

SERMONS FROM SELECT PSALMS

DAVID'S THEME SONG

PSALM 145

“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.” (vs.1-3)

One of the earliest prayers I learned was “God is great, God is good and we thank Him for this food.” Although Psalm 145 is not a “Prayer Psalm” but a “Praise Psalm,” David says that God is great and God is good. That is the theme of this, the last of David’s Psalms. What a wonderful last poetic will and testament!

This is really David’s crown jewel of praise, his swan song. The title is: “David’s Psalm of Praise” or, as other translations render it, “A Psalm of Praise, of David.” This is a singular title, used only of this one Psalm. This is his last “Hallelujah!” This is the only Psalm which has in its title the Hebrew word “tehillah” which comes from the same root word as “Hallelujah.”

This holy hymn is characterized by praise, not thanksgiving or even prayer. Praise is said to be “The past-time of heaven” and “The employment of eternity.” We will not pray or preach in heaven. We will not need faith or hope in heaven. But we will sing and praise – so let’s practice much while on earth!

Here is a glad Psalm! Many of the songs in the song book of Israel are on the sad side, as though written on a fog-bound day. But here in this Psalm the sun is shining – not a hint of fog! God is on His throne and all is well!

Let us take a helicopter view of this Psalm, hovering momentarily over some of the peaks of praise that occupied David’s attention. I will divide the scenery into three snapshots:

First, David Resolves To Praise The Eternal God;

Second, David Reviews The Basic Attributes of God;

Third, David Recognizes The Beneficence of God.

I. DAVID RESOLVES TO PRAISE THE ETERNAL GOD.

“I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.” (vs.1-2)

David begins by saying, “I will extol you”, “I will bless you”, “I will praise Your name.” He says “I will” three times. His triple resolve indicates the sincerest determination. Carefully note what he says in these opening words:

A. The Terminology David Uses to Express His Praise.

1. *"I will extol."* The Hebrew word for "extol" means "To lift up, to set on high, to promote, to raise, to exalt, to hold up." It means to elevate in our minds and by our attitude and actions, our reverence for God. It is expressing the greatest possible admiration.
2. *"I will bless."* The Hebrew word is "barak." It means, "To kneel in adoration, to salute, to thank." David, as God's king adores Almighty God as his King above all Kings and bows in humble adoration of Him. May we likewise say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." (Psalm 103:1)
3. *"I will praise."* The Hebrew is "halal" and means "To boast, to rave, to celebrate, to commend, to glory in, to sing." Praise originates within but to fully praise there must be outward expression. Why are we not more vocal in our praise of God in private and in public? Why, when we gather to celebrate God, is praise subdued? Is it because we are more self-conscious that we are God-conscious?

In a godless society some seem to be embarrassed to show their true appreciation for the God Who loves and lifted them. However, they are not embarrassed to exude their praise for their favorite sports figure, politician, singer, etc.

Ronald Allen writes, "What, then, is the essence of worship? It is the celebration of God! When we worship God we celebrate Him: We extol Him. We sound His praises, we boast in Him...a worship service is a celebration of God." (*Worship:Rediscovering The Missing Jewel*)

B. The Time-frame David Utilizes to Express His Praise.

David covers all his bases for he says he will praise God:

1. *"forever and ever"* – Twice he uses the words, *"forever and ever."* He says in essence, "I will praise you in the future." That is well and good for we shall certainly occupy ourselves extolling, blessing and praising the One Who bought us and brought us to the Father's House. Praise is the only activity that we are called upon to do now that we will continue doing in eternity. He also says:
2. *"every day I will bless You."* He did not say, "Every time I go to church I will praise you." Praise should be daily. *"The Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments."* (2 Chron 30:21) A day without praise is like a day without sunshine!

C.S. Lewis wrote, "We praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed."

