

Psalm 145

What Goes into Praise?

This psalm is a little different than the psalms that we have completed. This is the only Psalm entitled A Praise of David. This is the last Psalm that David contributed. There is no story narrative, a particular known situation or context that this inspiration can be applied to. This is a man running at *peak performance*. He is full of praise; without a lot of requests. He has a full heart; and he's fully satisfied and in awe of God. This is a mountain-top experience. It symbolizes a man about ready to step into heaven. It's just overwhelming beyond the senses.

The whole book of psalms is a song book for the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for the annual holy feasts. The last five psalms are higher praise. The final leg of the journey is to climb the last hill, and then climb the temple steps. As the journey to the temple is within sight, we have more explosive praise. The differences between the last 5 psalms are differing aspects of praise:

Psalm 146- Praise to God, who helps the weak

Psalm 147- Praise to God who protects the Jews

Psalm 148-Praise to God who creates and sustains the universe, nature and the earth

Psalm 149- Praise God for the Millennial reign

Psalm 150- The musical accompaniment to praise

All scripture is written for our learning. How so, here? This psalm can be used as a *litmus test* for us. How does reading this strike you? Is it *beyond the pale* for your current thought process? Does it seem extreme, or just for special situations? How does your spiritual health compare to this A+ student? If David is like a 12" ruler, does that comparatively-make my level of praise only 2-3"? David fills the psalm with words like: bless, praise, declare, utter, speak, sing, talk, to make you known, and to call upon you.

Jesus on Display

Read Psalm 145:1-3: It may seem out of reach for us; so, let's break it down a little. Perhaps a good place to start is to look at the believer who is hitting these *high notes* in his heart. What kind of situation would we need to praise God like this? This psalm begins by telling us that David will **extol God**. The original Hebrew word for *extol* here is H7311; that literally means to hoist something in the air (like a banner) to make a public presentation. It means to erect something before others to put on display. I can't help but make the connection with the cross.

We think of the cross as a symbol of torture and humiliation and sacrifice. For God it was a *billboard* set up at the main trade route crossings on earth. That includes: The King's Highway, the Via Maris, the Spice Route, The Silk Road, The Way of the Sea, etc...all linking the middle east with the east, and Egypt with the north and the east.



God gave us both visual and audible clues to follow his son.

And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Luke 9:35)

David is **glorifying God** in his own way; by trying to create a *top 40 hit*, all about God. You could title his hit “All the reasons that God is Great”. Perhaps the temple choir and the crowds will think it’s *catchy*. David can talk about what God has done for him personally and supernaturally. David can also go back in time; to remind the people about what God has also done in their national history. He wants God to get credit for all of things have gone unnoticed.

We are also supposed to *glorify God* in our lives. Like everything else; that common phrase meaning gets lost as another phrase in Christian-ease. What does that really mean? The word *glorify* includes the idea to reveal, so that others can see it too. We could say, “Glorify the beautiful sunrise by opening the window blinds”. How does that practically happen in our daily lives? Probably not the way that we think. Probably not the way that we would like either. We actually only glorify God only when we are completely out of the way. In other words, once we fail, people can see that God has rescued us. If the people see me as a *normal* guy who God keeps rescuing, that is a good start. If people see me as special, then it becomes about me. This way God gets the credit when we can’t pull it off on our own.

God has had to mute the special skills of some followers, so that God could be seen in the situation. Paul was a master of the Law, but he had to become nearly blind, rejected by the Jews, and write from prison, with a third-party delivery system. David was a very successful military general who had to be accused of treason and run away. How many psalms were written as David slaughtered the Philistines; and was publicly identified as the King’s son in law? Maybe none. How many psalms were written about David being hunted down and rejected? Most of them.

Paul was stoned virtually to death; but he revived. It is assumed that this is when he talks about someone seeing heaven. That kind of experience could make you feel pretty special. Paul was the best at his craft and training; but he finally realized that God did his best work when Paul failed.

*It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “**My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore most gladly **I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.** (2 Corinthians 12:1-10*

When we ask God to be glorified in our lives, we might be inadvertently asking to stumble, and require assistance. I tend to get a lot more spiritual when things go sideways. The Old Testament is very repetitious about man's failure. Our biggest failure, resulted in God’s greatest advertisement (the cross). It became obvious that good works, under any scenario would never save man.

Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? ”Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, “Look, He is calling for Elijah!” Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.” And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:33-39)

The angels see God in all of his glory; and they shout and sing praises about it. They sing about his power and majesty and perfection. We really just see a redeemer who had to go dumpster diving to salvage us from our confusion and short-sidedness. We sing more about his mercy and grace. In heaven the high notes from the angels, and the low notes of men will be combined to see God more clearly.

What does it mean **to bless God**? The word used here is H1288. It means to kneel down in the deepest adoration and awe. It is to salute with the highest regard. We can be too casual by subjecting God to our conveniences and whims. Some people kneel in church. Some people stand when God’s word is read. These are particulars that vary. More importantly than church, how do we carry on as we walk through society?

