

## **FBC Service Sunday May 28 2023 Psalm 90:1-2 God's Anvil - The Hammer Breaker**

*"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."*

Let's begin with a parable today. Once upon a time before there were any cars or modern machines – a time when horses and carriages and wagons were common on the dirt roads – there was a blacksmith shop with a large, heavy, well-worn anvil.

One day a little farm boy, who had never left the farm, came with his father to town for the first time. Everything was new and different. As he walked with his father down the unpaved main street, he heard a loud clang . . . clang . . . clang. He said to his father, "What's that?"

His father said, "Come, I'll show you." He took his son to the door of the blacksmith's shop.

And there the boy saw a huge man, a strong man, lifting a big, heavy hammer with a long handle and a large steel head on it high in the air, as if to chop down a tree, and then crashing it down on a glowing piece of metal on top of the anvil.

He hit the anvil so hard that it made the boy wince with every blow. His father explained to him that this was a blacksmith who made all kinds of metal pieces for wagons and carriages and plows and tools and horseshoes.

**But the little boy was fixed on one thing: the long, heavy hammer and the great metal anvil.** They met each other with such a loud bang and with such a force that he thought surely this anvil could not last long.

The big, strong blacksmith paused for a moment to catch his breath, and saw the boy standing in the doorway. "Aren't you going to break that thing?" the boy asked, pointing at the anvil. But the blacksmith smiled and said, "This anvil is a hundred years old and has worn out many hammers."

Here's the point of the parable. **The Bible is an anvil that has worn out a thousand hammers.** In every generation, new, huge, heavy hammers have been forged against the truth of the Bible. And strong men lift the hammers and pound on the Scriptures.

People with no historical perspective – like little boys who've never been to town – see it and say, "How can the Bible take such a pounding, and not be destroyed?" But others who know their history a little better say, **"This Bible was forged in the furnace of divine truth and has worn out many hammers."**

### **School and the blacksmith and the anvil poem. Wyn's uncle Bill.**

Dr. James Kennedy says, "I once saw a painting of a large anvil. And around the anvil on the floor there lay scattered dozens of broken, shattered, smashed hammers.

And underneath the words from the scriptures: *"The word of our Lord endures forever."*

**God's anvil is an appropriate metaphor for the Word of God,** which has endured the attacks of innumerable skeptics and unbelievers and yet still stands unscathed, in spite of the onslaught of the ages. *"So in all times and in all lands, men's hammers break, God's anvil stands."*

Dr. Kennedy shows how God, in a supernatural way, has sustained His Word down through the centuries against attacks from all classes and ranks of men.

**Broken hammers!** These two words sum up the entire history of men's attacks on the Word of God. Even though the anvil of God's Word has for centuries suffered countless hammer blows from its enemies, yet it still stands!

Inscribed upon those broken hammers are the names of those who wielded them, and thousands of others have employed their persuasive arguments against the Bible, and yet it endures.

The floor of history is littered with the broken hammers of critics, but the anvil is unharmed!

There's a lot of hammers out there today with the sole intent of vanquishing the Bible, but I'm confident we can still hear the sound of hammers breaking as they beat themselves to pieces against the God's Word. **What an anvil God's Word is!**

The opening words of Psalm 90 have felt the breaking of many hammers when the writer takes a leap into timelessness and says, *"from everlasting to everlasting you are God."* Away with such thoughts says the world, as with heavy hammers they try to smash to smithereens God's Word on Creation.

But before us in this majestic passage is the greatness of our God. **What do we see?**

**He's the God of history. He's the God of creation. But beyond all that, He's the God of eternity.** He is beyond and above His creation. He is greater than the universe He produced, and before it existed.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah said, *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever"* (Isaiah 40:8).

And Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."* Matt.24:35

Why is this? **Why has the Bible worn out a thousand hammers?** Why does the Bible survive generation after generation as a living and powerful book in the lives of millions of people?

The answer can be found in two observations:

**One is that God endures from generation to generation.**

**And the other is that the Bible is God's infallible, inerrant Word.**

What a mighty force it is when it's released through the lips of the preacher and received into the heart!

In Psalm 90:1-2 Moses says, *"Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations."*

*Before the mountains were born, or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."*

And in the New Testament, Hebrews 13:8 says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*"

**The reason the Bible has worn out a thousand hammers is because it's the Word of God that has endured from everlasting to everlasting,** and because its central character is Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

A.W. Tozer wrote years ago that of all of the concepts of God, His eternity is perhaps the most difficult for us to grasp, because everything else we know in all the world has had a beginning: we have all been born, everything we know has come into being at some point. **But not God.**

Before the mountains were born, God was.

Before this earth cooled and began to take shape, God was.

Before the universe itself began, God was.

And long after the mountains, the earth, and this universe come to an end, God still will be.

Moses said "*from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*"

When time began, He was God. When time comes to an end, He will still be God - **Unchanging in His nature - Unchanging in His purpose. Eternal!**

This is the God who made us. Who provided redemption for us, and who has called us into an eternal relationship with himself. **How great is our God!**

Here Moses is looking back over the course of human history and declaring that God is great because **He's the God of history.** Moses had seen pharaohs live and die. Perhaps he'd seen the tombs of the pharaohs and noted the many who in the past had been laid to rest.

