

A Great Word of Praise

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Well, as we approach the new year and come to the end of the current year, it is a good time for us to remember and reset our thinking and our priorities and remember that the greatest commandment, Scripture says, is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our strength, and with all of our mind. That's from Luke 10:27. And Psalm 145 is a Psalm that certainly directs you in that direction. It is a great word of praise that David has left for us as coming from his inspired pen.

Psalm 145 is the last Psalm that is ascribed to David and as we read it, we're reminded that David was a man after God's own heart which is what he is described as in Acts 13:22. If a man is a man after God's own heart as certified to us by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, then surely that man has something to teach us about fulfilling the greatest commandment and that's what we're going to see today. This is one magnificent Psalm as they all are and I realize that as we return to our sequential exposition of the Psalms, I will preach on this again in the future, but since we left off at Psalm 30 and that's 115 Psalms to get to Psalm 145, I'm pretty sure that you won't remember it by the time we get there so I feel the freedom to bring this one to you here tonight. If any of you remember tonight's message when I eventually preach on Psalm 145, let me know and I'll have a coupon for free ice cream for you. You just remind me of that when the time comes and I'll be happy and delighted to fulfill that for you.

Psalm 145 is a Psalm of praise and there isn't anything to indicate the occasion of this Psalm or why David wrote it on this particular occasion and that general nature of it gives a very broad scope to it. It's got a particular sense about it that this is a Psalm that is fitting for any occasion and that's certainly what we're going to see here. Praise is always fitting. Praise befits the redeemed and here we are going to see a wonderful Psalm of praise as we go through this in one message here tonight.

Now, as we study it, there is an artistic style to this Psalm that you wouldn't recognize just from the English text, but in the original text, in the Hebrew, this is an acrostic Psalm. It goes through sequentially, each verse starts with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Like we'd have 26 verses going from A to Z, there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet and this goes from aleph to tau, but it only leaves out the letter nun, the Hebrew letter N. And what David does here is he multiplies synonyms throughout the Psalms to emphasize his theme of praise and this Psalm is written in the form of an inclusio, which

simply means it's a fancy word to say that he starts and ends with the same theme, and as a result of that, everything that is contained in the Psalm is gathered up in the beginning and the end of the Psalm to reinforce that one great theme that marks the Psalm.

Look at verses 1 and 2 and you can see that the theme is one of praising God. Verses 1 and 2, he says, "I will extol You, my God, O King, And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever." Then notice at the end of verse 21 where he says, "My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever." So he starts with praise and he circles around and he deals with different themes to support that great theme and then he comes back and he ends at the same place that he began. Everything in this Psalm is about praising the God of Israel, the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So with this artistic structure, with the acrostic nature of it beginning and ending, David has brought, watch this, David has brought exquisite skill, exquisite artistic skill to the task of praising God. His worship was not something offhand. It was not something that he gave his secondary efforts to. He brought the fullness of his artistic ability in order to write this Psalm and to express the greatness of God in what he says.

So we're going to look at, I believe, three different points about this Psalm as we go together through it here tonight and I am very pleased to be able to bring it to you. Point 1 if you're going to take notes here tonight, the first point that I would have you see in the structure is: the goal of David's Psalm. The goal of David's Psalm, and the goal of this Psalm should actually be the goal of every man's life: to return praise to his Creator and much more to us as Christians that we would return praise to, not just our Creator, but our Redeemer. You realize, don't you, that God owns you and it's simply a question of whether you submit to that and give him the praise and ownership that he deserves, the prerogatives of ownership. God owns you by right of creation. He is the one who gave life to you. Secondarily for us as Christians, I say secondarily, second, in parallel and even greater fashion, you could argue, is that God owns you by right of redemption. He purchased you. Christ purchased you with his own blood and so God created you and therefore owns you, Christ laid down his life in order to purchase you for himself and so there is sort of a double ownership that God has over your life and that helps you see how black sin is. To sin against the one who gave you life both in a creative sense and in a redemptive sense, makes sin very inappropriate, very wrong, very dark, to realize that we would turn our hand against the one who created and gave us life physically and spiritually.

