

A Song of Praise

Psalm 145

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Well, good morning. Good morning. Welcome to Christ the King. If we haven't met, my name is Penny, and I'm the senior pastor here, and it's good to be with you. If you are a guest or a visitor, welcome. We're glad that you're here. And this morning, we are starting a new sermon series for the summer in the book of Psalms. So, if you have a Bible, you can turn to Psalm 145. The Psalms are in the Old Testament, and there are 150. So, 145 is near the back of the book of Psalms. If you're having trouble finding it, generally, if you just open your Bible to the middle, you're probably pretty close. It's right around there. But we're in the Psalms this summer for the next few weeks. This is a kind of rhythm that we established a number of years ago that, during the summers, we would take a break from whatever it was that we were preaching through, or we would set up the schedule in such a way that we would finish at the beginning of the summer. And we would spend the summer in looking at a variety of Psalms.

Now, we haven't actually been in this rhythm for the last few summers. The last few summers, we kind of changed our rhythm, changed our pace, and we continued with whatever book we were in at the time. But this summer, we're going to go ahead and spend the next eight or so weeks looking at various Psalms. And if you remember, or as a way of refreshing your memory, the Psalms were the Old Testament people's hymnbook. So these were songs that were written so that the people, as they came together, that they would sing them. Now, not obviously all 150 in a single service, but they would incorporate these into the worship of the people of God. They were the Old Testament hymnbook. And they're written by a whole host of different authors, some David, some by the Sons of Korah, some by other writers, some anonymous. They're written over many years, and they're written in a variety of genres. But the purpose of the Psalms was to incorporate and to inculcate and reorient the people of God around who God is and what he's done through song. Because, friends, song gets in us in a way that simple prose does not, right? That's just a reality, right? The songs that we sing, we hold on to, right? We find ourselves humming tunes.

Maybe y'all don't do this, but I do it, and my family does it, and my kids are always doing it, right? They're singing and they're humming. And it's because music gets in us in a way that words simply do not. And so these songs were a way of inculcating the people of God around God's truths. It would hold, they would hold to them and hold on to them even when they weren't in the worship, the place of worship. So that's what the Psalms are. Now this particular Psalm, Psalm 145, it's a Psalm of David. It tells us that in the title of the Psalm, if your Bibles are open, you can see that before verse one of our Psalm, it says, "a song of praise of David." Now those words that are in small caps, in the Psalms, when they appear, those are not additions by the English translators. Those were part of the Hebrew Bible. So they're part of Scripture. They were verse one in the Hebrew text. So this is a title, it's telling us this is a Psalm of David.

It also tells us it's a song of praise. Now what's unique about this is that this is the only Psalm in the entire Psalter that has this title, a song of praise. That might be surprising to many of us because when we think of the Psalms, we think of them as being about praise, right? Now it doesn't mean that other Psalms aren't Psalms of praise, right? There are plenty that are, but this is the only one with this particular title.

And so it's telling us what this Psalm is about. Also, what's unique about this Psalm is that it's an acrostic. We don't see it in our English translations, but in the Hebrew, it goes through the Hebrew alphabet line by line. So, right, you know what an acrostic is. You take a word, right, like penny, and we create a poem with the word penny, right? P is for pensive, E is for energetic, N is for nice, right? And we keep going. Yeah, you guys can fill in the rest later if you'd like, but that's what an acrostic does. And in the Hebrew Bible, this is what Psalm 145 would be. It starts with Aleph, and then the next line is Bet, and Gimel, and Dalet, and He, and it keeps going through the Hebrew alphabet. It's one of about eight Psalms that are an acrostic. But also, and last, before we actually read the Psalm, this is the last Psalm of David. So, it's the last Psalm that is attributed to David. There are many Psalms attributed to them. Most of them actually are found in the early portion of the Psalms, but this is the last one. And so, as David is nearing the end of his life, as he's writing his swan song, if you will, what does he write about? Well, he writes about praise. So, let's go ahead and read Psalm 145.

“A Song of Praise. Of David.

I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.