Praise is vital for a healthy soul; praise is valued by God; praise should be visible and vocal *"For praise from the upright is beautiful."* (Ps.33:1) Let us resolve, as did David, to extol, bless and praise God every day and *"forever and ever."*

II. DAVID REVIEWS THE BASIC ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. (vs.3-13)

In this Psalm David articulates some of the attributes that he most appreciates. The noun “attribute” means practically the same thing that the verb “attribute” means. A divine attribute is that perfection attributed to God that sets Him apart from us humans; those peculiarities which mark or define the mode of his existence, or which constitute his character. David speaks of several divine characteristics in this Psalm, the first of which is:

A. *His Greatness.* (vs.3-6)

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.”

One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness.”

The Great God deserves great praise. Our worship should be in proportion to the object of our worship. Spurgeon has said, “Praise may be said to be great when the song contains great matter, when the hearts producing it are intensely fervent, and when large numbers unite in the grand acclaim.” No chorus or hymn is too loud for God’s ears; no orchestra too large, no lyrics too lofty for the lauding of the Lord of Hosts.

His greatness contemplated.

When David says, “*His greatness is unsearchable*” he does not mean to infer that it cannot be searched but that the search cannot be exhausted; God cannot be fully fathomed or completely comprehended. He is so great that the human mind is not capable of contemplating the immensity of the triune God.

His greatness communicated.

David further explains his admiration for God’s greatness in verses 4 through 6 as follows: *“One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness.”*

The Lord’s greatness is revealed in His “*mighty acts*” (v.4) and His “*wondrous works*” (v.5) and “*men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts.*” (v.6) He says, “*I will declare Your greatness.*” (v.6) Isn’t that what all God’s worshippers should do – perpetually proclaim God’s greatness from one generation to another? We proclaim God’s greatness not only by verbally testifying but also by our visibly transformed lifestyle.

I love to sing the great hymn, “How Great Thou Art”:

“O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder
Consider all The works Thy Hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow’r throughout the universe displayed;
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!”

B. His Goodness. (vs.7-9)

“They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

In these verses we see both the *outflow* and the *outreach* of God’s goodness:

The outflow of His goodness.

From God’s goodness flows His “righteousness”; “graciousness”; “compassion”; “mercy” and “tender mercies,” among the many multi-faceted reflections of His goodness.

The outreach of His goodness.

“The Lord is good to all.” The goodness of the Lord reaches to all whether all acknowledge Him as the Source of goodness or not. Jesus said, “He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt.5:45)

Does that mean that all are or will be saved? Does Jesus’ statement mean universal salvation? No! Paul put the matter in clear perspective when he wrote, “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4) The goodness of God is intended to bring men to repent of their badness and receive the salvation that God offers through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The thought of God being so incomprehensibly great might strike fear into our hearts were it not for the revelation of His goodness. Certainly He is the great God, but He is also the God of great goodness: “They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness.” (v.7) He is good in the worst of times, in the best of times and when there is no more time!

C. His Glory. (vs.10-13)

“All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.”

God’s glory is manifested in a variety of ways. David speaks of “Your works”, “Your saints” and “Your kingdom”, all of which declare the glory of God. Principally, in these verses, David sees God’s glory revealed in His kingdom. He speaks of the King’s kingdom four times: “the glory of Your kingdom” (v.11); “the glorious majesty of his kingdom” (v.12); “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.” (v.13) In verses 10 through 13 “kingdom” related words stand out: “kingdom”; “power”; “mighty acts”; “majesty”; “dominion.”

As David speaks about God’s glory reflected in the glorious kingdom of God, he acknowledges two triumphant truths relative to that kingdom. First, The Existence of God’s Kingdom and, second, The Eternality of God’s Kingdom.

The Existence of God's Kingdom.

God is King. The object of David's praise is his King: "*I will extol You, my God, O King.*" (v.1) God, the King, has a kingdom. God rules His kingdom! God's glory is seen in His governance over His kingdom.

The theological term for God's all-pervading governance is called "The Providence of God." That is, Heaven's rule over the earth. The doctrine of Divine Providence, has reference to "that preservation, care and government which God exercises over all things He has created, in order that they may accomplish the ends for which they were created." (ISBE) God manages all things according to the "immutable counsel of His own will" (Westminster Confession of Faith, V, i). God's management of His kingdom is glorious!

