

# Psalms 145

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, and it's lovely to see visitors here with us. We're really glad that you could join us. If you're here for the first time, a particularly warm welcome as well.! And welcome to everyone on YouTube, those in the congregation, my fans, and we hope you're going to join us soon.

Psalm 145. I do get it open in front of you, and with our Bibles open before us, let's pray together. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

Heavenly Father, we do thank you that you have revealed yourself in the pages of Scripture. We thank you that your Holy Spirit inspired men of long ago to write your word.

And that same Holy Spirit is with us. And we ask that you would open our eyes, that we would learn something of who you are, and your greatness, and your grace.

That we would bless your name, and we would extol you, our Lord and King. Amen. So the last few weeks, we've been looking at, during the summertime, a series on daily things.

[ 1 : 21 ] How we live day by day. And we've sought to discover that the Christian life is a life that's lived a day at a time. And so as Christians, we need to learn to live in remembrance of yesterday, and in anticipation of tomorrow.

We live today looking both ways. We look back to what has happened in the past, and we anticipate what is to come in the future. And we've seen a number of things. We saw from Psalm 68, that the Lord daily bears us up.

He bears our burdens. We saw wonderfully that the mercies of the Lord, they're new every morning. Every day you get up, there's new mercies from God. We saw last week, the Lord gives us our daily bread.

Everything we have, day by day, is provided for by God. And we've seen that we're to encourage one another daily, to keep on going.

And we're conscious of our dependence on God every day on his grace. And so today, I want us to look at daily worship. Look at Psalm 145, verse 2.

[ 2 : 29 ] Every day I will bless you, the psalmist says. And so daily worship is a response to daily grace. And if we receive God's undeserved kindness, if we deserve mercy from God, we are to respond to that in love and gratitude to him, day after day.

And whenever we talk about worship, we're touching what is at the heart of our humanity. The heart, the very heart of a human being. When we speak about worship, we're approaching the ultimate reality.

Our catechism tells us that man's chief end, the reason why you exist on this planet, is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. That is the ultimate reality. That is why you're breathing this morning. And that lies behind everything. And human beings are worshipping beings. And if we don't worship God, it doesn't mean that we stop worshipping.

We live in a culture which worships all sorts of things. And that is a reflection of what they were meant to do, which is worship God. So a human being, a man or a woman or a boy and a girl, on their knees, before God, is at their noblest.

[ 3 : 47 ] And is at their most human. A non-worshipping soul is shrunken. And we only grow into the fullness of our humanity when we learn to worship God through Jesus Christ.

And so here's this concept in Psalm 145, of daily worship, of continual worship. And that's foreign to many people. So some people will think, oh well, once a week on a Sunday morning for an hour, that's enough.

That's about enough. Maybe on a Sunday. And regular worship, we can just about cope with that. But daily worship, that's too demanding.

It's too rigorous. It's legalistic. It's bordering on fanatical. But look at the Psalm. Look what he says. He says, Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Every day. The Israelites, in the Old Testament, they were commanded to sacrifice for sin in the morning and in the evening to bring a burnt offering.

[ 4 : 52 ] Every day, morning and evening worship. And the prospect of that daily sacrifice was part of the glory of Israel. And so in Daniel 8, when it is going to be suspended, they are horrified.

How can we live if we cannot daily worship the Lord? And you come to the New Testament, the early Christians introduced them were the same. So Luke tells us in Acts chapter 2 that they attended the temple, they broke bread in each other's homes, they partake of food with glad and generous hearts, and they praised God day by day.

And we need to learn to do that every day. Not necessarily in church, but in our homes, until all of our lives are pervaded by worship.

Until work or school becomes worship. An offering of praise to God that our whole being is orientated towards God and lived with a view towards God.

And worship is the very fabric of our lives. So verse 1, I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. And every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

[ 6 : 08 ] Do you notice the repetition? Look at the second half of verse 1 and the second half of verse 2. There's the repetition of his name, isn't it? I will bless your name.