One generation shall commend your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.
They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your saints shall bless you!
They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom
and tell of your power,
to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

[The LORD is faithful in all his words
and kind in all his works.]
The LORD upholds all who are falling

and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand;
you satisfy the desire of every living thing.
The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and kind in all his works.
The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
[He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;
he also hears their cry and saves them.
The LORD preserves all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.” (ESV)

Friends, this is the Word of the Lord. Let me pray for us.

Heavenly Father, as we come to your Word, we ask that you would lead us now. That you would open our eyes to the beauties that are found in these words and that you would fill our mouths with praise. Let us behold you in your goodness and mercy. And Father, we ask that you would lead and guide us and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, not too long ago, my family and I, a few of my family members and I, we were out of town for just a couple nights. We were at a particular event and we were staying in a hotel. We were a few hours away, so it didn't make sense to drive back and forth. And our experience at this hotel was completely normal. There was nothing unique about it. It was a very regular, very every day, very normal Hampton Inn. Okay. The room was clean when we arrived. The towels were hung in the bathroom and in the morning there was a perfectly satisfactory breakfast. There was nothing unique, nothing wonderful, nothing bad. In fact, when we got in the car and we drove away, my mind didn't think about that Hampton Inn ever again. I didn't think about it. We didn't talk about it in the car, right? My mind wasn't going to go there until 24 hours later when in my inbox I had an email from Hilton. Hilton, the parent company over at Hampton Inn. And the email asked, how was your stay? Your feedback is important to us. We look forward to hearing about your stay. And I knew exactly what would happen if I clicked on that button, right? I would tell them what I thought. You know, it was perfectly fine. It was satisfactory. The room was clean. There was nothing bad. And then they would ask me, can we post this online? Right? This is what they do. Can we post your thoughts on our website? Can we put them up on a Google review for everyone to be able to read? Right? You've experienced this. Maybe not with a hotel, but you've experienced it with restaurants, with stores, with hotels, with booksellers, right? With home improvement stores, right? They all want to know what was your experience. And can we take your experience and can we make it known to the world? How much you love us. How much you appreciate us. How much you enjoyed the service. Can we put that out there so the world will know we're so used to it that honestly most of the time I just ignore those emails. Every once in a while I get annoyed.

And very, very rarely do I ever actually speak of my experience. Except when my experience truly is praiseworthy. Because when I have that experience, when the food is delicious, and

when the service goes above and beyond my expectations and the experience is memorable, you know, I don't need to be prodded. I don't need to be encouraged to post something on Google or to tell my friends or to express how much I enjoyed it. In fact, I want to tell others about it. Right? I'm going to want to invite people to experience the same joy that I experienced. And so I don't need prodding. I don't need encouragement. I'm just simply going to do it. I'm going to praise the thing that I enjoyed. And that's what we see with David. Right? That's what we see with David in this passage.

He can't help but praise the Lord. From what he has experienced, from all that he has known, he can't help but talk about it. And this is ingrained in our very DNA. C.S. Lewis put it this way. He said that "all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. We delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expressed but completes the enjoyment. It is its appointed consummation." And that is true, isn't it? That when a person has something that tastes delicious, when they go on a wonderful vacation, when they finally discover that amazing song, they can't stop talking about it. And the same is true with the Lord.

Why We Praise

David can't help but praise God. You heard the language he used, right? Extol, bless, praise, greatly to be praised, commend, declare, speak, pour forth, sing, give thanks, tell, speak, make known. These are all words that he uses in this psalm because he can't help but give praise to God. And why? Well, it's because of who God is. Right? Praise for the believer is birthed out of the very character of God. We see this in verses 1 through 7 and 10 through 12. So we have these two sections of verses 1 through 7 and 10 through 12 where we get tons of language about praise and worship and giving God glory. But in between those two sections is verses 8 and 9 where David speaks of God's character. He says, "the Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all and his mercy is over all that he has made." So you see the structure, right? David spends seven verses praising God, then he tells us why he's praising God, and then he praises him some more because of who God is. He can't help but give him praise to give him worship.

Now what's interesting about this description in verses 8 and 9 is that this isn't original to David. This isn't David coming up with God's character. This is actually David quoting God himself. Because way back in Exodus 34, when Moses was on Mount Sinai and he was engaging and interacting with God, we're told that the cloud of the Lord came upon the mountain and God came before Moses and he declared his name to Moses and he said, "the Lord, the Lord, Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." You see, this is who God is. He's the merciful one, the gracious one, the faithful one, the one abounding in love.

