

Praise Fit for a King

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[0:00] For those of you, as Sean mentioned, I lead Sovereign Grace Music. It's a ministry of Sovereign Grace Churches, our denomination. We seek to produce Christ-exalting songs and training for the church, capital C, from our local churches.

And I've been a part of Sovereign Grace for almost 45 years now. And I'm doing what I do for about 25. And I bring you greetings from our sister church in Louisville, Kentucky.

Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville. Even though we live in another part of the country, a very different part of the country, we share a common aim in life, and that is to make much of Jesus.

His eternal word, His atoning work, and just to worship Him, to see as many people as possible worshipping Him. And we're sharing in that common aim.

And that worship is actually what I want to talk to you about this morning. We're going to be reading from Psalm 145, looking at Psalm 145. So I ask you to turn there in whatever device or book you have.

[1:05] And I asked Sean if I could give a little introduction to the psalm before we read it. Because I want to put it in context. Anyone who's been to my house for dinner knows that my wife Julie is an amazing cook.

She didn't start out as an amazing cook. But she is now an amazing cook. And we always have had a number of people living with us.

After all our children moved out, we've had other people come and live with us. And whenever we sit down at one of Julie's amazing meals, eventually someone will say something like, This tastes so good.

That chicken, it's so moist. I love the sauce you put in this. What spices are in here? Or what every cook wants to hear. Is there enough for seconds? That's the kind of cook she is.

And wouldn't it be odd if at the end of the meal, no one had said anything about her cooking. If we talked about our day, talked about the weather, talked about our plans for the night.

[2:12] But never said anything about how delicious the meal was. That would be odd. It's because we tend to praise the things we enjoy.

If we really like something, it's hard to stay quiet about it. Think of someone who's discovered a new band or seen a new movie or read a new book, found a new author.

They just can't stop talking about it. Why is that? Why do we have to let other people know what we love so much?

Why do we praise what we enjoy? British author C.S. Lewis gives an insightful answer to that question. He says, I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses, but completes the enjoyment.

It is its appointed consummation. It's not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are. The delight is incomplete until it is expressed.

[3 : 24] I'll be married 50 years next August to the most wonderful woman I've ever known. And I never tire of telling her why I love her so much.

Because the greater the delight, the more intense, the more expressive, the more enduring the praise. So what if you found something that surpassed all of the delights?

What if you found something that exceeded all your expectations? That overwhelmed you with its sheer beauty? Humbled you with its grandeur?

And compelled your unrestrained, unending praise? Then you might write Psalm 145. It's an expression of praise so comprehensive and passionate it can take your breath away.

And I hope it does. C.S. Lewis went on to say, The Scotch Catechism says that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But we shall then know that these are the same thing.

[4 : 42] Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify him, God is inviting us to enjoy him.

So in Psalm 145, God is inviting us to enjoy him. How? How do we enjoy God? By giving him praise.

We have 150 psalms in the Bible. And in the first 144, the psalmist explored not only the topic of praising God, but things like opposition, enemies, loss, discouragement, unfulfilled hopes, enemies, devastation, and sin.

I mentioned enemies twice because there's a lot of that. They're songs of confession, songs of doubt, songs of lament. They give us words to say as we wait for God to deliver us.

We don't know what to do. But Psalm 145 is an overflow of praise. It is the only one of David's 73 psalms, and the only one of 150 psalms, that is entitled a psalm of praise.

[5 : 51] I didn't believe that when I first saw it. Some commentator said that. I said, no, no, no. So I looked through all the psalms. It's the only one that's called a psalm of praise.

It's this rushing torrent of celebration and confidence and joy that serves as a hinge between the first 144 psalms and the last five psalms, which are called the hallelujah psalms, because they all begin with hallelujah.

It's as though God is saying, if you trust me, if you know me, this is where your life is headed.

That's good news. Psalm 145 is the song of one who sees God as he really is, and that view is staggering. And what we're going to see is that those who know that God is a king like no other won't rest until he receives praise like no other.

That's what the psalmist is telling us. They know that their enjoyment of God must reach its consummation in specific, engaged, joy-filled, universal praise.

[7 : 08] So we're going to read it, and I'm going to ask you to stand, because this is God's word to us. It's not like I'd ask you to stand for my entire message, because it's me speaking.

Hopefully it's the Lord speaking through me, but this is God's word. Psalm 145, a song of praise of David. And by the way, if you're feeling a little lethargic this morning, I hope by the end of this you are not, because it's coming.

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.

[8 : 32] 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.