And so the name of God is so vital, isn't it? The name of God is the revelation of who he is and what his character is like.

And we praise God for his name, for who he is. And we praise him as our king. And this psalm is about the kingdom of God.

So glance down to verse 11. 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.

And your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And so do you see those things? His name and his kingdom. Where have you seen that before? Where have you seen that order before?

[ 7 : 09 ] You just prayed it. Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. And so the name of God and the kingdom of God, they are the grand obsessions of the people of God.

That his name would be given the honor that is due to it. And that his kingdom would be recognized and established and extended. Now Psalm 145 is the last of eight acrostic psalms.

That means alphabetical psalms in the Psalter. And that is that, and their verses one after the other in the Hebrew began with the successive letters of the alphabet. So as you look at this psalm, it's deliberately structured with skillful craftsmanship.

And we're not surprised as we look at it in detail that it's not just the way that it's written, but actually the substance of what's written displays craftsmanship. And what I want to say to you is he builds this daily worship on four affirmations, on four great truths about God the King.

And so let me give you four reasons why you and I should put into the pattern of our lives daily worship. Number one, the Lord is great. Verse three, the Lord is great.

[ 8 : 26 ] Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised and his greatness is unsearchable. The greatness of God is seen.

The psalmist goes on in verse four, doesn't he? And he says, one generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. If you look at the end of verse five, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

Let's start at verse six. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds or terrible works. So what are the deeds and the acts in which the greatness of the Lord is displayed?

Well, to begin with, are the acts of creation. Do you remember at the beginning of time that he created this world by his great power and his outstretched arm?

That he made the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon and the stars, and the Bible calls them the work of his fingers. His greatness is seen in creation.

[ 9 : 36 ] Well, you know that. You've seen that. The various places you've been, and you've seen. But his greatness is also seen in the mighty acts of redemption.

Because do you remember the people of God, they are in Egypt, aren't they? They're in captivity. And the strong arm of the Lord reaches into Egypt and brings his people and redeems them out of captivity and out of slavery and takes them through to the promised land.

And from our Christian perspective, as we look back on our history, we see, don't we, the outstretched arm of God that has raised Jesus, our Lord, from the dead. A mighty arm reached into the grave and brought him back to life. And he is raised and he is exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high where he is today. And Paul tells us that he's given the name which is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[10:45] And that is the greatness of God displayed in his mighty works and acts and deeds. The mighty acts of creation and the mighty acts of redemption.

So first one, I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever and 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.

Because I have seen your deeds, because I have experienced them, in the greatness of creation and salvation, I will worship you.

But secondly, the Lord is not only great. Can you see in verse 8, the Lord is gracious. The Lord is gracious and merciful. Verse 3, the Lord is great. Verse 8, the Lord is merciful.

And he's gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast covenant love. The Lord is good to all. And his mercy is over all that he's made.

[11:50] Now you know that verse. We've looked at that verse quite a number of times the last few weeks. It's a quote, isn't it? It's a quote from Exodus 34. In which Yahweh, the Lord, proclaims who he is.

He proclaims his name. And he says, the Lord of the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. It's a quotation of the revelation of the covenant God of Israel.

And so if his greatness has been displayed in creation and then redemption, his graciousness is extended to his people supremely in forgiving their sins.

made possible only by Jesus Christ who identified himself with our sin and guilt and bore in his innocent person the condemnation that you and I deserve.

That is his goodness. That is his compassion to all that he has made. And I think that it means that he has remade those who are his saints, his people.

[13:01] He has taken us to be his own. And they, verse 11, when they realize what God has done, they shall speak of the glory of your kingdom. That we have been brought under the reign of the loving God.

And there is no greater blessing in the kingdom of God than his gracious pardoning and forgiveness of all our sins. And so that is why at the heart of Christian worship is to praise God for his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And to praise Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit for his self-giving love and his great salvation through his death and resurrection.

