

Message

The Psalms Teach Us How to Worship

For the past few weeks, we have been looking at some of the Psalms. We have emphasized some important lessons from these studies:

- **Psalm 8** - We learned about **Re-orienting our Lives toward God** and we learned that **one of God's mandates for His people is to care for the earth He created.**
- **Psalm 32** - We learned **how to get right with God** when we have sinned
- **Psalm 88** - We learned to **maintain our faith when we are going through a season of darkness**
- **Psalm 119** - We learned about the Importance of **Reading, Memorizing and Meditating on the Scriptures**

We are going to look at one more Psalm (145). The theme of this Psalm is probably the one theme that most people think of when they think of the Psalms. It is a praise song that was used in Worship. We want to talk about **what the Psalms teach us about Worship.** In Jewish practice, Psalm 145 was used in daily prayer times, morning and evening. When we began this series of studies, I referred to a comment attributed to Eugene Peterson. He refers to the Psalms as **"Answering Speech"**. The Psalms provide us with words that can be **spoken to God in response to what He is doing** in our lives and in our world. The Psalms teach us **how to Pray in response to what we are going through.** The Psalms give us language to use to cry out to God when we are in need. In the Psalms we also find **"Answering Speech" in the form of words of praise and worship.** We respond to God or answer to Him with our words of thanks and worship.

There are several ideas included in the word worship. **David Peterson** writes that one meaning of worship includes the idea of bending over, or **bowing down.** It is a **gesture of respect or submission.** **It is a formal way of expressing devotion or dependence, acknowledging God's majesty.** All people are invited to live in submission to God, to bow down and acknowledge Him.

Delesslyn Kennebrew writes that **to worship is to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission.**

There are many Psalms that we could look at when we are learning what the Psalms teach us about Worship. I have chosen Psalm 145 for our study. As we talk about this Psalm, I want to answer the question, **What kind of Worship brings delight to God?** Delesslyn Kennebrew refers to **extravagant love.** The heading tells us that this is a Psalm of David. As we read this Psalm, it almost feels like David can hardly contain Himself as He expresses his praise to God. He uses several words to express the thought of praise.

"I will **exalt you, my God the King; I will **praise** your name forever and ever. Every day I will **praise** you and **extol** your name for ever and ever."**

His heart is overflowing with gratefulness to God. There is no comparison to God's greatness. All other object of worship are worthless idols.

Vs. 4 – Worship that honors God recognizes that God alone is worthy of our praise – **"One generation will commend your works to another..."** The purpose of Worship is to Honor God, to lift Him up. And the purpose of worship is to acknowledge God as our God and Lord and place ourselves under His authority. This verse contains another purpose of Worship – **To declare what God has done and who God is so that others will come to know Him.** This is a theme that is found throughout the history of Israel – Parents are to impress on their children the greatness of God. I have heard some parents say they will let their kids choose who to serve when they get older. What an offense to God that must be.

As the Psalm continues we learn that worship is prompted by two things: There are two reasons for His exuberant praise: First of all Worship is sparked by **what God has done.** (**Vs. 5 - 6**) **Wonderful works; Awesome works; great deeds.** As God's people would gather to worship, they were reminded of God's Great deeds for them throughout their history – deliverance from Egypt, a new land, God's defeat of their enemies. But they knew that God is always working on their behalf.

The 2nd reason for his exuberant praise is **God's character.** (**Vs. 7-9**)

- **Abundant Goodness**

- Righteousness
- Gracious
- Compassionate
- Slow to anger (Patient)
- Rich in Love
- Good to all

Our worship must include expressions of thanks to God for His deeds, for all that he has done for us. But in worship, **we must always take time to reflect on God's character. We must not rush through worship.** We must take the time to let our minds be filled with wonder for God's character.

The words that David uses here are words that originate early in Israel's history. When Moses asked God to reveal His character to him, God passed by in front of Moses reciting these same characteristics (Exodus 34). In the encounter with Moses, he does not see God's face. But he learns what God is like. ⁵ ***Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD.*** ⁶ ***And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,*** ⁷ ***maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.***

Knowing God's character is of great importance. For our worship to be pleasing to God, we must learn to meditate on His works and His character (vs. 5). Meaningful worship will take time.

Vs. 9-13 – In his words of praise to God, David is aware of God's blessing on two groups of people. **Vs. 9 – The Lord is good to all.** God has extended His hand of blessing to all people – to all that He made. We refer to this as **God's common grace.** He sends rain on the just and the unjust, he provides food for all. But not all people acknowledge God's hand of blessing on their lives. Only those who have been the recipients of God's covenant love, His promises understand and praise Him. **"Your faithful people extol you."** (Vs. 11-13). Even though there are many who do not acknowledge God's grace, **as believers we must remain faithful in honoring Him and worshiping Him.** It is **through out worship that people will hear of the mighty acts of God and be persuaded to submit to Him.** We may feel like turning our backs on unbelievers. If they don't want to acknowledge God that's their problem. But we must be faithful in our worship so they will know

As David continues his reflection on God's goodness, he mentions 3 ways that God's hand of blessing is evident in the lives of His people.

Vs. 14 – The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down. David had experienced the Restoration of God's mercy. Throughout his life we see that David fell often. But in his times of spiritual brokenness the Lord came and lifted Him up. God longs to lift up those who are broken. He does not give up on us or turn His back on us when we fail.

Vs, 17-18 – The Lord is near to all who call on Him. The Lord **Redeems** those who He lifts up. He draws those who have sinned into the warmth of His embrace.

Vs. 19 – 20 – He vindicates. Again David had discovered God's faithfulness to Him. David had many enemies. Those who attacked him, slandered him. But rather than defending Himself, David allowed the Lord to come to His defense and save him from the hand of his enemies.

As he brings the Psalm to a close, David once again lifts his voice in praise to His God – **Vs. 21.**

CONCLUSIONS: So the Psalm guides us in worship that will bring delight to God.

- Unrestrained extravagant praise
- Acknowledgment of God and submission to Him
- Reflection on God's acts toward us
- Reflection on God's character
- A reminder of God's faithfulness to His promises