Despite the passing centuries, there's no change in the relationship of humans to God. He has been the home of people for all generations.

**Moses points out that God is the God of creation.** Here he is looking back across that record and saying that before the mountains were formed, God was. Then before that, he "*brought forth the earth and the world,*" literally "*the earth and the land.*"

God formed the earth first and then later brought out the land from the waters, as the book of Genesis makes clear.

The land emerged from waters that covered the earth. So Moses is gradually moving back in time from the formation of the mountains to the emergence of the land, and finally the creation of the earth itself. **Before all this, God was.**

Then he takes a longer leap into timelessness and says, "*from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*" **Surely here is the greatness of God.**

He's the God of history. He's the God of creation. But beyond all that, He's the God of eternity.

He is beyond and above His creation. He is greater than the universe He produced, and before it existed, He was.

### **From everlasting to everlasting God exists. How great He is!**

When I think that Moses, so many long centuries ago, understood these great facts about Almighty God, I'm inclined to cry with him, "*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.*"

**There are two reasons why I point this out.** One is that I want to build my life on something that lasts. And I think most of you would share this desire.

I don't want to build my life on sand. I don't want to spend my life chasing bubbles that shimmer with beauty and pop as soon as you catch them. I want to build my life on something durable – **something like an anvil that breaks a thousand hammers.**

The other reason why I point out the indestructible toughness of the Bible is to contrast it with the incredibly short shelf-life of the ever-changing remedies and treatments and schemes of hope that pop up in our day.

Schemes of hope that leave out any account of God, and Christ and sin and salvation and repentance and death and heaven and hell. They leave these great realities out of consideration as if they were non-realities or inconsequential.

These treatments and remedies and schemes of hope put themselves forward with great forcefulness. **But how many people notice how short is the life of God-neglecting promises of hope?**

Surely we all want to build our lives on something more durable than some therapeutic fad.

**Make no mistake: How often have the schemes of the world left in their wake vast disillusionment.** No fulfilled life. No fountain of youth. No utopia. No comfort at death. And millions of people left with the question: **is there a more durable hope to build my life on?**

They are like the hymn writer who wrote, "*I tried the broken cisterns Lord but ah the waters failed, e'en as I stooped to drink they fled and mocked me as I wailed.*"

All the things that never change, all the things that last, all the really big things in life and eternity still wait to be addressed: God, Christ, sin, redemption, repentance, faith, forgiveness, death, heaven, hell, eternal life.

**Which brings us back to where we started: there is a rugged, unchanging, solid anvil called the Bible.**

It has outlived all fads and broken a thousand hammers of criticism. It doesn't sweat the small stuff very much; its message deals with the big things that never change from generation to generation.

And what is the message?

The message of the Bible is this. It has to do with four great realities: God, sin, Christ, faith.

### 1. God:

*"In the beginning God . . ."* – the first verse of the Bible: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). There is a personal, infinite, eternal, just, loving, holy God who made this universe and everything in it to reflect His glory – His greatness and beauty and power and wisdom and justice and mercy.

The first great reality is God, who made us to enjoy and display his glory.

### 2. Sin:

But the second great reality that the Bible teaches us about is sin. If the purpose of our existence is to know and enjoy and reflect the glory of God as our highest value, then sin is our failure to do that.

The apostle Paul puts it like this in the greatest letter ever written, *"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

All of us have sinned. There's no exception.

### 3. Christ:

Which brings us to the third great reality of the Scriptures: the central character of history, Jesus Christ. O for a thousand tongues to describe the greatness of our Saviour!

*"He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father"* (John 1:1-3, 14).

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, eternal with the Father from everlasting to everlasting, truly God. And yet, he was made flesh, that is, became human.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45).

This is the centre and heart of Christianity. God sent his own Son to provide a way for men to get their lives right with God. **Quote** – He died that we might be forgiven, he died to make us good etc.

### 4. Faith:

Which leaves one last great Biblical reality to mention. **Faith.** One of the greatest questions ever asked. What must I do to be saved from my sin? The Philippian jailer asked it. Millions since etc.

**The answer of the Bible is: Trust Christ.** *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him [that is, trusts in him] should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

There is no place of greater, deeper more lasting healing, than to be in Christ with sins forgiven and heaven secured, living moment by moment looking back with thankfulness on all that God has done for us, and looking forward at all God promises to do for us because of Christ.

### **POEM: The Anvil of God's Word**

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,

And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;

Looking in, I saw upon the floor

Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

How many anvils have you had," said I,

"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"

"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,

"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,

For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;

Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,

**The anvil is unharmed--the hammers gone.** -Author Unknown

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, as we leave today may we continue to know your presence and power in the lives we lead, and your Word be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path

As we take our worship, praise and prayer from this place and into our homes and communities, may our lives show forth the honour of Your name, and clearly show whose we are and whom we serve

Give us all a servant heart, and a genuine willingness to be Your hands and feet to carry out Your will in this place.

May the beauty of Jesus be seen in all we do in all the time You have given us.

**Amen**