

The Opening Of His Mighty Hand

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Let us turn this morning to our text and our text is found in Psalm 145:16.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how gracious and holy and just and sovereign thou art. O Lord, I pray that thou would indeed lose my lips this day that I may speak of thy sovereignty, that I may speak the depth of who thou art, O Lord, that it be glorifying unto thee. That Lord, you would lead us to the depths of how great thou art this hour and the hour to come. O Lord, I thank thee, Lord, for thy faithfulness to bring those of us who have traveled back safely. Lord, we pray for those who continue to travel, that you would in thy faithfulness bring them back also safely. Lord, may you glorify thy name this day and may thy presence be mightily upon us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

It was about two or three weeks ago as I was finishing reading through the Psalms, I came to Psalm 145 and this verse stood out to me, "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." I thought about the Lord took me to how dependent I truly am upon him, how much I depend on the opening of his hand for whatever crumb to fall, whatever his providence brings, for all to live in this life, I am dependent upon this sovereign Lord.

I'd kind of forgotten about the verse until the first night on our trip when, in the Lord's providence, he brought an affliction upon me where I ended up at the hospital. I had an allergic reaction. As I sat there in the emergency room and I sat listening to those that were attending me, they gave me what they called a cocktail full of a lot of different medications and told me to take them and they said, "We'll come back and check on you in an hour and we'll be able to tell then and we'll see if this affliction gets any better." I had broken out all over me and my face was swollen. So I sat there and the Lord quickened this verse to me while I was sitting there, that I knew when I heard those words of the attending physician there and the nurse, I knew that the Lord would take it away when he opened his hand and that was comforting.

So I sat and I waited and it wasn't even an hour and I would lift up my arms and I'd look because they were all broken out and I knew, I could just feel it, I could feel it leaving my body. And I would look up and I'd see all of a sudden now I had no redness, and then a few minutes later, all the bumps and swelling was gone and it was gone. And when the nurse came back in 45 minutes later, not even an hour, he said, "Oh, I came to check on you. I wanted to see what progress has been made." And he said, "Oh, it looks like it's all gone." It was all gone because the Lord opened his hand.

Sometimes when I read the word like that and I'm reading through it, the Lord stops me and he allows me to go a little deeper into what the word says, and then in his faithfulness, he'll bring it back in my life, try me on it, and then experience it. And as I sat there, that's what he impressed upon me. "I open my hand." Man can give you any medication, they can put time on things, they can tell you how things will go, and I think about that because when you go on a vacation, you're going to get away from the life that you have. Not that the life that you have is bad, it's just you need a break. And you have all these ideas in your mind about how things will be and the things you're going to do and that wasn't on my list, but it was on the Lord's, and when he opens his hand, what he drops from his sovereign hand is what he wills for his children, and no man, whatever medication or whatever time limit or whatever restriction they put on his power, it's not going to restrain his power or his providence.

I want to read through this Psalm to get down to our text real quickly. This Psalm, Psalm 145, is the only Psalm that is titled this way, "David's Psalm of Praise." There are many titles given to all the Psalms and different ones: to the chief musician, to this, and David's prayers and other writers in Psalms. But this is the only one titled this way, "David's Psalm of Praise." And as we read through this, I pray that the Holy Spirit leads us to a praising heart, a thankful heart, because there are some very deep things said here by David who is exercised in his soul. I think every exercised pilgrim is brought to the Psalms because they see how David was exercised in his soul and they can take great kinship and comfort in the things that the Lord showed him because they're the things that the Lord shows us. It's the same Lord. And sometimes I know Satan when he works on me, he'll tell me how odd I am, how strange I am, that I have these thoughts; how wicked I am because of these thoughts; how bad to have this kind of thought or this kind of flesh rising up that the Lord's grace or the Lord's mercy can't extend to me because of how wicked that moment is. And sometimes in the Lord's great faithfulness, he'll lead me to the Psalms and I'll see David's same struggle and I'll say, "Wow, Lord, I know what that means."

So let's just start here in Psalm 145. As I said, I'm going to read down to our text, "I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever." Do you know what a mercy it is to say that? You and I who have this warfare every day of our life and knows what it's like for that nasty flesh and old man and old nature to rise up, to be able to say in your soul, "Lord, I'll lift you up. You are the God of my soul." It speaks of the Lord's presence in that eternal vital union that we have in Christ. It speaks of him in you.

