of Hope*, and more specifically His corner of the globe we know as the Atlantic District. When we look back to ponder all the great achievements during these past years, we must also come to grips with the

many times we have failed and have fallen short. How easy it would be to just focus on the failures, (which is exactly what the devil would have us do!) God however, having heard our confession, chooses to shower us in His waters of forgiveness as He leads us to the banquet table of his mercy through this marvelous psalm! Thanks be to God, His steadfast love endures forever!

Psalm 118 was also a favorite psalm of the sainted Dr. Martin Luther. He specifically loved it, we are told, because of verse 17; *"I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord."* What a great proclamation! As one who understood the redemptive power of Christ, Luther was compelled to live his life recounting and proclaiming the wonderful deeds of the Lord! This too is our responsibility and joy!

We are called to shout, recount, and live this wonderful message of hope and love. We are empowered to share this message with everyone, for the message is truly about celebrating the victory our Jesus has won for this world on the cross and empty tomb! It's a message that God has called us to share with one another and His world, so that we no longer live in fear and uncertainty, but rejoice in His promise of victory and life everlasting. His message is for us and for the world. May we live it daily as we proclaim, "His steadfast love endures forever!"

To God be the glory, now and forever! Amen!

- Rev. Deric Armon Taylor