

Family Service

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[0 : 0 0] Now, we're going to pray, but before I pray, I'm just going to mention something that I'm going to pray about. When we pray, there's lots of things we do, and one of the things we do is we give thanks to God, and we could imagine, I'm sure, of a lot of things that we can give thanks to God for when we're praying. But there's one thing I want to mention that I'm going to mention in prayer, and it's to do with a birthday that there's going to be this week.

Now, I wonder if anybody knows what birthday there's going to be this week. It's quite a tricky question. I'll give you a clue. It's not a person. So, I don't know if you've been watching the news, but there's something very special that's having a birthday this week. Well, I'll tell you, okay, this, what shall we call it? It's not a person. This, it's quite tricky to find a word.

Thing. Let's call it a thing. Yeah, let's call it a thing. This thing was born on the 5th of July, 1948. Do you know what it is? It's called the National Health Service. So, that's all the hospitals and all the health centers all over the country, pretty much all of them, nearly all of them. And they're all part of what's called the National Health Service. And I think that's something we should thank God for, because we have lots of people in Bonacord who work in the National Health Service.

We thank God for them, the doctors and the nurses and all other, lots of other kinds of people as well who work in the National Health Service. And I reckon just about all of us have been treated.

Maybe we've been in the hospital, we've gone to the doctor, we've been given medicine, we've had some tests. So, I think that it's something we should be thankful for. And so, that's one of the things I'm going to pray about. So, you can be looking out or listening out for that when I'm praying now.

[1 : 5 8] So, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you that we can come to you, our God, and you are the God who knows us and the God who hears us as we pray. We do thank you for your Son, Jesus. We thank you that He is our wonderful Savior. We thank you that He died on the cross and rose again and is alive today.

And even as we've sung, He's alive at your right hand, interceding for us. And so, when we come and we pray to you, we pray in the name of Jesus. We thank you that you're a God who hears us, a God who answers us when we pray. We come and we ask that you would forgive us for our sins. We disobey you in lots of ways, and we confess that, and we ask that you would forgive us for all the bad things that we have done, all the bad words that we have spoken, all the bad thoughts that we have had. And we do thank you that you're the God who is always ready and able and willing to forgive us. We thank you for the good things that we enjoy from you. We thank you for the families that we form a part of.

We thank you for the friends that we have. We thank you for the church that we belong to. And as we think of the close of the Sunday school year, we thank you especially for those who help in Sunday school, for all the teachers and helpers. And we thank you for all the children who participate. And we pray your blessing on each and every one of them. We do thank you for the way that you provide for many of our needs. We thank you for the way that you provide for our health needs. We do thank you for the National Health Service that we have in our country. We know that we're very privileged to have such a service. We know that in lots of countries of the world, if you're poor, then you can't go to hospital. If you're poor, you can't have an operation. But we thank you that we are able to have these things.

And we thank you for those of our own congregation who work in the National Health Service and indeed others in so many different ways, in all kinds of different jobs, for the doctors and the nurses and the auxiliaries and the ambulance drivers and the cooks and the scientists who invent new medicines that can help people and so many others. We thank you for each and every one of them. We pray that the resources that are needed to provide this service would be available and that those who are unwell would be able to receive good treatment. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the world that we form a part of. And we do recognize that we live in a part of the world where for many of us it's a very safe place to live. We don't need to think about escaping from it because of danger or violence, but we know that that's not true for everybody. And we do pray for families and very especially for the children who are fleeing from wars and famine and danger of one kind or another. We think of families who are separated in the midst of that attempt to find safety across Europe and in the Americas and indeed all over the world. And we do pray that refuge would be provided to those in need of refuge. We acknowledge that as your people, we read in the Bible how we have this great responsibility to look out for the stranger, for the needy, for the weak, and for the disadvantaged. And we pray that that would be our real concern and that that concern would not just be in words that we speak, but in the actions that we take. Be with us as we think about truths concerning Jesus, our wonderful Savior, this morning. And we pray all of these things in His name. Amen.

Right. Well, I want to spend a little bit of time speaking to you guys, and I want to speak a little bit about what we've just been singing. So you sang the song, Sing Hosanna, and then we all joined in and sang it as well. And you did a great job singing it. And one thing about that song is that it's got a really catchy tune. So I'm going to tell you what happened to me. I found out just during the week that that's what you were going to be singing. And I was in touch with Rob, and I was asking him, well, can you tell me what the words are? Because maybe it'd be nice if we all sang it. And so it was in my head. And I just couldn't get it out of my head. I was going around the house yesterday.

[6 : 47] Oh, dear. Like it's good, but like not all the time. But you know, some tunes are like that. They're just very catchy, and they just get stuck in your head, and you just can't get rid of them. So that's what happened to me yesterday. We'll see if it carries on for the rest of the day. I wonder if that does happen to you sometimes. You get a tune in your head. You don't need to tell me what the tune is. But whatever. I'm sure it does. Probably you'll notice it when it happens now, and you've got a tune stuck in your head. So it's good to sing. It's good to enjoy singing. It's good to sing enthusiastically. It's good to enjoy a good tune, even if we're not great singers. Some people are really good singers, and some of us are not so good, but that's okay. It's good to enjoy singing.