David here transcends all of that and in these opening two verses states the goal of his Psalm. Look at verses 1 and 2 with me again. He says,

1 I will extol You, my God, O King, And I will bless Your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.

The verbs here express the idea of making God's name high in the sight of men; of exalting him; of elevating his name so that others are drawn into the praise as well. When we magnify the characteristics of God, when we speak of his works, when we teach his

word, when we give testimony to his grace in our lives, we are magnifying God, praising him and extolling him and drawing others into the response of worship that is in our own hearts. And what God has done through David here is David, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is praising God for his abundant provision and his great love.

And notice this, you know, every time I go to the Psalms, especially as we've been teaching them sequentially over the past year or so, I am just struck by and as you read the Psalms going forward in your life, I just encourage you to keep this thought in mind as you read the Psalms even devotionally, is that in some ways every Psalm is framing a whole worldview, a whole way to live in what it is teaching you, even the shorter ones. They're expressing things of such profound depth, of such power, of such comprehensive, such a comprehensive view of life that it's so much more than just trying to find a Psalm that gives you a little bump for the day to get you through a rough spiritual patch. That's certainly not what this Psalm is like.

Look at what David says. Notice the open ended commitment and the delight with which he writes this. He says, "I'll extol You my God." Notice the timeframe, it's infinite. He says, "I will bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you. I will praise your name forever and ever." So David right from the beginning of this Psalm is laying forth that the glory of God is so magnificent that it calls forth an ongoing continual response of praise from his heart. That's how great God is. It's not just that we praise him occasionally, that there is an overwhelming surge of worshipful response to who he is and David says, "Lord, I commit to you as I open this Psalm that that will be the open ended way that I spend all of my life and all of my eternity. I will always be like this. My whole heart is devoted to you."

You know, one of the things that is taught in the beatitudes, Jesus teaches about those who are pure in heart and the idea of pure is not just having a moral purity, that there is a whole heartedness to it. Like gold is pure without impurities but there is a purity in the sense that there is a single-minded devotion and commitment that is driving this; that our hearts are undivided in their commitment to the praise of God. And the nature of God and the works of God call forth that that there would be an unreserved response to his character and that, even that frames the way that we think about a saving response to the Lord Jesus Christ in that the person who was coming to Christ, comes to him not only as wanting a Savior from sin, but as one who wants him as Lord of his entire life; the one who gives the fullness of his life over to receive the fullness of the Savior in response. There is no division. There is no borrowing Jesus' blood while reserving for yourself the right to live life however you want to. It doesn't work that way. What David here is describing is a wholehearted response of praise which is the only proper response to the greatness and the glory of this God.

So he says, "Every day I will bless you." Now, think about that. Think about what that means. There will be days in your life where you are praising him in the midst of blessing. "God, thank you for your goodness. God, thank you for these blessings that I enjoy." Some days like Job, you'll be praising him in times of drought. "The Lord has

given and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." You see, we have to think about it from this perspective, that God is continually worthy of our praise, his praise is continually the goal of our life in response to that great commandment to love him with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind; that our commitment to praise and our response of worship to him is unyielding. It is unchanging despite the changing circumstances. Why? Because God has never changed in the midst of it. So, beloved, shifting circumstances do not alter your fundamental duty to praise God and to love him with all of your heart because of the unchanging nature of his character and to recognize that, to understand that, is to settle and to anchor your heart and your commitment and say, "Yes, this is the way that I will live. I will join with David in that commitment. Lord, I will commit to you as I sit here tonight that I will be the one who blesses your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless your name. You will not find me going a day without directing my thoughts in worship to you."