And so I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. And every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

because you are great and you are gracious and you are abounding in steadfast love and compassion. Thirdly, the Lord is faithful.

[14:05] Can you see that in verse 13? In the middle of verse 13? The phrase is dropped out of the Hebrew and there's a letter missing in this acrostic stem. I mean, it's put back again as the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint.

So back in is gone. The Lord is faithful. The Lord is great. The Lord is gracious. The Lord is faithful in all his words.

Verse 13. 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 and the eyes of all look to you.

You see, after speaking of God's greatness and his mighty acts of creation and redemption, his graciousness in bringing his people to himself and forgiving the sins of Israel and making them his people, the psalmist goes on logically to talk about the faithfulness of God.

Because once God has created, he does not abandon that which he has made. Whether it's the universe that he's made or whether it's what he's made in the new creation, the redeemed community, the church, but what God creates, he never abandons.

[ 15 : 34 ] What God starts, he upholds. The church is what God created and he never abandons it. He is faithful to what he's made and as he created the universe, he sustains it and as he created the church, he upholds it.

And whatever God has made by his power, he sustains by his faithfulness. That's true of both creations, isn't it? Both physically and spiritually.

And the psalmist goes on wonderfully in verse 14 to say, the Lord upholds all who are falling and he raises up all who are bowed down.

And in verse 15, the eyes of all look to you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season.

You open your hand and you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Jesus says, my father, he feeds the birds, he clothes the lilies of the field. And verse 17, the Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

[ 16 : 47 ] He is faithful, faithful, faithful to all that he's made. And so again, we extol God and we praise his name every day because he's a faithful God.

And then fourthly, if you look at verses 18 to 20, we see that the Lord is near. The Lord is near. The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.

And the nearness of God, it was a constant source of wonderment to the Israelites, to the people of Israel, entranced them.

And so do you know that there's a marvelous verse tucked away in Deuteronomy, in Deuteronomy 4 and verse 7, where Moses says to the people of Israel, he says, what great nation is there that has a God so near it as the Lord our God is near to us when we call upon him?

What great nation is there that has a God so near to it as the Lord our God is near to us when we call upon him? And one of the unique things about Israel in the Old Testament was the nearness of God to them.

[ 18 : 12 ] God's people knew that they could never escape him. He had bound himself to them in his steadfast love, in his solemn covenant, they could never escape from his presence.

And so Psalm 139 tells you that if they ascended into heaven, they would find him there. That if they descended into Sheol, the abode of the dead, they would find him there.

If they took the wings of the morning and they travelled to the ends of the earth, the uttermost parts of the sea, even there his hand would guide them and hold them fast.

Because they could not escape from God. it's very different to Baal. Baal was the heathen fertility god that the people in the land of Canaan, they worshipped Baal, they served Baal.

But when Baal's prophets called upon him, Baal was not near to hear them. He was far away. So there's that great contrast, isn't there, in the days of Elijah, when we're told that from morning until noon, they called upon him, those false prophets, and they said, Baal, hear us.

[ 19 : 26 ] But there was no answer. So Elijah mocks them. And he says, perhaps your God, Baal, perhaps he's gone on a journey, perhaps he's far away, perhaps he's busy, perhaps he's preoccupied with this or with that, maybe he's even asleep.

So shout louder, shout louder to waken him. And so from noon to sunset, the prophets of Baal, they shout louder, they gash themselves until the blood flows, and they raved at Baal.

And they called Baal Lord hear us, but there was no voice. Nobody answered. And nobody heeded.

And you see, in our age, isn't it, the gods of this age, the idols that we have put in place of God, how will they help you?

Your job, your work, your dreams that you've put in front of God, even your family, in the day of trouble, how will they help you?

The Lord is near in the day of trouble to all call upon him. think of Allah. Is Allah near?

[ 20 : 46 ] Is that ever a description of Allah? It's never ever a description of him, is it? But the God of the Bible, the God of our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is offered to you this morning, he is near if you will call on him.

Look at verses 18 to 20. the Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him.

