

## A Psalm of Thanksgiving

### Psalm 145:1-21

A family was hosting a large gathering for Thanksgiving dinner with all the traditional fixings. A friend of the hostess had come over early to help with preparing the meal. It came time to stuff the turkey with the stuffing mix and the two set about feverishly to get the bird packed with the breaded mixture. With the turkey stuffed they set about putting it in the oven when the friend noticed that a band aid she had on her finger earlier was missing. Horrified they wondered what they should do. They could leave it and just tell who ever got the band aid that there would be a special prize at the end of the meal or they could unpack the turkey and look for the missing finger dressing inside the bird dressing. They decided that it would be the prudent thing to remove the dressing and sift through to find the bandage. After several minutes of searching they were dismayed not to find what they were looking for. So they re-stuffed the turkey and went to put it in the oven. There stuck to the counter under the roaster was the missing bandage.

Another couple related how they were celebrating their first thanksgiving turkey by opening up a bottle of champagne for the occasion. As the wife was lifting it to put in the oven the husband popped the cork on the bottle only to have the cork fly up breaking the overhead light that sprayed shards of glass all over the turkey.

Maybe you have your own stories and would be willing to share them sometime. Regardless of how your thanksgiving turned out, we have a lot to be thankful for.

Take your Bibles and turn with me to the Old Testament Book of **Psalms** and **chapter 145**. This particular Psalm has been titled *David's Psalm of Praise*. It's uncertain what occasion prompted David to write this Psalm, but suffice it to say that

we could cite any number of reasons why David gave thanks to God.  
There are those many occasions he was delivered from Saul;  
His defeat over Goliath;  
God's promise to establish his kingdom forever;  
God's protection from other enemies;  
He had a lot to be thankful and he sums up a life time of memories and blessings compiling them into one Psalm of praise.

You can't tell from our English translation, but the Psalm is laid out in such a way that each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet as an acrostic. Now if you know anything about the Hebrew alphabet you know that there are 22 letters. Scanning to the end of the chapter you can quickly discover that there are only 21 verses. So you immediately begin to question the discrepancy. The missing letter is their letter 'n'. Some scholars have suggested that one letter is missing because as a Psalm of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, our praise should never be complete, it should and will continue.

Our English word praise comes from the Latin word *pretium* which means worth or price. As such it has come to mean in our language simply an expression of approval, esteem. Originally it meant to set a price on something. Later it developed into admiration of or lauding the glory of someone else. In the case of this Psalm it is giving God glory or praise for both who He is and what He has done. It's recognizing His worth.

**So, what are you thankful for today? Could you compile a list of say 50 or 100 things for which you are thankful? What would be on your list?**

Family

Warm home out of the elements

With having no heat in the study for a week, I'm thankful for heat.

Good food

Church

Bible  
 God's Son  
 Salvation  
 Dependable car  
 Free country  
 Good health  
 Church family  
 Hands to write  
 Eyes to see  
 Ears to hear  
 Tongue to taste  
 Nose to smell  
 Phone to keep in touch with extended family  
 Technology  
 Your support  
 Books  
 Hobbies  
 Laughter  
 Peace  
 Traveling mercies to and from the office  
 Godly parents

Our list can go on as should our praise to God.  
 Would our list include the toothache, or the delayed traffic, or the annoying neighbor or the sleepless night or any other inconvenient or unwelcome event?

As we go through this passage I would like for us to notice a number of things about praise. The first is that praise is to be personal.

## I. PRAISE IS TO BE PERSONAL – v. 1

Personal from the standpoint that it's God's blessings to me, His child.  
 Personal from the standpoint of the relationship I have with God.

Notice what the Psalmist says in **verse 1**.  
 I get weary of listening to athletes and actors or CEO's brag up their game or their business, how they have worked hard to get where they're at, never once giving credit where credit should go.

It's rare to hear someone say that their success and skills came from God. I hope you will notice in this Psalm that there is no shred of evidence in David's tone that he takes any credit for the blessings in life. He is not like King Nebuchadnezzar who boasts about the great kingdom he has built. He begins right away by acknowledging the rightful place and person of praise and makes it personal.

The author has been pondering for some time all of God's blessings, he'll name some of them in the verses that follow, and in his musings over God's blessings he shouts out praise to God. He acknowledges that God is the benevolent benefactor from where all these blessings originate and he makes his praise personal. He can't help but speak praise to God and about God.

