

Praise Due to God

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Preacher: Terron Tuckett

[0 : 00] Read Psalm 65 for us. Praise is due to you, O God in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed. O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come.

When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple. By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farther seas, the one who is by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might, who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples, so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs.

You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy. You visit the earth and water it. You greatly enrich it. The river of God is full of water.

You provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

[1 : 29] You crown the year with your bounty. Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. The pastures of the wilderness overflow. The hills gird themselves with joy.

The meadows clothe themselves with flocks. The valleys deck themselves with grain. They shout and sing together for joy. Okay. So as I came to read the psalm, I was a bit vexed as I went to look at it, trying to pick up some sort of unifying theme, or what was the big picture kind of thing as I was looking at it.

And so I just kind of went through to see what was here. And so I have a list of things that are found here in this psalm of a mere 13 verses.

This is not a holistic list. There are things I kind of skipped over, ideas that I put together. But here is the list of things that are found here in these 13 verses.

There's praise due to God. We're to perform vows to God. You learn that God hears prayers. When we sin, God atones for our sin.

[2 : 48] You know, it's blessed are those who are in God's presence. We're encouraged to be satisfied with God's presence. The psalmist declares that God is righteous.

God performs awesome deeds. God is salvation. God is hope to the ends of the earth. God established mountains. God stills the roaring seas.

God stills the waves of the seas. All people marvel at God's power. God controls the arrival of morning. God controls the arrival of dawn.

God waters the earth. God enriches the earth. God provides grain. God waters the earth abundantly. God softens the ground and brings growth. God brings forth bounty from the land.

God brings forth enough bounty to bring in excessive abundance. You see that even the untended lands produce abundantly.

[3 : 49] The hills produce abundantly. The meadows produce flocks abundantly. The valleys produce grain abundantly. And there is a shout and singing for joy.

I thought, that's a lot in 13 verses. And it seems that the psalmist has a bit of a free-flowing thought. And the psalmist is following one idea to the next, to the next, and to the next. And so two things came to mind as I was looking at this psalm.

And one of the things that came to mind as we go to understand it is I felt like it was valuable to take a holistic approach.

And by that I mean to process the psalm as a whole. Not to process the psalm as a collection of verses or a collection of ideas.

[4 : 48] Instead to try to experience the psalm as one entity. Not try to follow verse by verse to piece out where the psalmist is trying to take us in a step-by-step process.

As an analogy to kind of understand this holistic approach, I thought of eating a chocolate chip cookie. And I like chocolate chip cookies.

And it's good. And when I eat a chocolate chip cookie, I just eat the cookie and I experience it. And I say, that's good. And I enjoy it as a cookie. I don't try and pull it apart and enjoy it as a mixture of its elements.

I don't try to pull it apart and enjoy the flour, enjoy the butter, enjoy the chocolate chips, enjoy the baking soda or the sugar and the eggs and the vanilla. I don't try to enjoy the pieces of it.

I enjoy it when it's all put together. And in the same way in the psalm, I thought, it's kind of just one of those things that you enjoy when it's all together. And it's a bit of an experience of what the psalmist heart, as he's coming before God, in this idea of just amazement before God, and this tracking of what God can do and who God is, and how God has control and power over all these things.

[6 : 12] The second idea that came to mind was the use of creation and the discussion of creation as a way of understanding God's power and of understanding God's character.

And through the course of the scriptures, this is constantly brought up as we look upon the created element, that which God has created, and says, look, that creation tells us something about God.

In fact, the Bible very much just begins at that point where God says, look at what I've created. I thought also of the end of the story of Job, where the last four or so chapters of Job have this great declaration of who God is.

And it's done through looking at the world that God has created. So in the same way, this psalmist really reflects upon that idea of looking at the created world and through that being able to discern the might and the power and the amazement of our God.

And one of the things that amazed me as I think of this idea of creation and how the Bible uses that to discuss God is that that's one of those things that whatever time we're in, whatever culture we're in, whether it's 2,000 years ago when Jesus was alive, or maybe 3,000 years ago when this passage was written, or we could probably even look into the future and say 2,000 and 3,000 years from now, people look at creation and they're like, there's a certain awe factor that comes.

[8 : 00] And often I think when we think of creation in this awe factor, we think of going to this great vista and seeing some picturesque scene. But, you know, and while that is certainly a beauty to that, there's beauty in the created element here even in our city as we look and just look into the sky and see that wonderful blue sky.

And I think of even as we have in our age, this age of great advance, which is a little bit funny to me because I think pretty much all ages in a pretty extensive amount of time have thought they were in this age of great intellectual advancement.

But we look at ourselves now in this age of great intellectual advancement, at least by those who came before us, and the great technology that we have.

And of all the effort that goes into that, we still can't predict the weather. As you go to look at this upcoming snowstorm, I thought the prediction is three to six inches.

I'm like, that's a pretty significant variation that we're going on. And, you know, that's kind of a rough prediction. And I thought, huh, with all that we have going, we still can't accurately predict the weather.

[9 : 17] I mean, if we can't accurately predict the weather, I mean, think of how far we are from being able to control the weather. That's one of the things this psalmist even talks about, that's God's ability to control creation.

But with this idea of trying to experience this psalm as a whole, I think it's helpful if we hear it again. And so I'm going to read the psalm for us again.

And it's one of those, if you want to follow along while I'm reading, you certainly can. If you want to just listen and experience it that way. But try, as we come, to put ourselves before God and see this image that is being presented here.

Because what is very much being presented in this psalm is this image of God and of who God is and how God has the ability and the power to control all things. Let me read it for us.

Praise is due to you, O God in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed. O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come.

[10 : 26] When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple. By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness.

O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, the one who by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might, who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the torment of the peoples, so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs.

You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy. You visit the earth and water it. You greatly enrich it.

The river of God is full of water. You provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, setting its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

[11 : 46] You crown the year with your bounty. Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. The pastures of the wilderness overflow. The hills gird themselves with joy.

The meadows clothe themselves with flocks. The valleys deck themselves with grain. They shout and sing together for joy.

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Come on, you McMahan we have a better job.