So, is that the heart commitment that you bring to your relationship with Christ tonight? That's what this Psalm is teaching us. It's the goal of praise and it brings clarity to the life of any believer. You know, you can praise him as a young person at the age of 12, 14, 10 or 8. You can praise him as a young person. You can praise him at midlife. And beloved, I say these things from time to time because I want to prepare you for that moment when it comes, that his praise should be on your lips when you are on your deathbed and you are aware that you're drawing your final breath. That even in that moment of extremity, especially then, he is worthy of your praise, and rather than yielding over to the fear of death or yielding over to the anxiety that impending death might bring as a Christian, you face that moment, you think about it now, you prepare your heart in advance and you realize that your responsibility on your deathbed is the same that it is in the height of the health of your life; that you rise to the occasion and you give worship and praise to God even with your dying breath. And we think through those things now, not to be morbid, far to the contrary, we think through those things now in order to just realize how exhaustively great the goodness of God is; how good his greatness is and that we embrace, we welcome, we run to the privilege and the duty, the responsibility and the opportunity to always be the one who is returning praise like this. David says, "Every day I will bless you and I will praise your name forever and ever." So when that is settled in your heart, then that takes some of the fear of death and the process of death away from you and you say, "I can embrace this. I can look to this without fear because who God is won't change in that day, who I am will not change in that day. I will simply be still one who is given over to the continual unbroken praise of God and if I'm saying it through the rattle of compromised lungs, I'm still going to be there praising God as long as I have breath." And today we embrace that and say, "Yes, that's how great God is. That's how much he's worthy of our praise." So that's the goal of David's Psalm.

Now secondly, as we move on here: what are the grounds for David's praise? Why is he praising God? What motivated David to express this transcendent commitment to praise? What is it that anchors our life in this direction? Beloved, what is it? What is it? What is it that motivates you to be faithful? What is it that elicits from you that ongoing commitment that fuels the day by day saying, "Yes, another day to serve Christ. Another day to be with him"? What is it that motivates us to continue on and to persevere when

sometimes the days are dry and the days are long and the nights are weary? What motivates us to continue in faithfulness to our Christ? Well, David outlines it here and while the Psalm is long, it's actually very simple in what it says and the Psalms are an expression of the genius of the mind of the Holy Spirit, that certain common themes can appear again and again and yet be continually fresh and new even though in some ways the same things are being repeated with only different words.

Why is David praising God here in Psalm 145? Well, first of all, it's because God is great. God is great. Look at verses 3 through 7. Flowing out of his commitment of praise, "I will praise your name forever and ever," verse 2. Why, David? Why are you so committed to the worship of this God? Well, I'll tell you, verse 3, "Great is the LORD," the name Yahweh, his covenant faithfulness, this promise keeping God is great.

3 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable. 4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts. 5 On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. 6 Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, And I will tell of Your greatness. 7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness And will shout joyfully of Your righteousness.

And so, David here is expressing the greatness of God and he says, "This is why I'm praising God, it's because God is mighty. His greatness transcends time and his praise will never cease." Look at verse 4 with me when he says, "One generation shall praise Your works to another." From generation to generation there will be this unfolding, magnificent realm of praise that is given from one generation to the next as the baton is handed from one to the next. And those of you here young people off to my right, it seems to be the older people sitting on the left, doesn't it tonight? You guys noticed that, I know, because I certainly did. But to realize that you young people on my right, you are in the position of receiving the baton from the older generation, from the generation of your parents and older, that you're receiving the baton and you will go forward with, that your responsibility and the opportunity to repeat the praise that you learned at the feet of your Christian elders, of your godly generation that preceded you. And for our part as the older side now talking to you on my left here, and I identify with you so I'm not being unkind here, for us to recognize that we're mindful of this transgenerational praise that goes on and that we are not simply in this, we don't simply exist for our own realm and for praise to be of our own private benefit, that we are engaged in the thought that this needs to be handed to the next generation that follows. Parents to their children, older people in the church to the younger people in the church, and we're mindful that this praise is designed to sweep generations, not simply stop with us.

God's deeds are the outworking of his greatness. Look at verse 4, "One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts." Psalms are filled with this idea, I believe it's in Psalm 22 where it speaks that your works will be declared to a generation yet to be born. So you see in the Psalms, you see from David's pen the fact that he's thinking long-term about the praise and worship of God when he writes. It's not

simply, it seems like we come back to this theme again and again on Sundays and on Tuesdays as well, that biblical praise, biblical worship, a Spirit-filled Christian life is not something that is self-centered and contained within my heart. That we realize that there is this outworking, there is this overflow, that our lives call others to worship and it goes horizontally in time and it goes into time future with generations yet to be born. God's deeds are splendid. They reflect the glory of his majesty and one generation declares it to the next in an unbroken relay in honor of God.