But when we sing a hymn or a psalm of praise to God, the most important thing is not the tune. That's important, but it's not the most important thing. The most important thing are the words. We need to sing with understanding. We need to think about the meaning of the words that we're singing. And so I thought it would be quite good for us to just spend a little bit of time thinking about the words that we've sung today. The words of that song sing Hazana. Now, you guys in Sunday school, I think you probably know what they mean already because you've been singing them, and I'm sure it's been explained to you, and you're so clever that you know what they mean already. But for the benefit of everybody else, let's just spend a little bit of time thinking about some of the words of that song. And though the song isn't from the Bible, everything it says are truths that come from the Bible. So I think the very first word that we need to think about is the word Hazana. That's in the very title of the song, isn't it? Sing Hosanna. And that's what we need to think about especially because it's a bit more complicated because it's not even an English word. It's a word from a language called Hebrew, Hosanna. And so the first thing we need to do if we're going to sing that song, really understanding it, is work out, well, what does that word Hosanna mean? Well, the word means save, or if you shout it out or you sing it out, it kind of means save me. So when you sing Hosanna and praising God, you're addressing words to a Savior, to one who can save us. That's what Hosanna means. And in the Bible, in the passage that we read there in Matthew, we found the crowds in

Jerusalem as Jesus was coming into Jerusalem on a donkey. They were singing Hosanna to the Son of David, and they were recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. Now, maybe some of them didn't understand really all that that meant, but the words that they were shouting out, that's what they meant, save or save us. They were acknowledging or speaking to, addressing words to the Savior.

When we sing Hosanna, we are recognizing that we need a Savior, and we're also recognizing that Jesus is our Savior, that God has provided His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. So it's a really important word to be aware of what it means when we sing it. Sing Hosanna. Now, the question that I've got, or the next question I've got, is what kind of Savior is Jesus? And there, we're going to see what the song says. Well, what does it say right at the beginning, the very first line? What a wonderful Savior is Jesus. So we're asking, what kind of Savior is Jesus? Well, there's an answer. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus. Now, wonderful, that's another great word. We've already thought about the word Hosanna from another language. Now, a word in English, wonderful. Now, we all know what wonderful means, don't we? It means really special or amazing or great, something that's wonderful. But the core meaning of this word wonderful is something or somebody who causes wonder or amazement. So when you see this thing or see this person, you're amazed, you're in awe. I guess one way we could put it is, or the way maybe some folk would say, if they see something wonderful, they would go, wow, just wow.

So when we say that Jesus is our wonderful Savior, we're saying that He's a Savior who makes us look at Him and see who He is and all that He's done, and we respond by saying, wow, just wow.

[11 : 33] He's a wonderful Savior. Now, that leads me on to ask another question. What's so wonderful about Jesus? Now, the song says that He's a wonderful Savior, but is He? And what about Him is wonderful?

What makes Jesus a wonderful Savior? I think He is a wonderful Savior, but I want to just think a little bit about why. And again, the song picks up truths from the Bible that give us an answer to that question. What makes Jesus a wonderful Savior? And there are four things that we sing about in the song that help us understand what's so wonderful about Jesus. And the four things are, see if you can remember them, and you can be seeing if I remember to say them all or talk about them all. The first thing that we learn about Jesus that helps us understand why He's so wonderful is who He is.

And then the next thing that we learn is what He's done. And the next thing that we learn is what He's doing, like now. And then the final thing we learn about Jesus that proves that He's wonderful is what He's going to do. So do you think we can, do you think you can remember these? So first of all, who He is, say that, say that with me, who He is, who He is, yeah, who He is, what He's done, what He's done, what He's doing, and what He's going to do, right? All of that's in the song. Wow, you didn't realize there was so much in that song. So first of all, who He is. Well, what do we sing in the chorus? We sing, sing, hosanna, sing, hosanna, sing, hosanna to the King of Kings. So the song is recognizing that Jesus is the King, not just any King, but the King of Kings. And what that means is that because He's the King, He has all power, He has all authority. And when we think about Him as a Savior, well, He has the authority and the power to save us. Whatever big the problem is, whatever mess we're in, however far away we are from God, Jesus is the King of Kings with the power to save, with the power to protect, the power to deliver us. So we think about that and we say, wow, isn't that amazing that Jesus is the King of Kings? That's not all we learn because the next, the very next line in the song says, what a wonderful

Savior is Jesus, what a wonderful friend is He. So that's something we don't normally think of together. We maybe think of somebody being a King and being very important, and that means that they're very far away and we can know about them, but we don't know them because, well, they're just so important. Well, Jesus is the King of Kings, but He's also our friend. And when we trust in Him, He becomes our friend. And so it's an amazing thing to have the King of Kings as our friend.

And that also makes us say, wow, what a wonderful Savior He is, that He can be the King of Kings, all-powerful, the creator of the universe, and yet He can also be your friend. That is wonderful. That is something that really is amazing. So that's one thing we discover that proves to us that Jesus is a wonderful Savior, who He is. But also the second thing we said that the song talks about is what He has done. And we find that in the song as well. First of all, it says that He left all the glory of heaven.