[9 : 56] 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.

Father, would you open our ears and our hearts and our eyes to see things about you and about your son by the power of your spirit that we have not seen before to the degree that you want to show them to us now.

May our joy in you be consummated in the praise of our king. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's take our seats. David begins, I will extol you, my God and king.

My God, the king. We're going to look at four ways that David extols God as king in this psalm. And I've titled this message, Praise Fit for a King.

[11 : 15] If you title your messages like I often do, that's the title. Praise Fit for a King. So we're going to look at four ways that God extols, that David extols God as king.

And then we're going to take some time at the end to look at what kind of response is fitting for that kind of king. So two parts. First, David extols God as the great king.

Verses three through six. Psalm opens up with this note of joyful celebration, summed up in Psalm three. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised and his greatness is unsearchable.

It's unsearchable, not in the sense that we shouldn't try to understand it, but in the sense that we'll never, ever reach the end of it. Some people would have us believe that it's humble to say that we really can't know God.

He's too big. He's too mysterious. He's just beyond our comprehension. Well, yes, but God has revealed himself to us in Scripture, the written word of God, and in Jesus Christ, the living word of God, so we can know true things about him, but what the psalmist is saying is we'll never reach the end of how much we know about God.

[12 : 44] It's unsearchable. That's how great he is. Just look at the words David piles up to describe God's great reign.

I will praise you for your mighty acts in verse 4. Verse 5, the glorious splendor of your majesty, your wondrous works, your awesome deeds, your greatness, your abundant goodness, your righteousness.

Why does he take time to use so many words? Why does he just say, Lord is great, greatness is unsearchable. Woo! Woo! Well, because we, well, as a commentator, William Plumer says, unless we have great thoughts of God, our thoughts of sin will be low, our sense of obligation feeble, and our praise is dull.

We won't think our sin is that bad. We won't have a right perspective on why God put us on this earth to begin with. And the worship of God will just feel boring.

You know, I've heard people say sometimes, like, is heaven is like, we're just gonna sing to him? I don't think that's what the new heavens and the new earth is, but that sure shouldn't be your attitude if you know who God is.

[14:01] If you know that when he calls us to praise him, he's calling us to the highest joy we could ever conceive of. So we want to be really clear about how great God is. Even apart from what he does for us, even though we'll see that's crucial as well.

But praise fit for a king begins with how great he is apart from anything he does for us. God was great before he created the universe, and he will be great forever.

So he's the great king, and we exalt him as the great king. Second, David extols God as the good king. Verses 7 through 10. I love this.

Verse 7. 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.

If you know your Bible, you'll know those words in verse 8. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Those are the words that God proclaimed to Moses after Israel had prostituted themselves and worshiped a golden calf in Exodus 32.

[15:17] Those words come from Exodus 34. At that moment, after God had delivered Israel from Egypt, right through the Red Sea, Pharaoh's army lay dead in the Red Sea, never coming out of there, they're delivered, they sing a song of deliverance.

He calls them to Mount Sinai. What do they do? They worship a golden calf. So don't you think it would be appropriate at that moment for God to just say, I'm going to wipe you out.

In fact, he told Moses, he said, you know what, let me do that and we'll just start over. And Moses says, oh no God, these are your people. What would it be if the nation said he brought them out but couldn't deliver them? And God was just showing Moses his heart which was to do just that.

But he doesn't wipe them out. He says, I am merciful. I'm gracious. I'm slow to anger. I'm abounding in steadfast love.

God doesn't want to just be known as the great king. He doesn't want us to know that he's really great and transcendent and out there and amazing and high and lifted up. He wants us to know he's the good and merciful king.

[16:30] And David goes on to expand what that means. Verse 9, the Lord is good to all and his mercy is over all that he has made. You know, in this psalm, it's almost 20 times that David uses the word all or every.

He wants us to get this isn't just about an individual or a fleeting moment. This is all. The Lord is good to all. His mercy is over all that he has made.

Verse 8 speaks of God's goodness to his people but this verse speaks of God's goodness to everyone. He's saying God is so good because we can see his goodness everywhere.

All over the world God's providing sights and sounds that astound and delight and propel us to amazement and wonder. Think of the Grand Canyon.

You think of Mount Everest. You think of the Hawaiian sunsets. You think of just what happens this time every year in Boston to the trees. Do you realize that God didn't have to make the trees become beautiful in autumn?

[17:35] They could have just like been green and just turned brown. But they don't. Why? Because God's so good. See his goodness everywhere. Rivers and oceans teem with creatures that are fascinatingly beautiful and some people think they're good to eat.