So you as young people have the opportunity to say, "Do you know what? I'm going to pick up the baton. Do you know what? I'm not going to simply be focused on that which my peers are focused on. I recognize, I'm going to take advantage of this early opportunity to say, yes, I will take the baton for my own generation and I will run with it. I will commit to you, Lord, as a 14-year-old girl, a 16-year-old young man, that I will be the one who continues the praise that has been declared to me."

So the majesty of what David is saying here is just remarkable. Notice in verse 3, he says, "Your greatness is unsearchable. It transcends time. It transcends my mind." You could not investigate fully the greatness of God. It is beyond human comprehension. It's so transcendent and yet David says, "It intersects with my personal affections. That my heart commitment is to praise you and so while your greatness transcends the generations, yet it intersects with the affections of my heart in a way that shapes the way that I live in what I consider to be important." And as he goes, he multiplies superlatives to express God's praise.

Look at it in verse 3, "Your greatness is unsearchable. Your mighty acts," verse 4. "Your glorious splendor," verse 5. "The majesty of Your wonderful works," verse 5. "The power of Your awesome acts. I will tell of your greatness. The memory of your abundant goodness. I will shout joyfully of your righteousness." He just brings the fullness of language to bear and he multiplies adjectives to try to capture something of the multifaceted splendor of the greatness of God.

Now, it's interesting here that as David is writing this, it's interesting that he doesn't even specify particular works in what he's saying here. He speaks about them generally. You could reflect on the glory of God in his creation in the skies and on the earth. You could reflect on the way that he delivered Israel from Egypt and lead them through the Red Sea, and that he miraculously parted the water and he delivered them from the most powerful nation on earth, brought them out of slavery after four centuries of being enslaved there. That would be wonderful, gracious, marvelous to reflect on. Today on this side of the cross, we talk about the greatness of his redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ; the majesty that he humbled himself to come to earth in order to live a perfect life and offer that life as a pleasing sacrifice to his Father to turn away the wrath of God against you and your sin. You could speak of his glorious works yet to come when he returns and establishes his kingdom here on earth and the still greater future that lies ahead in the eternal kingdom and unbroken bliss where time will cease to be and sin and Satan will be banished into the pit and there will be nothing left but saints perfected, glorified around the throne, all joining in the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ. That would be pretty great

and glorious to praise him for, wouldn't it? And that's just a little bit of an outline. That's just a little bit of a sketch and yet any one of those things could call forth unending praise from us as his people.

So when you think about the greatness and the fullness of biblical revelation and what it says about the works of God, you can see why David says it's unsearchable. And, beloved, here's the thing, here is one of the things about it, is it that you and I in our little brief 70 year window of time here, we do our part, we enjoy our praise, we seek to serve Christ faithfully but do you see that we're just one link ultimately in an unbroken chain that stretches back to the time of Christ and to the people of the Old Testament, the people of God in the Old Testament before reaching all the way back to creation and that that link will continue on long after we're gone, that God will continually raise up people one generation after the next, giving praise to our God? There will be people in years to come after you and I are all gone, guaranteed by the certain work of Christ if he carries, that there will be people standing in rooms like this two centuries from now who are saying the same great things about God that we are now and they'll be a link in a chain further on, realizing that if the Lord comes back, the chain will change into his kingdom. But that there is this transgenerational aspect of the praise of God that helps us to see that we belong to something that's bigger than ourselves; that the kingdom of God, that the glory of God, that the greatness of Christ is something that transcends us, that dwarfs us, that we're part and we are connected to something that is much bigger than us and it's bigger than our lifetime.