[15 : 01] So He left heaven. He left His home. He left His throne. Remember, He's the King of Kings. He left His throne to come into this world to help us, to rescue us, to save us. That was an amazing thing that Jesus did.

It's a wonderful thing that He did. He was willing to leave heaven, to leave His Father in heaven, and come into this messed up world to save us. And so we say, wow, what a wonderful Savior that He would do that. But He didn't just leave heaven. What else does it say in the next verse? It says, or in this first verse, He came to earth to die on Calvary. So He left heaven, He came into the world, and He came to die.

He came to die in our place. He came to die to take the punishment for our sins. That's what He was willing to do. His love for us was so great that He was willing not only to leave heaven, but to make His way to the cross and die there for sinners like us. And so we think about that, and we say, wow, what a wonderful Savior that He'd be willing to do that. But then there's one other thing that He did that the song talks about. It says that He arose from the grave. So He died. He was buried. He's put into the tomb.

But we know that on the third day, He rose again, and He's alive today. So even today when we're speaking about Him, we're not just saying, oh yeah, this Jesus, He was amazing. He did all these amazing miracles. He lived 2,000 years ago. Wow, what a guy. We're saying, no, He's alive today. He rose from the dead, and He's alive today. And that's another thing that proves us what a wonderful Savior He is. And we say, wow, that is who Jesus is. So who He is, the King of Kings, our friend, and what He's done. He left heaven, He died on the cross, and He rose again. But the song also goes on to talk about what He's doing now. So we read what we sing. It says, at the Father's right hand, interceding. I think maybe of all the words in the song. That's the most tricky one. Interceding. What does that mean? That's a long word. It's not a word we would use very often, I don't think. So what does it mean to say that Jesus is interceding for us? Well, what it really means is that Jesus speaks up for us. He's our Savior. He's our friend.

So when we pray, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, and He's saying, the one who's praying, they're trusting in me. He's my friend. And so God is delighted to hear us because Jesus speaks up for us. God loves us just as much as Jesus does. God the Father and God the Son, they love us with the same love. But Jesus has this special, important role of speaking up for us, or of using this very big and fancy word of interceding for us. So He's interceding for us, but the song also tells us that He's hearing us and heeding us. He will hear and heed our faintest cry. Well, there are two words there. The first one's an easy one. He hears us. So when we pray, He hears us, and He's listening, and He's interested. But then He says, He heeds us. Now that's a bit more of an old-fashioned word.

[18:13] So it's not a long word, but it's quite an old-fashioned word. He hears and heeds our every cry. I wonder what does that mean, to heed? When I was thinking about, well, what does that mean? I'll tell you the thought that went through my mind. And it wasn't a very clever thought, but it's the thought that went through my mind. I thought, maybe that's what people in Glasgow do when they're playing football.

They heed the ball, and they score a goal. But that's not what it's about. To heed is to actually do something about it. So when Jesus hears what we pray to Him, He doesn't just say, oh, that's interesting. He responds. So when we ask Him for something that's going to be good for us, then He responds, and He answers our prayer. It doesn't mean He gives us everything we ask for, but He pays attention to what we say and what we ask, and He responds. He's attentive to us. That's what that means. So that's what He's doing now. Even today when we pray, Jesus has been hearing us, and He is heeding us.

He's responding to us, even this morning as we're gathered to worship. And the final thing I said, I said there were four things that we learned about that proved to us that Jesus is indeed a wonderful Savior. Who He is, He's the King of Kings, and He's our friend. What He's done, He left heaven, He died on the cross, He rose again. What He's doing, like right now, He's interceding for us, He's hearing us, and He heeds us when we pray. And then the final thing we were going to mention is what He's going to do. And that's something that our song also talks about. It says He's coming someday to receive us. So that's talking about Jesus coming back again. Now, we're in the middle of the World Cup, and some of our friends in England are getting very excited about the World Cup because their team has been winning some of their games, and they think maybe they're going to win the World Cup. And some of our friends in England are singing a song that goes, football's coming home.

I'm hearing lots of people singing that on the TV, football's coming home. Well, I don't know if football's coming home, but one thing I do know for sure is that Jesus is coming back. That's what He's going to do. He's going to come back. He promised when He left, when He ascended into heaven, He said, I'm going to come back. And when He comes back, we're going to be with Him, and there's going to be an amazing renewed world, universe, a new heaven and a new earth where there'll be no more pain or sickness or death or tears or sadness. All of these things are going to be removed, and it's going to be an amazing place to live together with other believers and with our Savior. And Jesus has said, that's going to happen. I'm coming back to be with you. And we think about that, and some of that, we don't really even understand. It's so amazing. But even the bits that we do understand, we think, wow, that is wonderful. And so for all of these reasons, and maybe lots of others that I haven't even mentioned or that the song doesn't mention, we can say, and we can sing, what a wonderful Savior is

Jesus. Well, let's just bow our heads and let's pray.