

“God be Praised”
Psalm 66
(Preached at Trinity, April 17, 2011)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we come to **Psalm 66** we find a designation similar to the previous psalm. It is both a psalm and a song, suitable to be both read and sung. It was delivered to the Chief Musician which tells us it was written to be used in the context of Israel’s worship.
2. We are not told who wrote this psalm, although we have no reason to doubt that David was its author. It is certainly true of his style.
3. The theme is clear – it’s the theme of praise. The praise of God in all His greatness and of His wondrous mercy unto His people.
The word literally means “shout”
NAS “Shout joyfully to God”
 - a. What a contrast with the previous psalm
NAS **Psalm 65:1** – “There will be silence before Thee”
 - b. Both conditions are true. On one hand we stand in silent awe before God. Our meditations are beyond words.
On the other hand our hearts explode in thanksgiving. Make a joyful noise. Shout joyfully to the Lord.
4. As we’ve seen, there are certain themes that recur often in the psalms – themes of deliverance, themes of justice, and themes of praise. There are familiar themes, yet each time we see significant differences, each teaching us a different truth.
5. **Psalm 66** can be divided into four neat sections, each separated by the familiar use of the word Selah – the unique element used in the psalms designating a pause.
 - I. **Verses 1-4** – God is to be praised in His majesty
 - II. **Verses 5-7** – God is to be praised in His magnitude
 - III. **Verses 8-15** – God is to be praised in His mortification
 - IV. **Verses 16-20** – God is to be praised in His mercy
 - I. **Verses 1-4** – God is to be praised in His majesty
 - A. God’s praise is universal
Psalm 66:1 – “Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:”
 1. God is intrinsically glorious.
 - a. This means there is glory inherent to God, glory that belongs to the essence of His Diving being. He is infinite in His splendor and majesty. All of creation manifests his glory.
 - b. But it is the duty of all men to recognize God’s majesty and give Him the praise due His name. We are to *give* Him praise and glory.
 2. Most translations translate **Verse 1** “All the earth” - אֶרֶץ
Verse 1 is a call to all the people of the earth. The praise of God is not restricted to a single race of people but to people of every kindred and tongue

3. Its repeated in **Verse 4**
Psalm 66:4 – “All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing *to thy name*.”
Remember in the Bible a person’s name represents his character – all the earth sings forth the glory of God’s holy character.
 4. All the earth cannot contain the glory of God
Listen to **Psalm 72**
Psalm 72:19 – “And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.”
- B. God is full of majesty and glory
Psalm 66:2 – “Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.”
Psalm 66:3 – “Say unto God, How terrible *art thou in thy works!*”
1. Praise begins with a recognition of who God is
Psalm 66:3 – “Say unto God, How terrible *art thou in thy works*”
 2. God is to be praised in His majesty and splendor
 3. The psalmist then proceeds to describe the magnitude of God

II. Verses 5-7 – God is to be praised in His magnitude

- A. David invites us to gaze upon God
“Come and see the works of God”
1. This is an essential exercise for all men – “Come and see”
Look at the works of God
 2. Most turn their face away. They refuse to look. They suppress the truth.
Romans 1:21 – “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God”
 3. David says, “Look!” He is calling all men to look upon the magnitude of God.
Psalm 66:5 – “Come and see the works of God: *he is terrible in his doing*”
 - a. God’s works are fearful to look upon.
 - b. The word for “terrible” is a verb meaning “to shudder in awe”
God is worthy of the highest reverence.
 - c. Modern man doesn’t like to describe looking at God in fear.
The term “God fearing man” used to be a common expression describing a man whose life had been captivated by God.
 - d. God is to be approached with fear. Fear is a proper disposition when a person recognizes the magnitude of God. He is infinitely greater than us. He is infinitely different from us.
Hebrews 10:31 – “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”

- B. David points us to God's awe inspiring work in the lives of His people
1. He directs our attention to God's activity in ruling the affairs of man
Psalm 66:5 – "*he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*"
 - a. God rules and overrules all of the affairs of human beings
 - b. Our lives are maintained by God
Acts 17:28 – "For in him we live, and move, and have our being"
 - c. Our days are numbered by God's rule and every event of every day is determined by God
James 4:13-15 – "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: ¹⁴ Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. ¹⁵ For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
NAS **Daniel 4:35** – "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'"
 - d. This is true from the greatest to the least
Proverbs 21:1 – "The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."
 - e. This was always a great source of comfort for David. He knew that God had absolute sovereignty over the life of every human being. While it may seem for a season that they are in control they are absolutely under God's dominion. And they will not escape His justice.
Psalm 55:23 – "But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee."
 2. David gives a specific example
It surely appeared that Pharaoh and the Egyptians were almighty and unstoppable. But God overruled
Psalm 66:6 – "He turned the sea into dry *land*: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him."
 3. God is to be praised in His magnitude. To gaze upon the power of God should cause every nation and every man to bow in submission.
Psalm 66:7 – "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves."