That's why David praises him. And these characteristics, these qualities of God, they are evident to all people. That's what we're told in verse 9, "the Lord is good to all." Verse 15, "the eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due season." Now, verse 15 is very reminiscent of Matthew chapter 5. So, Matthew chapter 5, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, he says that God makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. So, what Jesus is saying and what David is telling us in verse 15 is that God looks upon all people and that he is kind in some semblance, in some way to all people, right? Like, it's not just that God's people get sunshine and everyone else who's not part of the people of God walk around with a dark cloud over their head, right? Like, that would be kind of funny, wouldn't it? I mean, it's straight out of a cartoon. That's what cartoons do, right?

That's not what happens, though. And it's not that the farmer who trusts in Jesus, he gets rain and the farmer who despises Jesus, well, he gets drought. No, God sends rain and sun on the good and the wicked, on the just and on the unjust, right? This is what God does.

He demonstrates his character to all people. This is what the Psalm is getting at. That the very air that we breathe, the food that we eat, the clothes that we wear, the sun that shines and the rain that falls comes from the provision of God. It's what theologians call God's calming grace, not his saving grace, his calming grace. Now, what's sad is that many who experience God's kindness and provision never actually acknowledge it. They don't acknowledge that it's his hand, his care, and they withhold the praise that is deserved. But we who know, we who know that everything that we have, every good and perfect gift, it comes from the Lord, that our talents, our abilities, our gifts, those are part of God's care for us. Well, when we know that, we will praise him. You see, God shows his very character to all people so that it would elicit praise, but he doesn't just show this common grace, this little bit of mercy and kindness to all people.

He actually also shows a special grace to his people. So, that's what we see in verses 18 through 20. "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him. He also hears their cry and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy." So, do you hear what David's saying? God's near to his people. He hears our cries. He saves us. And this salvation, it's implied by the very words that are used earlier in the Psalm.

God's mighty actions, his wondrous works, his awesome deeds. When we hear those words, maybe our minds go to the miraculous events of the Old Testament, right, when God brings plague upon Egypt. Or maybe we think about God raising the dead in 2 Kings 4. Or maybe our minds go to the miraculous events in the Gospels and what Jesus does as he walks on water and as he feeds thousands and as he heals the sick. Maybe that's where our minds go, because those are mighty deeds and those are awesome acts. And yet, the greatest act and the most wondrous work and the most awesome deed, it's the salvation God wins for his people on the cross. Because on the cross, Jesus accomplished what no one had before and what no one will since. He has redeemed his people. And in the cross, we see the most awesome of deeds and the most wondrous of works and the greatest of God's acts. Because in the cross, we see the lengths to which God's steadfast love would go to redeem his people. That God would send his son to take sin on himself and to rescue us from the judgment we deserve and to save us. That is the grace of God. That is his character on display.

And friends, that is why we praise him. All people experience some semblance of God's common grace, but only his people experience his saving grace. And friends, that's why our mouths are filled with praise and our hearts are overwhelmed with joy, because he has redeemed us.

How We Praise

a) With Our Mouths

Okay, that's the why we praise, but what about the how? How do we praise? Well, we praise God with our mouths, with our language, right? Did you notice that all the language that's used here about praising, all the words except for meditate, they're all aloud, right? Extol, bless, praise, commend, declare, speak, pour forth, sing, right? None of those things are internal. They're out loud. They're spoken. They're sung. They come out of our mouths.