Would it help if we took the time to write them down? That might be a good habit to start. I know I don't, but I should. Call it your tickler file. When there seems to be a lapse in memory as to God's blessings or provisions or when you seem to think that God is absent dig out the tickler file and let it be a reminder of the times in the past when God provided something for you. And don't just list the big things like helping you through some surgery or a miracle of healing. List the everyday things like the aroma of a flower or the call from a friend or something that made you laugh.

When you wake up, praise him for the sunrise.  
 When you go to bed, thank him for the sunset.  
 Thank Him for the seasons. Thank Him for the promise that no season will be missed until His Son returns.

Thank Him for your school and your teachers.  
 Thank Him that you have a school to go to when there are others in the world who don't have that luxury.

Thank Him for your job when so many are unemployed or if unemployed thank Him for the benefits you receive.

I suggest to you this morning that a lack of gratitude stems from an entitlement mentality in which we

expect even demand certain things from God. As we learned last week from Job, everything we have comes from God. Give Him praise for the things He has given to you or the things He has done for you. He is a personal God and therefore our praise should be personal.

I think this also means that we share our praise of God with others. You're already going to share many of those things with your family or friends anyways, so why not go ahead and couch it in praise to God?

Hey Mom, I got a great score on my English test. Isn't God good?

Hey Dad, I just accepted into Harvard Medical School, praise the Lord.

Hey Honey, I just got that job I had interviewed for, God did that.

When the doctor gives you a clean bill of health after a surgical procedure tell him God did that.

[Tim Tebow may not be one of football's finest quarterbacks but he makes no qualms about where his success comes from. He unapologetically gives God praise for everything and he does so publicly. He doesn't care about what other people say about him or his faith. He doesn't do it for show or to get attention. He gives credit and praise where due – to God.](#)

Let others know that it was God. He deserves our praise.

Notice that is where the praise and thanksgiving of the psalmist is directed. It is God and not just any God, it is MY God. There is an intimate relationship with God for which the Psalmist recognizes who has blessed him. God isn't just some nebulous deity out in the cosmos who is unconcerned about us. He has revealed Himself and David has a personal relationship with Him. It's like he's saying that he and God are on a first name basis with each other. In praise David is expressing a personal affection for Him for all that God has done.

### **I Love You, Lord (Hymn #78)**

I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice  
To worship You, O my soul rejoice!  
Take joy, my King, in what you hear:  
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.

#1292471

God loves to hear songs of praise from those who have a personal relationship with Him. David acknowledges who this deity is that He praises. He is God. In the word he uses to identify God he acknowledges that God as supreme. There isn't anyone else who is over God. In this case David is stating that God is all powerful. In this name for God he knows that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe, that everything exists and is held together by Him. Just because of who He is, God deserves our praise.

Then he says that He is King, meaning that God is not only supreme, that there is no one that is as powerful but that he is also sovereign. He is not only the creator; He is the king, the ruler. As ruler He blesses His people with good things, gives what they need. Because of His sovereignty as King He is worthy of our praise.

In this term David speaks of his willingness to obey the laws of this King. As a king himself, David understood what it was like to have responsibility for the care of others. He knew that God was THE King of the universe. His was a sovereign and righteous rule.

His praise is personal to a personal God and for that David wanted to express his praise.

### **II. PRAISE IS TO BE PERSEVERING – v. 1-2**

I think you would agree that there are some days when praise is easy and it just rolls off the tongue. Those are the days when everything is going well. **Can I get a witness?** But then there are some days when saying anything that is praise worthy is as difficult as learning a foreign language. There

seems to be nothing for which from a human perspective we can give praise. We looked at some of those in the life of Job last week. He lost everything he had and yet he had the ability from a personal and intimate relationship with God to stop in the moment of his anguish and worship God, give Him praise.

But notice what David says again. **I will praise you, how long?** I will praise you forever. Say that with me: **I will praise you forever.** That means there is no stopping. David will offer every form of praise possible to hopefully get across his adoration of God and His blessings.

The Psalmist is stating that for what God has done and is doing or what He will, he would always, for ever and ever give praise. But for ever and ever seems like such an undefined amount of time. Because we really don't know how long forever is he adds a clarification that puts into something we can understand. David restates it this way: **“every day I will praise you.”**

How long? Forever.

When? Today and all day long.