And as you look at what is said here, look at verse 5 with me for example, "On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works I will meditate. Men will speak of the power of Your awesome acts, And I will tell of Your greatness, They'll shout of Your righteousness." You see, it's not just that we praise God for his past work, although we do that, his work in your life adds to the grounds of praise. God is still working. God as these future generations come, as you young people rise up and serve Christ in your own life, there are works of God ahead in your hearts and in your life that will provide grounds for praise that we do not presently know exist right now. They are known to God but they will unfold in time and men will praise God for the work that he does in your life as young people in years yet to come. So God is still working. He's still going to be displaying his greatness to future generations and thus he will add daily to the works that we praise him for. One generation praising him to the next, praising his works to another and declaring God's mighty acts.

So we as believers, we celebrate God's greatness to the world; we proclaim it; we proclaim Christ to the nations; we proclaim Christ to individuals looking for God to continue the work, to save still more and add and multiply still further the reasons that we praise him. There is no exhausting the testimony. It will just continue to billow like clouds, building as the storm clouds develop and they just billow out more and more, so is the understanding and the display of the greatness of God. That's one ground of David's praise, but he moves on as this Psalm continues. God is great, secondly, why does he praise God? Secondly, because God is good. God is good. It's more than God's works that caused David to praise him. The very nature of his character elicits our praise as well.

Who he is independently in his own attributes, who he was in character before the world began, before his works were on display, his perfect immutable character elicits praise from his people.

Look at verse 8,

8 The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.

You see, he's describing the attributes of God here, not things that God has done but who God is in his person. He's gracious. He's merciful. He is slow to anger. He's great in lovingkindness.

9 The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. 10 All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD, And Your godly ones shall bless You. 11 They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom And talk of Your power; 12 To make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts And the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

So he begins this section with a multiplied description of the attributes of God, verse 8: gracious, merciful, slow to anger, great in lovingkindness, loyal love, in other words, his faithfulness, he is good to all, he is merciful over all. And God's character here becomes like a great, perfect, multifaceted diamond that radiates glory from different perspectives as you turn it and view it from different lenses, as you view it from different angles. God's glory is like a ray of light hitting a prism and shattering into a rainbow of colors that are displayed. You speak of his goodness and then you look at it more closely and you see that it is displayed in multiple ways that go beyond one simple adjective could produce. Tonight I want to just highlight one aspect of this for the sake of time and for the sake of getting through this Psalm in one setting.

Look at verse 9 with me. It says, "The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works." We've talked about this recently as we've talked about God's providence, just recognizing that God actively cares for everything under the sun. God cares for his people. You are the beneficiaries of that, aren't you? You see the way that he has cared for your soul in the provision of our Lord Jesus Christ. You've seen his provision as you go through daily life. You know that in the future there lies his provision for your eternal well-being and that you who are saved will most certainly end up in heaven and that his care for you was rooted in a choice that he made before the beginning of time. There has never been a moment in the existence of the universe where God's purpose for your well-being was not somehow being worked out. So comprehensive is his mercy over his people. So great is his care.

But, you know, as we look at it a little more closely and we see, we examine it from another perspective, we turn the diamond, we alter the prism and get a different ray of

light coming through, do you know what? God's like this even with his enemies. Even with sinners, God is merciful to sinners. Scripture says that he makes the sun to shine on the righteous and on the unrighteous and that the rain falls on the saints and on the sinners alike. He gives earthly goodness for 70 years to people who profane his name with their very existence; who mock and scorn his name and deny his word. God is good to them and provides for them as well during the course of their earthly life. He cares for the animal kingdom. A sparrow doesn't fall to the ground apart from him. Jesus said, "Your heavenly Father feeds the birds of the air." He cares for the inanimate creation. He clothes the flowers of the field with great glory.

So, beloved, with those familiar themes, we step back and we ask ourselves a transcendent question in light of those things, in light of the testimony of Scripture, in light of God's goodness to us then, now and in the future, you ask this question: what kind of goodness is that? How good is he? How kind? How gracious? How wonderful? How merciful is he to provide so abundantly like that? A transcendent, transgenerational God, watch this, cares for creatures, cares for sinful creatures, cares for elements of creation that are far below his dignity and can offer nothing to him in return that he doesn't already have. That's what God does and what he does is an expression of who he is, and then multiply that goodness by infinity, multiply it by multiple millennia since creation, multiply it by 7 billion people currently on the face of the earth. I think the number is about 100 billion birds of the air that are estimated at any given time. Multiply it through the unfolding ages of infinity and see that the well of his goodness is obviously bottomless. It is infinite. So great is his goodness to creatures like us.