I don't personally think that but some people do. Fruits and vegetables and grains grow in abundance. We just took a trip by God's grace and mercy to Italy with five of our children.

It was amazing. The golden fields of wheat, the orchards, the olive groves and grapevines and it's just amazing.

God's given us these amazing tastes and smells and colors and textures to enjoy. He is so good. But you know what shows us the most that he's good?

Is that he doesn't destroy us every time we sin. That's how we know he's good. One of the most overlooked signs, testimonies to God's goodness is his patience.

[18:52] Amazing patience with sinful people. He bears with us. He blesses us. He sustains us and we don't deserve any of it.

It's all his goodness and mercy. In 2009, an Air France plane was flying from Rio de Janeiro to Paris when a thunderstorm caused it to plummet into the Atlantic Ocean.

All 228 passengers and crew were killed. People were incensed. Social media blew up. Where was God? Well, no one noticed when 100,000 flights a day take off with no problem and make it to their destination.

filled with people who ignore, minimize, and despise the God who keeps that plane in the air. That's patience.

That's goodness. And if we continue to ignore, mock, and sin against God, why doesn't that happen to all of us? Because God's good to all and his mercy is over all he has made.

[20:12] So verse 10 is a response. It says, all God's work give thanks to him and his saints bless him. So when God's works give thanks to him, they don't use words.

They just do what they were intended to do. Stars shine, oceans roar, birds sing. That's what they do. They're giving glory to God. They're giving thanks. But the saints, God's people, we have better reasons to praise God, to bless God, to thank him.

We've been redeemed through the blood of the Lamb, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are no longer under judgment. We're objects of his affection. Our hearts have been changed so that we really do love to be with him.

We really do love to know him. And at one time, we only wanted to praise ourselves. Now we want to praise him. That's a miracle. He watches over our every breath, every breath, the breath you just took.

He gave that to you. There's no reason why we shouldn't just die. But God's good. And his saints bless him.

[21:19] There's no one like him. And those who know that God is a king like no other will not rest until he receives praise like no other. Number three.

He's the great king, he's the good king, and he's the powerful king. verses 11 through 13. 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's an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works. God's kingdom is marked by power.

His reign has no term limits. He's not nervous about anyone voting him out or taking over his throne. Think of the great rulers of history. They all have the great attached to them.

Cyrus the great, Alexander the great, Julius Caesar, well, they just called him great, Constantine the great, Charlemagne the great, Catherine the great. Turns out they weren't so great after all.

[22:28] They're all dead. Whether through election, appointment, or death, other people are sitting on their thrones, but they don't even exist anymore at those thrones.

No one else will ever sit on God's throne. God has always ruled. He always will rule. He controls the stars. He controls the atoms.

He rules presidents and peasants. He can move mountains. He can move hearts. There is nothing our God cannot do.

He rules over tsunamis and earthquakes and floods and fires. So those who know him and love him speak of the glory of his kingdom and tell of his power.

He's a powerful king. And after praising God for his rule and his dominion and his kingship and his power, one might expect David to go on and tell us more about that.

[23:35] How great is he? How big? How mighty? How powerful? But to show us how great God really is, David shows us that God has also revealed himself as, number four, the gracious king.

verses 14 through 20. He's the great king, the good king, the powerful king, and he's the gracious king. Grace speaks of undeserved, unmerited favor.

We see it in verse 14. The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. That isn't a promise that no one will ever fall or that no one will ever be bowed down.

It's saying that if someone recovers from a fall or is kept through trials or is raised up from humbling circumstances, the Lord is the one who's done it.

We can't claim credit for that. God is intimately involved in sustaining and restoring everything he's made. The next verse, the eyes of all look to you, verse 15, the eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due season.

[24:54] You open your hand. You satisfy the desire of every living thing. Those verses remind us that everything in creation is absolutely dependent on God for their existence.

As Acts 17, 28 says, in him we live and move and have our being. God is lavish in his generosity, open-handed in his blessings and free in his giving.

It's amazing how we don't see him that way so often. Sean mentioned Julie and I raised six kids by God's grace and even with one kid, I have a fresh appreciation for this as a grandparent.

Even with one kid, life can be overwhelming. The amount of time and energy and effort and sweat and wisdom and money and thought it takes just to provide for one child is just overwhelming sometimes.

And I remember as we had maybe three or four children, just money felt just really tight all the time. And when we'd eat out, we had certain rules.