I don't know about tomorrow or the next day or even next year but I do know today. Implied in those two words is this: not a day is going to go by for which I won't give you praise. Or to translate: it doesn't matter what kind of day I'm having, God will get praise. Why? We'll see why in a moment. Before we go there turn to **Revelation 4:8-11.** Night and day we are to have an attitude of praise, giving a word of thanksgiving to our God and King.

Now Paul writes it in a little different way but it means the same thing.

**I Thessalonians 5:18 “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you.”**

Similar to what David writes Paul is telling us that in every day and in every life event in each day give God thanks. That's easier said than done isn't it?

**Do we know and believe that what happens to us in a day is God's will? Did we stop to give Him thanks or do we complain about it? Did we stop to give Him thanks or did we expect it?**

Robyn had plans for Friday. Those plans did not include going in to work, but because of an unforeseen circumstance she had to get up at 3a.m. in order to be there by 4. Her change in plans changed my plans. **Did we give God thanks for those changes?**

**We can talk a good game and give rhetoric to the fact of praising God in all things each and every day but when the rubber meets the road of reality are we as thankful as we say we are or should be?**

In a cartoon this week a family had gathered around the thanksgiving table with hands folded getting ready to pray when the little girl asked a probing question “why aren't we this thankful every day?”

When you drive in to work this week, before you turn off your motor, praise God that you got there safe, praise God that you have a job, praise God for the lunch you pick up off the seat. If you were delayed getting there because of some accident on the freeway, praise God that it wasn't you.

When you get to school kids, find something to praise God for.

Praise Him for the breath you just took or the heart that still beats or your voice to speak.

An elderly Christian man who was an exceptional singer who learned that he had cancer of the tongue. Surgery was required and when the day arrived the man asked the doctor once again if he was sure that the operation would take away the ability to sing again. Finding it difficult to answer the doctor simply shook his head.

Asking to sit up the patient remarked that he had many wonderful memories singing to God and asked just this one last time before the operation if

he could sing. Softly he sang this hymn of Isaac Watts "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,/ And when my voice is lost in death,/ Praise shall employ my nobler power;/ My days of praise shall ne'er be past,/ While life, and thought, and being last,/ Or immortality endures."

Even in his darkest moment at a time when he would lose his ability to audibly sing praise to God, the last words heard from him were of praise. We can be so quick to complain, but oh, so slow to praise when things don't go the way we would like. We lose an account – we complain. We get a flat tire – we complain. We have someone belittle us – we complain. We don't do well in a class – we complain. We have a leak in the basement – we complain. Very rarely do we stop to consider that it happened as part of God's plan for us, with an opportunity to give Him praise. David reminds us that praise to God should be every day, that it should be the first and last words we speak on any given day.

Every day at the beginning of the day, and every day at the end of the day and as many times during the day as we can - praise Him. Praising God alters my opinion about things and redirects my attitude. Instead of my attitude being dictated by my circumstances, praise alters my attitude so that I rise above my circumstances. Instead of being a grumpy old sourpuss I'm filled with joy and gratitude. Persevere in praise. Keep at it. Why? The third thing I see in this passage is that praise is to be pre-eminent.

### III. PRAISE IS TO BE PREEMINENT – v. 3-7

We already looked at the passage in Revelation 4 that speaks of God as being worthy. The bottom line is that God is worthy because of who He is and what He has done. Our praise to Him should be above anything else we do. Our praise of Him should be above everyone else. Why, because as

verse 3 indicates that God is great and His greatness is beyond our ability to comprehend.

#### Romans 11:33

On occasion just for fun or to torment me, Matthew Bauerle will show me some mathematical equation that has a bunch of Greek letters and numbers. I know the Greek letters and the numbers, but I don't even know where to begin to figure out the equation or come up with an answer. It's beyond my limited understanding and comprehension.

Who God is, His glory, His might can't be comprehended. God can't be figured out. His greatness is beyond our ability to understand. If I look through a telescope up into the sky at night and see all the stars and I just say WOW. I'm not even going to try and figure it all out. If I look through a microscope at some cell with magnification where I'm able to see at some molecular level, I don't even know where to begin and all I can say is WOW. There are a lot of people who are way smarter than me who think they have things figured out. Some conclude that it just happened, that it all got started when some lightning zapped the primordial soup of some mud pit and bingo, life began and evolved to what it is today and they praise science and evolution and Darwin for figuring it out. Others see the same evidence and conclude that God did it and they conclude that they don't understand it all because God can't be figured out yet they pause to acknowledge He is God and worthy to be praised.