And then you and I remember that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Christ knowing the rebellion of the life that you would live, knowing the darkness of the worst of your deeds, knowing the way that your mouth would blaspheme him, the way that your conduct would deny him, that your heart would be indifferent and cold and irreverent toward him, knowing all of that, Christ steps into the world and says, "I'll go to the cross for that. I'll suffer in your place. I'll be your substitute." Lord, why? Why would you do that? What is there in me that deserves that? And the answer is nothing. Christ does that out of the goodness of his own initiative; out of his love for his people. Out of his obedience to the Father's will and he goes to Calvary and he suffers for you and bears an eternal weight of torment. He feels the pains of an eternal judgment in his person, your judgment he felt. Your judgment. Your portion of the cup of the wrath of God, he drank it on your behalf, because Christ died for sinners just like you. And we are humbled before that. We say, "What kind of goodness is that? What kind of incomprehensible love is that?" We live in a world where one will hardly die for his friends, Scripture says, and yet Christ died for us while we were his enemies. Coldhearted rebels and he interceded for sinners at the cost of his own lifeblood. So many ways that you can look at that but just step back and say, you just step back and try to get a little bit of perspective and think in really broad principles and say, "How good is that? How kind is that? That is incomprehensible kindness." We have nothing on earth, we have no man that is like that, let alone with the one with the capacity to actually take away our sins. It is incomparable. It is unsearchable.

Look over at John 14, and I just, we dwell on this and we emphasize it to encourage you in Christ, those of you who are believers, for you to be renewed in your love and appreciation for what Christ has done for you and with a prayer that perhaps those of you that are still hardened in sin and dead and you've never been born again, you've never turned to Christ, that somehow an exposition of the goodness of God, his kindness, would be that which would lead you to repentance. On what grounds, let's ask it generally, on what grounds could a sinner rightfully reject such kindness and goodness? When this is explained, when you see these things in Scripture and someone closes his heart, unfeeling heart, her heart, unfeeling heart, and says, "I will turn away from that. I don't want that for me. I don't respect that. I won't yield to that. I prefer my sin on earth to the glories of Christ in heaven." Look, let's just recognize that what Scripture says is righteous and true that someone like that who tramples underfoot the blood of Christ and regards as unclean the blood of the covenant by which men are sanctified and set apart for God and says, "No, I won't have that," can there be anything but a righteous judgment that comes on a wicked heart like that? There is no excuse for that. There is absolutely no justification for turning away from the goodness and kindness of God when Christ says, "Come to me you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." When Christ says, "Come to me, the one who comes to me I will certainly never cast out." And you won't come? Defend that. Justify that. Explain to someone why that's righteous, why that's good, why that's defensible. There is no defense for that and the judgment of God rightly falls on those who spurn his goodness and kindness and thereby manifests the badness and wickedness of their own heart. Oh, I don't want that to be true of any one of you in here tonight.

Jesus said in John 14, you say, "hy did you turn us to John 14?" I'll show you now. John 14:1, going back to us as Christians and what we get to enjoy and as we see the goodness of God laid out in the words of Christ. Jesus said in the first three verses of John 14, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." So Jesus says, speaking a little bit colloquially here, Jesus after his resurrection goes to heaven, he goes home. He goes home where he belongs. He goes to his place at the right hand of the Father. He goes to heaven where his glory is displayed and appreciated, that which belongs to him and he says, "Do you know what? The reason I'm going back is so that I can get it ready for you. That I want to prepare this for you in whatever transcendent way that that means." I can't imagine what that's like. But he says, "I'm going to make it ready. I'm going to prepare a place for you so that when I come again, I can receive you to myself and that where I am, there you can be also." Really, Lord? Really? For those of us who even now find ourselves sometimes halfhearted and half prayerful and dis-interested at times? Those of us who are so quick to wander, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. You'd do that for us? You'd do that for me? And you come back to the question: just how good are you? "Lord, honestly, just how kind are you? How abundant is your goodness and your mercy upon your people that you would receive us where you alone belong? That you gave your life in order to bring us in and to share that blessing with us."