[26:09] Just water here. Okay, we're splitting the big fry. Okay, no, don't get that. One time we were eating out with Julie's dad and his wife and I leaned over to the kids and said, just get whatever you want.

And my 10-year-old son, Jordan, he looked right at me and said, you're not paying for this, are you? Try not to take that personally.

Governments spend countless hours, organize countless committees, make countless laws to make sure that people are provided for. It's happening right now in our government.

Often with little success. God doesn't labor. He doesn't worry. He doesn't break into sweat, doesn't strive. It's what the psalm says.

He opens his hand. He satisfies the desire of every living thing. That's grace. He goes on to say, the Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

[27:23] Duh. Yeah, we're seeing that. But God shows a unique grace to his people. people. Is God kind to all?

Is he good to all? Yes. That's what the psalmist says. That's what God's word says. But J.I. Packer goes on to explain, God is good to all in some ways and to some in all ways.

He's good to all in some ways and to some in all ways. And the some that he refers to are those who know his steadfast love. Those who know his grace.

Those who know his grace and have received his grace. And these are the promises God makes to his own. And notice how the psalmist starts to put qualifiers on these actions.

Verse 18. The Lord is near to all who call on him. To all who call on him in truth.

[28:24] Not just all who call on him, it's to all who call on him in truth. Those who know him as he really is. God doesn't promise to be near us when we feel like he should be giving us what we want anywhere, anytime.

No, those who call on the Lord in truth are those who really know him through his word, who humble themselves to believe him and trust him and follow him.

And for Christians, to call on the Lord in truth means to call on him by him who is the truth, Jesus Christ. We bring all our requests in the arms of Jesus Christ and he actually carries us there.

Verse 19. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him. He also hears their cry and saves them. Now back in verse 16, we just looked at it, we're told the Lord satisfies the desire of every living thing, but here God fulfills the desire of those who fear him.

Those who fear him are the ones who want God to be glorified. Those who fear him are the ones who want to walk in God's ways. Those who fear him are the ones who want others to know God's forgiveness.

[29:42] They want to see the name of Jesus lifted up. So God hears their cry and he saves them. And he often saves them from their situation but ultimately he saves them from his wrath and from their sins.

That's the kind of saving we want. Not just to be saved out of our current circumstance but to save from his just condemnation. And verse 20 contains one more promise.

The Lord preserves all who love him but all the wicked he will destroy. Did you notice that's the first mention of evil in the psalm?

The first time anything is out of sync. It's as though the psalmist wanted to keep us focused on God himself but finally has to say something about the fact that not everyone believes in this God.

Not everyone loves this God. Not everyone wants to follow this God or even acknowledges the existence of this God. God has enemies.

[30:56] But we don't need to be afraid of him. We don't need to be afraid of him. There's a verse in Psalm 112 that has ministered grace to my soul repeatedly when I am in a situation where I'm fearing what's going to happen.

Fearing what my enemies might do to me. Psalm 112 verse 7 says he is not afraid. Speaking of the man who fears the Lord or woman who fears the Lord, he's not afraid of bad news.

What? His heart is firm trusting in the Lord. His heart is steady. He will not be afraid until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. You know when we're going to look in triumph on our adversaries?

It may be in this life at different times, but you know when it's really going to be? When all the wicked he will destroy. God protects us from our enemies.

He ensures, he will ensure that the kingdom of heaven is made up exclusively of those who love the king, those who treasure the king, those who prize the king, those who want to obey the king.

[32 : 09] In Luke 21, Jesus is talking to the disciples about how they will encounter situations where some of them will be put to death.

And then a verse later he says, but no one will be able to harm a hair of your head. And I'm thinking, Jesus, if they put me to death that sounds like they're harming every hair of my head.

But Jesus knows there is a life that others can't take from us. And that's what he promises. But that promise of protection for us is also a warning.

Those who refuse the mercy and grace of God that we've been talking about will receive exactly what they deserve. And that is the righteous punishment for their sin and rebellion.

They will be destroyed. You can't fight the king and win. But there's always hope. We can turn to Jesus Christ and find refuge in this good, great, powerful, and gracious king.

[33 : 20] Which brings us to the final question. What is the fitting response to this king? God is so great and so good and so powerful and so gracious.

What kind of praise is fit for a king? This one gives you four ways, four characteristics of the way we should respond. First, it's personal. David is the king, but he recognizes an infinitely greater king.

And he starts out, I will extol you, my God and king. He doesn't want to watch everybody else around him praise God for him. This is what he says in the beginning of the psalm.