He also hears their cry and he saves them and the Lord preserves all who love him. All the wicked he will destroy. If that was true for God's people at this time when this psalm was written, how much more is it true for you and I today?

this side of the cross with the Holy Spirit having been given to us. We live in days don't we in which God has come near in the person of his son Jesus Christ and so you this morning can draw near to

God through the Lord Jesus.

So Paul says in Philippians chapter 4 he says the Lord is near. Where was Paul when he wrote Philippians? He was in prison, he was in custody, he was probably chained to a Roman soldier. [ 22 : 05 ] His freedom has been taken away from him but he says the Lord was near. I hope Psalm 145 verse 18 means a great deal to you because it means a great deal to me.

The Lord is near to all who call upon him. To all who call upon him in truth. The condition is you've got to mean it. The condition is you can't fool God.

You can't play with God. But if you will call upon him in truth and say Lord I need you and Lord I want to know you and I do truly desire that he is near.

we have to know that we often pray on Sundays where in James 4 verse 7 we promise that if you will draw near to God he will draw near to you and the Lord is near and so we have the Lord is great in the works of creation and providence and we have the Lord being gracious in the forgiveness of sins and we have the Lord being faithful to all his promises upholding all that he's made keeping every promise and the Lord is near to those who call upon him and so it's no wonder the psalm ends as it does in verse 21 is it?

he says my mouth my lips will speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

[ 23 : 54 ] Do you see the movement in verse 21? It moves from me and my lips to all flesh that all humanity would know this.

He goes from himself little old me to all the world that all the world might taste and see that all the world might know the greatness and the graciousness and the faithfulness and the nearness of God that they would come to recognize the uniqueness of God and it's the desire of the person who knows this God that it would be known by others isn't it?

Surely he. And so let's conclude. How can we worship God daily? And I don't know about you but I find it very very easy to grow stale.

Day to day life the grind of it it gets old doesn't it? and it gets boring and monotonous and routine is a trial and so we live in a culture that loves the new don't we?

New clothes new restaurants new cars new homes new everybody loves the new and the routine is a trial and we can't abide can we the same old thing every day and so how can it be fresh?

[ 25 : 38 ] Please don't misunderstand me when I speak about daily worship and when Psalm 145 speaks about daily worship you are not being asked and invited to go through a set formula that every day you you kind of like a parrot go through kind of daily worship Jesus forbade vain repetition that is meaningless and mindless repetition of words so how?

and the answer is this our worship can be fresh every day only if God's mercies are new every day and so do you remember the promise of God from Lamentations 3 that God's mercies are new every morning it is fresh grace that you are given and fresh grace begets brings about fresh worship and so that is why meditating on the Bible is indispensable to daily worship I think sometimes we have daily Bible reading plans don't we I would love to be able to do again Robert Murray McShane's daily Bible reading plan where you read four chapters a day what's the problem with that the problem is that when you start off in January you get to the end of January and you've got 32 chapters to catch up on and you read them all in one day speed read but you've not actually understood what you're reading and I think there are times when we need to actually read the Bible in big chunks but more often than not our problem is that we've not meditated on the truths of scripture that we've not internalized them regurgitated them meditated upon them and we need to take our time over scripture the Bible is the only book in the world that has been written by God about God and God is its author and God is its subject and the

Bible that you have on your laps is a self disclosure of God and so if you want to know God you've got to know the scriptures and as we meditate we cry out to the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds that we may grasp with fresh wonder many of the same truths yes but with fresh wonder the greatness and the graciousness and the faithfulness and the nearness of God and then when the Holy Spirit enables our hearts and minds to absorb his mercies afresh he'll put a new song in our hearts that he even prays unto our God and so what is the purpose of if I can call it the quiet time or whatever you want to call it is to fill our minds and our hearts with God and who he is and what he's done and that he is great and he is gracious and he is faithful and he is near

I will extol you my God and King bless your name forever and ever every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and forever let's pray together