You see, what Scripture leads us to, watch the connection here, it unfolds these marvelous things, these marvelous mercies of God to us and you're supposed to draw from that, "Oh, God is really good. Christ is really merciful. God is really, really wonderful. My Savior is blessed." And then with that recognition, you give your heart over to a life commitment of praise. "I will extol you, my God. I will bless your name forever and ever." It's no wonder David praises God, is it? There's no wonder that David praises God. Why? Because the greatness of God is good and the goodness of God is great. It is unsearchable.

And yet David is not done. Go back to Psalm 145. He further expresses his praise. God is great. God is good. Thirdly, God is gracious. God deserves our praise because he shows his grace to the weak. Look at verse 14 of Psalm 145. And just remembering here that we're talking about the Lord of glory. We're talking here in verse 14, we're talking about the God who created the world out of nothing, spoke it into existence, sustains it now by his own power, dwells in unapproachable light, is impeccable in his holiness, and what is this God like? Look at verse 14 through 19. He says,

14 The LORD sustains all who fall And raises up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look to You, And You give them their food in due time. 16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds. 18 The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.

Beloved, the weak look to God and find their champion. Sinners look to Christ and find their Redeemer. The hungry look to God and find he provides their food. The humble, the broken, the desperate, pray to God and find that he answers. Broken hearted sinners look to God and find mercy and the cleansing of their sins. Those who doubt, who question, look to God and find that he's glad to provide them with assurance; that his love for them is genuine and that Christ's work has been applied to their heart. The repentant look to Christ and find one who receives them.

God is gracious. He is unspeakably gracious. From his position of unparalleled might and authority from which he could assert his righteousness and his justice to the detriment of us all, God condescends and meets us in our need. This great and good God is glorious and he gives. Who is like that? Who is like God? Who is like the God of the Bible? No one. He is unique. He is alone on the throne. He deserves praise that no one else does. He deserves allegiance, watch this, he deserves, Christ deserves allegiance from your heart because of the intrinsic nature of who he is and what he has done for you. Christ deserves an exclusive allegiance and love from your heart that no one else is privy to, not even your closest earthly relationship. Not your spouse. Not your child. Not your parent. Not your puppy. Nothing. No one.

When you realize the greatness, the goodness, the graciousness of this God, you realize that he has absolute claim on your absolute allegiance and if you belong to Christ, you

gladly give it without reservation and in that, your life manifests this response of praise that David gives. When you understand these things, you realize that this is transcendent, that this is eternal, that this defines the purpose of your existence, and therefore you can gladly say with David, "O God, my King! I will bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless your holy name. I will praise your name forever and ever." Why can you make such an open-ended commitment? Why can that be said without qualification? Because there is no limit to the greatness and the goodness of God to whom you're responding and therefore you could not righteously put any parameters on your response.

So God is good. God is great. God is gracious. Fourthly, what are the grounds of David's praise? God is glorious. God is glorious. For all that we've said here, God not only guards his creation, he does something else: he guards his justice. He guards righteousness in the process and this ties into something that I alluded to a little earlier. Look at verse 20, Psalm 145:20,

20 The LORD keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.

We dare not trifle with this God. If wicked people curse him in response to his grace, if sinners defy him openly, knowing the call of the Gospel and still reject him, God will ultimately defend his honor. God will not allow his name to be blasphemed forever. There will be a time when one day God will destroy the wicked and that's what verse 20 is saying there, all the wicked he will destroy. Those of you who are rejecting Christ here tonight, you should not take it as a sign that God treats lightly your rejection. Those of you listening on the live stream that maybe you're like that too, understand that God will not tolerate that forever and don't mistake, oh, this is the eternal mistake that so many sinners make, they mistake his present patience for his eternal indifference to their sin. That's not true. God will deal with sinners eventually and the fact that he hasn't judged you yet is not a sign of indifference, it's a sign of patience and grace that calls you and gives you time to come to him, but understand that God in his moral order, God in the moral universe, will not bear unsatisfied justice forever. God will uphold his glory and if you won't recognize it here on earth, he will vindicate it in eternal pains of hell forever on those who don't bear, take up their cross and follow after Christ. So God is glorious, he's great, he's good, he's gracious, yet this Psalm teaches us ever so briefly that we still must fear him and not trifle with the wonder of his greatness.