And this makes sense, right? Because when we experience something good and beautiful and praiseworthy, we talk about it. We don't praise the restaurant in our hearts, right? We don't extol that song in our minds. We do it out loud. We sing. We praise. We tell others, right? I mean, this is why we sing. This is why we sing in worship. This is one of the reasons why we sing in worship. Because when we have experienced the grace of God, our songs are going to express the affection that we feel towards the God who has saved us. And we can't help but praise him, right? Remember before I said song does something different than merely prose. It is wonderful to talk, to speak, to extol, to commend the greatness of God. But there's something about singing it. It's an overflowing of our hearts that we can't contain ourselves. And so we sing. We praise out loud.

b) To the Generations

And we praise to the generations. Do you see that in verse 4? "One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts." You see, the kingdom of God is a multi-generational kingdom. And so we are to tell the generations of the goodness of God and invite both young and old into this place of praise. This is why we invest time and money and effort into our children's ministry and into our youth ministry, right? This is why grandparents were volunteering at VBS just a couple weeks ago, and why adults invest in our high school and middle school students, and why our high school middle school students assist in our children's Sunday school. Because God's kingdom, not just his future kingdom, but his kingdom today is made up of infants and children, teens and young adults, middle-aged and retirees coming together with one voice to praise God.

And so our children are not just the church of the future, but with the rest of us, they're the church of today who sing praise to God. And so it's our responsibility to commend who God is to the generations. And friends, this goes both ways. I think we often think about this, and rightfully so, as adults imparting the goodness of God to our children, and that is true. And have you ever interacted with our children? Like, talk to someone who serves in children's ministry, especially Sunday school, and what you will hear them talk about is not just what they're telling their kids, these kids, but what these kids are telling them, and how these children are commending and extolling the goodness of God to this 60-year-old. Now, of course our kids don't use that language, right? I will extol to you, right? I mean, we don't use that language, let's be honest, right? But that's what they're doing, right? The older generation is hearing of the goodness of God from those who barely speak.

c) To the World

And that is beautiful. And the older generation is imparting to the younger generation the goodness of God. And that too is beautiful, that we are praising God together as the generations. We praise God with our mouths, we praise God to the generations, but finally we praise God to the world. It's what we see in verses 10 through 13. "All your saints shall bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power to make known to the children of men your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures throughout all generations."

So you hear what David's saying, he's saying the saints, which is just another way of describing God's people. Remember that doesn't mean we're perfect, doesn't mean we're without sin, it means we're set apart. We are his people, right? We are the saints of God. The

saints of God will make known to the world the mighty deeds of God. That we will declare it to the children of men. That we will tell others of God's grace and where salvation is found.

Y'all, we have no problem extolling the greatness of a restaurant. We put on Yelp, we post pictures, we tell our friends. If we do that with things that are fading and momentary, why wouldn't we do with things that are eternal? And with things that, as verse 29 says, "satisfies our desires." You see, we who know of the might of God and who know of the grace of Christ, when our hearts are captured by his mercy, we will tell others where that mercy is found. We will tell others that there is a kingdom, not of this world, but one that is ruled by a forever king. And we will be calling others into this same praise, a praise that will last forever and ever. That's what David said with his last words, right? "Let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever."

Y'all, that is an amazing thing to think about because praise of something often starts to wane over time. Like a few years ago, my family and I, we took a trip out west and we explored some of national parks. Well, all the national parks in the southern part of Utah in the Grand Canyon. And for my money, it's Zion every day of the week. Zion. It's amazing. It's beautiful. It's wonderful, glorious. It's got rivers, and it's got ponds, and it's got trees, and mountains, and rock form. It is wonderful. And when I got back, you heard me talk about it, I am sure. And anytime someone goes out west, they're going to hear me talk about it.

But you know, I don't talk about it as much now as I did then. It's still glorious. It's still wonderful. It's still beautiful. I'll still tell you, spend two days at least, not one like we did. But my praise of it, it has waned. But the grace of God, the glory of God, the wondrous acts of God, when our hearts have been captured by that, well, our praise for Him will never wane. It will go on forever and ever. Our words of praise, our words to the generation, our words that we declare to the world, these are words that will pour forth that there is a King who is gracious, and merciful, and kind. A King who is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. A King who gave Himself to preserve and save His people. Jesus is that King that we praise, and His praise, the praise He deserves, endures. Forever. And so friends, let us praise Him now. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we do thank You. Thank You for Your Word, and ask that our mouths would be filled with praise. Praise to You, our God and King, that we would call others into this praise, that we would commend Your works, and Your deeds to the generations, and to the world, inviting others to sing to You, to glorify You, to praise You now and forevermore. And so we ask that You would fill our hearts, and minds, and our mouths with praise. And we pray all this in Christ's name, and God's people said together, Amen.