I will exalt, I will bless, I will praise, I will meditate, I will sing. David is not going to stand in the midst of a crowd and watch other people, as his arms are folded, watch other people praise God and love me.

He says, I'm not going to do that. I can't do that. It's personal. This is what God means to me. This is how God has revealed himself to me. He's not going to be swallowed up in the crowd no matter how big the crowd is.

[34 : 28] It's personal. Second, and this will be obvious, it's passionate. It's passionate praise. Verse two, every day I will bless you.

Every day I will bless you. Not just occasionally or when I feel like it. Every day I will bless you. Certainly on the good days.

But also on the bad days. The hard days. The turbulent days. The confusing days. The painful days. The sad days.

The disappointing days. The discouraging days. The I'm not sure I can go on anymore days. Every day. I will bless you. God.

Because his praise aligns with what is true about God. God is always worthy. So David says, I'm going to always praise you.

[35 : 25] And I'm going to do it with all my heart. Not going to be half hearted. Not going to be lazy. Not going to be quiet. It's every day and it's exuberant. It's just in the Bible guys. Verse seven.

They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant over the top. This is how God calls us to praise him.

Now I know what some of you are thinking. I grew up Presbyterian. I'm an introvert. What would my friends think?

It's just not my style. I'm kind of new here. You just don't know me very well. It wouldn't be cool. Our response to God, our praise of God, praise fit for King, is not determined by our personality or our preferences or our background or our circumstances but by God's greatness.

We just don't see how great he is. David doesn't want to keep his personal and passionate praise to himself. It's not only personal and passionate, it's passed on.

[36 : 43] It's a third characteristic of a fitting response. One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. David's describing the godly desire to pass on what is true and praiseworthy about God to future generations.

Our children, as we were just hearing about. Our grandchildren, our great grandchildren. And notice we're not just passing on our practices or our preferences or our traditions as time proven as they may be.

We're pressing on praise for God's works so that every generation might have an understanding that God is always great, always good, always powerful, always gracious, not just to you all, but to us.

That's who he is. And those who know God is a king like no other will not rest until he receives praise like no other from every generation.

Every generation. Finally, our response is eternal. David begins and ends the psalm with eternity in view. It starts off, I will extol you, my God and king, and bless your name forever and ever.

[37 : 58] That's what I'm going to do. Look how he ends. My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever. God's praise can't be contained to a meeting or a calendar year or a century or time itself.

We will never, ever reach the end of it. No one in the new heavens and the new earth is going to look at their watch and say, aren't we about done yet?

Isn't that, like haven't we covered everything? They won't be able to do that because we'll see him as he really is.

So at the end, David prays, let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever. And we know that prayer will be answered because God has pulled back the curtain of heaven and showed us what's happening and what will always be happening.

Jesus Christ has opened the scroll as we sang about earlier. He's ensured that through his redeeming work, God will have a people who will bless his name forever and ever.

[39 : 18] Revelation 5, 13 and 14, I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

And for those of us here who have experienced God's life transforming grace through Christ, we sit here confident that we will be among that multitude.

But it's here we realize this is a psalm that none of us in integrity could really pray by ourselves. do I bless God's name every day?

Do you? Do we consistently meditate on his wondrous works? Do our mouths consistently speak the praise of the Lord at every moment? Do we always come to God with praise that is personal and passionate?

I mean, I don't know you, but I'm pretty sure the answer is no. But there's one who did. praise. I don't know because praise fit for a king must be given by the king himself.

[40 : 40] We may never praise the king as we ought, but we have a king who has done that for us. And we can be assured that he is working those desires in us.

God gave us this psalm to raise us above our circumstances, above the temptations we're fighting, the trials we're facing, the suffering we may be enduring, to see our great God as ruling over all things and graciously working all things for our good in Christ.

And so we respond in ways that defy our circumstances and astound and confound the people around us who don't know God. that's what he's called us to, brothers and sisters.

Praise fit for a king because God is a king like no other. And with all the joys he gives us in this life, we know that our greatest joy lies in the future when we join our voices with those around the throne.

But we don't want to wait until that day because God is great and good and God is powerful and gracious and we will bless his name every day all to the praise of his glorious grace.

[42 : 04] Father, we thank you that your grace has come to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you that you have given us a reason to praise you. You've given us countless reasons to praise you.

for our good and and it's for our good and our joy and our health and our benefit. It's all for your glory. We thank you that Jesus has done this for us.

It's in his name we pray. Amen.