Well, those are the four grounds for David's praise. It leads us to the grand finale, point 3. We saw the goal of this Psalm in verses 1 and 2; the grounds for the praise, verses 3 through 20; now we see the grand finale, verse 21. Having cycled through all of these attributes and works of God, David comes back to the conclusion which stated the theme of his Psalm at the beginning.

21 My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, And all flesh will bless
His holy name forever and ever.

David says, "In light of these things, let me just state again my affirmation that my life, my heart, my lips, my thoughts, my mind, my soul, my strength, are all given over to the

praise and the worship and the service of this great God." And that verse sets the tone, not only for his life, it sets not only the concluding tone of the Psalm, it sets the tone for the conclusion of the entire book of Psalms. As we've seen in times past, the following five Psalms, 146-150, are like a grand finale of fireworks of praise and you enjoy the fireworks show as it goes on for 20-30-40 minutes and every display is great as every burst of color splatters on the night sky, but then there's that grand finale where it's happening in multiple times simultaneously. The end of the Psalms is like that.

Psalm 146:1, "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being." Psalm 147, all of the Psalms being drawn to this climax of praise. Psalm 147:1, "Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God." Psalm 148, "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! Praise Him, highest heavens." You just can't stop. Psalm 149, "Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones." Verse 9, "Praise the LORD!" Psalm 150, the word "praise" is multiple in every verse of it. "Praise the LORD! Praise God. Praise Him." Verse 2, "Praise Him. Praise Him." Verse 3, "Praise Him. Praise Him." Verse 4, "Praise Him. Praise Him." Verse 5, "Praise Him. Praise Him." Verse 6, the concluding verse of the Psalms, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!"

And, you know, I picture somebody, maybe an unbeliever, someone unregenerate, someone who has only dabbled briefly in the nature of God and say, "Oh, do you know what? This just gets kind of repetitive. Why? I got it the first time." Eh, actually no, you didn't because, you see, when you appreciate and understand that the greatness, the goodness, the graciousness and the glory of God and you understand that each of those attributes are infinite in their wonder and their worthy, then you realize that a single time of simply saying, "Well, praise the Lord," doesn't do it, especially from our sinful created nature. To say it one time isn't enough. To say it a thousand times isn't enough. This eternal greatness calls for a response of unending eternal praise from your heart. That resounding conclusion of, "Praise the LORD!" over and over and over again is meant to become the defining passion, the defining motive, the reason for your existence. "Ah yes! Praise this LORD!"

And so what do we do? We join in the climax. We join in that fireworks finale where Scripture multiplied times is saying, "Praise the LORD!" and that climactic panoply of praise finds an echo during our short earthly life, "Yes, I join in! Yes, praise the LORD! Praise the LORD with my life! Praise the LORD with my words! Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, amen!"

Let's pray together.

Father, help us that we might lift you higher and higher both now and forevermore. For your goodness, our God, we praise you. For your greatness, we praise you. For your grace, we praise you. For your glory, we praise you. For eternal blessings yet to come, we praise you. For blessings here on earth still to be bestowed, we praise you. For the

fellowship of the saints on this December night, we praise you. For the blood of our Lord Jesus, we praise you. For the new birth, we praise you. For answered prayer, we praise you. For things that you have withheld, Father, we praise you all the more. The entire atmosphere of our existence is unending reason to praise you and beyond the veil where you alone see and where you alone exist, Father, we reach in even to there guided by the instruction of your word and we say praise you for those invisible attributes that we cannot see but are made known to us in your word. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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