The Eternality Of God's Kingdom.

"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." The kingdoms of men rise and fall but, as David said, "Your dominion endures throughout all generations." In the pattern prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew chapter 6 are these words, "Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." (v.13)

As David reviews the basic attributes of God he exclaims about His greatness, goodness and glory. Let us do the same and, as Joseph Addison (1672-1719) wrote:

*"Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
For, oh, eternity's too short
To utter all thy praise!"*

III. DAVID RECOGNIZES THE BENEFICENCE OF GOD. (vs.14-21)

"The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The LORD preserves all who love Him but all the wicked He will destroy."

Write "GRACE" in large letters over these verses for the God Who is great, good and glorious is also the God Who is "gracious in all His works." (v.17) What a beneficent Creator He is to His creatures! David's recognition of God's beneficence is instructive for us.

A. How God Responds To Us With His Blessings.

God did not create us and then leave us to fare for ourselves without His aid. He is present with us - "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth." (v.18) David tells us how God responds to us in our need:

He responds with open arms. "The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down." Are you bowed down with the weight of problems and difficulties? If so, turn to Jesus and He will uphold you when you fall and lift you up when you're overwhelmed for "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut.33:27) to uphold and uplift.

He responds with open hands. “You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” (v.16) David praises Him for His open hand that satisfies the desires of every living thing. This is a wonderful picture, isn’t it? Instead of giving grudgingly or a little at a time, God takes his hand and opens it completely to us. He is the open-handed God! He is always generous, always giving. See Him there on the cross with open hands – a nail driven in each – giving Himself for us! Have you received Him?

He responds with open ears. “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.” (v.18) We see God pictured as a tender Father. His ears are open, He is listening. “His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear.” (Isaiah 59:1)

B. How We Respond To God When We Are Burdened.

There are several actions that David lists that encourage us to take our burdens to the Lord:

We are to look to Him. “The eyes of all look expectantly to You.” (v.15) We are to look to Him for our salvation: “Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:22) Having looked and having been saved, we are to continue to look to Him for all our needs.

We are to fear Him. “He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him.” Holy fear is “reverential awe.” To fear Him is not to cringe before Him but to come before Him as children to their Father whom they respect. We can come into His presence with our cares for “He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

We are to call to Him. “He also will hear their cry and save them.” (v.19) Calling upon the Lord is praying. Sometimes the Lord allows us to be burdened so that we will be pressed to our knees and talk to Him. One man said to me, “I don’t bother God with my problems. He has plenty to do without me troubling Him.” Communicating with our Heavenly Father does not bother or trouble Him. He welcomes our communion and loves for His children to unburden themselves to Him in prayer. Therefore, “Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.”

We are to love Him. “The LORD preserves all who love Him.” (v.20) If we love Him we will call to Him, fear Him and look to Him. Notice that David names two classifications of persons in verse 20 – “The LORD preserves all who love Him but all the wicked He will destroy.” The two groups are those who “love Him” and “the wicked.” He “preserves” those who love Him and “destroys” those who do not love Him.

God preserves those who are saved and will judge those who are not. This is a comfort to those who love the Lord and discomfoting to the wicked. If you are among those who truly love the Lord you can have the confidence that God will watch over you and usher you into His presence when you die. You can be assured of your salvation as 1 John 5:13 states: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

While God watches over believers, He will punish unbelievers who insist on going their own way. That gives me great motivation to tell people about Jesus. If you have never received the gift of forgiveness and salvation, then this verse is a warning to you.

CONCLUSION

David's grand finale' to his Theme-Song is: *"My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever."* (v.21) This final verse repeats the opening words of the Psalm: *"I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever."*

David does not have a monopoly on praise for he longs for every living person to praise God forever. We should cultivate a lifelong lifestyle of praise. If Christians praised God more, the world would doubt Him less.

I read about a Christian conference at which people were given helium-filled balloons and told to release them at some point in the service when they wanted to praise God. All during the service balloons ascended, but when the service was over, a third of the people were still holding on to their balloons! Don't hold back. Let your praise ascend to God regularly!

"I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever."

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