III. Verses 8-15 – God is to be praised in His mortification

In these verses David is reminded of how God worked in the lives of the children of Israel

A. God showered them with His goodness

Psalm 66:8-9 – “O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: ⁹ Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.”

1. God’s presence was continually with them
2. He cared for them, provided for them, protected them.
3. God’s goodness should cause every human being to bow in praise God for His infinite goodness – **See Verse 8**
4. Spoke of God’s goodness and our lack of gratitude in **Romans 2**
NAS **Romans 2:4** – “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

B. As an act of God’s goodness He tried and tested His people in the wilderness

Psalm 66:10 – “For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.”

1. God tried and tested Israel in the wilderness – many were proven false
Exodus 32:9 – “And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people.”
2. We are reminded to give heed to God’s testings
Hebrews 3:8-9 – “Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.”
3. David continues to describe God’s fiery trials and His blessings upon those proven faithful
Psalm 66:10-12 – “For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. ¹¹ Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. ¹² Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*.”
4. God is to be praised for His mortification – His fiery trials purify us unto holiness
1 Peter 1:7 – “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”

IV. **Verses 16-20** – God is to be praised in His mercy

Finally, David testifies before all God's wondrous mercy in his life.

Psalm 66:16 – “Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.”

- A. We must always have the praise of God on our tongues declaring His wondrous acts of mercy
1. David says, “Come and hear.” Let me tell you. Come and listen.
“I will declare what God hath done.”
 2. David's tongue was full of praise
Psalm 66:17 – “I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.”
 3. Peter tells us to always be ready to give testimony
1 Peter 3:15 – “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”
- B. David recalled God's wonderful mercy as he cried out for forgiveness for his sin
1. David understood the danger of holding on to his sin.
Psalm 66:18 – “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*.”
 - a. To regard iniquity is to look upon it without repulsion. It is to embrace it and cherish it. It is to love our sin more than Christ.
 - b. David said such a condition separates us from God
 2. Of course we understand a lost person is alienated from God because of his sin. He can only be reconciled through the atonement of Christ received through faith and repentance.
 3. But what about the believer? Does this verse apply to us?
 - a. Sin also affects our ability to approach God.
 - b. David knew the effect sin would have upon his life
 - c. In Psalm 30 David describes the grief of losing the sweetness of communion with God
Psalm 30:7 – “thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.”
 4. There is a difference between *union* and *communion*
 - a. Our union with God is sovereign and unalterable
 - b. Our communion with God is alterable – it can be affected by our actions
 5. Sin always leads us away from God
 - a. Sin will hinder our prayer life.
NAS **1 Peter 3:7** – “You husbands likewise, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”
 - b. Spurgeon – “The very supposition that “if he regarded iniquity in his heart, the Lord would not hear him, “implies the possibility that such may be the state even of believers; and there is abundant reason to fear that it is in this way their prayers are so often hindered, and their supplications so frequently remain unanswered.

6. But David knew the solution to our sin – He cried out to God in confession and God in His mercy heard
Psalm 66:19 – “*But* verily God hath heard *me*; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.”
- C. David closes the psalm by lifting up his voice in praise of God for His infinite love.
Psalm 66:20 – “Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.” (רַחֲמֵי)
1. The KJV most often translates רַחֲמֵי “mercy” because mercy is at the very heart of God’s covenant love.
 2. We find the the KJV translation of the psalms David exclaiming 33 times: “His mercy endureth forever”
 3. In these passages the Septuagint used the word, ἔλεος – “mercy”
 4. David praised God continually for His mercy

Conclusion:

1. As we conclude this psalm our hearts should be stirred to praise God.
 David says:
 Praise Him in His majesty, His magnitude, His mortification, and His mercy.
2. May our lives be filled with praise. Praise is our duty, but it must also be our heart.
 Praise ye the Lord!
Psalm 66:2 – “Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.”