But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Matthew 9:13)

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the [c]heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' (Isaiah 58:6-9)

Meanwhile, Back to My Routine

What happens to an *otherwise healthy* saint who is short-changing praise in his normal daily routine? After all, our faith has multiple dimensions, such as bible study, prayer, fellowship with believers, evangelism and ministry work, etc... We emotionally and mentally wither like a disconnected branch. The Word cleanses our thoughts and gives us direction and understanding. Jesus is the summary of God's promises to men. You could say that Jesus is the Word of God. Our manner of living (fruit) or attitude (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self control) actually come from the Holy Spirit. When the bible says that we have to do something *in Spirit and truth* it means according to the bible and by the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit is where we commune with God.** When God abides in us that means he is living in us.

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. (John 15:3-6)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:14)

Here are some telltale signs that we are not people generating much praise.

- Uninspired
- Moody
- Unlikely to seize spiritual opportunities
- Lethargic and
- Bored

We could conclude that God has big shoulders, and does not get his feelings hurt when I fail to recognize all of the good stuff, he is doing for me. It is actually staggering to see that we can make the LORD of the Universe cry when we hurt ourselves. But we actually see that praise is as beneficial for me as anyone. It is easy to march through the scriptures and share my requests with God without taking the time to *savor the current and past blessings*. Romans chapter 1 tells us what happens when we continue to omit thankfulness and praise.

because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, (Romans 1:21)

The first thing that happens in a praise deficiency is that our thoughts become more futile (Greek original word G3154). That means that we become focused on the more foolish things (spiritual junk food). We begin to give more importance to the more shallow pursuits of life. Many things are enjoyable; but they should not become our focus, or dictate our schedule. Perhaps the NBA finals and personal projects and going-out begin to dwarf our quiet time with God. That is OK for a minute. Pray about it, and address it. Work on it. Chip away at it. Perhaps our quiet time is a regimen that we *force* ourselves to do because we just know it's right. We may not look forward to it. We just *soldier on*; with no outburst of happiness.

The second thing that happens if we are not thankful is that our hearts become darkened (G 4654). This means the shades are getting pulled down of our visions of holy things. We just stop seeing the holy realm and we stop sensing the Kingdom of Light. All of a sudden there are no more apparent spiritual opportunities. It just becomes more dormant and absent from our minds. We become like the world. We become more like animals that search for ways to satisfy the quest of the moment.

I like to compare my spiritual health to the warning lights on the dashboard of my car. If I am low on oil it is dangerous. Likewise, if I am not being filled with the Holy Spirit I may not be in pain. I am more likely to feel numb or melancholy. As we become less spiritual we become more carnal. There is no middle ground. In fact, if you are not going forward in your faith you are going backwards. We cannot just tread water. There is no such place/

I have a friend who stopped going to church because all of the songs were repeatedly saying Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. It seemed redundant and *over the top* to him. He was looking for more mental stimulation and variety. His heart was all about his hiking trips, motorcycle off road trips, his man cave entertainments, and getting together with friends. He had knee replacement surgery that went very badly, and had severe complications that went on for over a year. He thought that he might lose his leg. He was a successful workaholic who was completely lost and incapable of doing anything physically. He lost the ability to exercise and even walk for a while. He felt helpless; and unable to enjoy life as it once was. Focused people have identity crises when they are unable to pour themselves into their goals. He had a renewed interest in God and a resurgence of thankfulness for *the simple pleasures of life*. Now my friend is back into the church and a bible study. Sometimes God had to *take the cherry off of the sundae*

because it is too much for us to turn away from. Some of us just cannot successfully fly at certain altitudes. It's too much for us.

We have talked over and over about the importance of rehearsing all of the blessings that God has provided. It is vital for our mental health and outlook and perspective. In that sense, praise is not something that we just give away as an expected courtesy. It opens us to an inflow of healing. The demonic world and our flesh are geared towards *what I can get next*. Without reflection, nothing means anything. Without reflection and praise, our prayers are reduced to a grocery list. Our prayers become an impersonal *Instacart order*.

David is not asking here for anything to *make him happy*. ***He is happy***. He recognizes that God has given him everything already. Can you also say that you really don't need anything?

The old saying in sports is *practice how you play*. That means that nothing should be treated as empty habit or *a dress rehearsal*. Get in the habit of going all out. We are in the early part of our eternal life. When we take our last breath, we will pick up where we left off. Do you want to walk into heaven without anything to say?

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10)

If I feel a little antsy getting stuck in an ongoing anthem of praise, that is because of my tuning. Our fleshly side cannot know or relate to spiritual things. They are just weird....and even scary. That is why my earthy side has to get starved down. Do not feed that beast with worldly stuff. It becomes very evident which side of me is the healthiest (the spirit or the flesh). Praise is something that you cannot manufacture out of self-will on the spot. You have to work your way into it daily, like growing a seedling. Keep watering it; and it will begin to become more natural and vibrant. People have noted that the gospel of John is 21 chapters, because it takes three weeks to start a new habit.

Read Psalm 145:4-13: Do we look at God's wonderful works through the lens of our own experiences, or from what is recorded in the bible? God tells us to share his good works with others. That is another way that he is glorified. Part of praising God is ***to publish*** God's good works. Some key words used here are: praise, declare, meditate, speak, utter, sing, bless, talk, etc..

As long as we do things the way we feel like doing them we are being controlled by the flesh. Doing what we do not want to do requires a different driver inside of us.