They understand that at the end of the day, when it comes to all that God has created we haven't even begun to unravel the mysteries of the universe and all we can say is WOW – God be praised. He is great. There are some who can't figure Him out and just throw up their hands and give up. I may not know a lot but this I do know, so hear me on this: ***God's ways may be unsearchable but He is not unknowable.*** For that give Him thanks.



**Jeremiah 32:17**

So what do we do with this? How are we supposed to respond to what God does in our lives? Notice the instructions given in **verses 4-7**. Our praise is to be moved forward. Each generation is to be taught who God is and what He has done so that they too can join in this ongoing anthem of praise. Each generation must pass on to the next generation the things of God so that God will be praised. As we acknowledge our praise of Him, we are to teach others to see that God deserves our praise in everything and for everything. We not only should teach them things from the past for which God should be praised but we should also teach them to look at the things of everyday life so that every day God is praised. It's fitting that I should praise God for what He has done in the past. In that way it's a reminder from generation to generation of His unchanging nature and His past provisions. But I also believe that when praise becomes personal because it is something I have personally witnessed in my own life, then praise becomes deeper and richer and those should be shared as well. Mom and Dad passed on to us praising God for His daily provision they received. They remind us of God's faithfulness. We should pass them on to the next generation, but we should also identify what God has done for us and pass those on as well.

By our actions and attitudes are we teaching the next generation to be complainers or praisers? Are we teaching them to be grumblers or have gratitude? Are we teaching them to praise God every day and in every way? Is our thanks preeminent?

Verse 4 speaks about praising God for His power.

**IV. PRAISE FOR GOD'S POWER – v. 4**

I think this is in reference to the many facets of His power.

First there is His miraculous power. Nothing is too hard for Him.

Then there is His creative and sustaining power by which He spoke and the universe came into being from nothing. It is power that holds it all in place: galaxies within the universe and stars and planets within galaxies and you and I along with the billions of others on this planet. We are not self-sustaining. There is a cause and effect. He is the cause, He spoke and it came into being. We are the effect and He sustains us with breath and things necessary to sustain us on this planet like air and water and food. (See verses 15-16)

Finally, I believe we can speak of His redemptive power. He not only sustains my physical life, but through His power He saves me and then sustains me spiritually so that nothing can separate me from His love, nothing can sever my salvation from the power that holds me in the grip of His hand.

**Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone who believes; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**

Praise God for His power to save.

**V. PRAISE GOD FOR HIS PROMISES – v. 13**

All His promises will come to pass

**II Corinthians 1:20**

**Romans 4:20-21**

**Titus 1:2**

**Hebrews 10:23**

**I John 2:25\***

**Numbers 23:19**

God will keep His word to us the things He has written for us in this book, His Holy Word.

**VI. PRAISE GOD FOR HIS PRESENCE – v.18-19**

**Hebrews 13:5**

**Psalms 23:4**

## VII. PRAISE GOD FOR HIS PROTECTION AND HIS PRESENCE – v. 20

We have so much to give God praise for. **Will you join me this week in giving Him the praise He deserves?** He is worthy of it and so much more.

## VIII. PRAISE GOD FOR HIS PROVISION – v. 15-16

We know well of the famous preachers and song writers John and Charles Wesley, but we know little of their father Samuel Wesley who also was a preacher. He was one who faced severe criticism as a pastor and there were many in his church who opposed him. One winter night, someone set fire to his home. This person was unaware that a young John Wesley was inside at the time. Playing upstairs the 6 year old boy quickly became trapped by the fire. Two neighbors sprang into action and rescued the boy minutes before the fire consumed the building. While many people would have sat in despair, watching their place of refuge burn, Samuel gathered his family and friends and said, "Come, neighbors, let us kneel down. Let us give thanks to God. He has given me all my eight children. Let the house go. I am rich enough."

True praise can only come if we have a personal relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. **Do you know for sure today that you have such a relationship?**

Matthew 6 reminds us that if God cares and provides for the birds of the air or the flowers of the field won't He also care and provide for His own. Remember in this to give Him praise.

This Psalm of thanksgiving ends appropriately summing up the praise of David who said in **Verse 21 "My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise His holy name for ever and ever."**

The New Testament word for praise initially meant to tell a tale or give a narration and then came to denote praise. **Isn't that what praise is? Isn't it a narration or recitation to others and to God of His mighty acts on our behalf?**