"I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever." And you know that that new nature in you, it's a true statement. It praises the Lord every day. It does. He does. His vision is upward to the one who is reigning, who is sitting upon his throne, whose kingdom is everlasting and eternal and lasts forever. That's where the child of God is brought to, to see in that new nature that's in him, and he can sit and say, "Lord, I will always praise you in that nature." And we know that. He has proven over and over his faithfulness.

"I will bless thy name for ever and ever." It's not boastful and it's certainly not boastful in himself, it's boastful in his Lord, in his Lord's faithfulness.

"Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever." I'm going to tell you something, the child of God's desire, which is what we're going to talk about today, "thou openest thy hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." Do you see that qualifying statement in there? Every living thing. The dead do not understand what the presence of Christ in their soul means. They can't come with the Psalmist or be brought to the Psalmist to say, "Every day will I bless thee, Lord." But the child of God can say that. Not boastfully in himself, but knowing that the Lord in him will praise and sing praises to the Lord who is faithful every day because the Lord is faithful.

"I will praise thy name for ever." That is the fruit of him being in us.

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness." There have been it seems like in the last couple days, our neighbor city, Orlando, has gone through quite a few things, a couple of things, and the child of God and the world looks and says, "Oh, what horrible things are going on down there. What things." But the child of God sees his Lord's hand. He sees his Lord's hand in judgment. He sees his Lord's hand in all the providential things that he brings and they are meant for the children of God. What is the Lord saying in these things? Do you think he does things in this life and in this world that don't affect his children? That are not for the very souls of his children? And when the Lord brings judgment the way that he brings judgment, what are we to see in that? He is a just Lord. He will punish sin. And I don't know what that says to you, but to me that nature in me then says, "I want to fly to Christ who is my shelter in the time of these storms; whose the only refuge for me from these storms." And I think the Psalmist is going to say those things, at least will be in a passage today where he does.

He says, "They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy." And that slow to anger is for the children of God. David's soul said, "Lord, I know it's of your great mercy that I'm not consumed." We know how wretched this old nature is because the Lord is faithful to reveal it. He sends his Spirit and the Spirit testifies of what sin, how wicked it is. "Lord, you are a deeply merciful Lord and how longsuffering you are to us, and how merciful you are to put away that sin, not only the

past sins but the present sins and the future committed sins. You've put them away." The Lord Jesus Christ has dealt with them. He has paid the price for them. That's where resurrection life is. He has victory over them. He has put them away. That's the life he gives his children.

"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom." Do you see what the saints, how the saints' communication is ordered? Do you see how the work in the soul and what it produces? Glory to him. Praise to him. Glory to him.

"They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom," thy kingdom, "and talk of thy power." Not our power. Not what will we have. Not what strength we have. Not what might we have. But what we have in Christ and through Christ who strengthens me.

"To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. The LORD upholdeth all that fall." Do you fall much? I fall every day but the Lord keeps me. That's what that says. He keeps me.

My daughter and I were talking yesterday on the way back, she said, we were talking about how wicked the world was and how that one just walked up and shot that singer in Orlando. Just needless violence. But are we capable of without the grace of the Lord restraining? That's what man is, a ravenous beast. I was raised to look at man and say there is good in all of them, but there's not. Do you know why I say that? Because the Lord looked down and said, "There is none good, no not one," and he doesn't lie. So, no it does not surprise me when I hear things like this that are in the news. It does sometimes send a shock wave to me because they are so close to where I live, and I know that's the Lord bringing those things and what does he say to me in them? To be sober, that he is a reigning and ruling Lord, his sovereignty and that's the thing when we come to this passage,

"The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season." Then we come to our text, "Thou openest thine hand." And there is absolutely nothing given to the child of God until the Lord opens that hand. He must open that hand because everything is stored up by the Father to his Son and it is dispensed by the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ's finished work and all the blessings that the Father has given to the Son. We see the perfect concert of the Triune Lord working in the soul of his child.

When I come to passages, when the Lord brings me to these type passages that speak so strongly of the Lord's sovereignty, just think, Jesus said, "No man will pluck you out of my hand. All that the Father gave me, he has lost none." Why? Because we're in that sovereign hand. When you hear the word "hand," it's power. It's power. It's the power, the sovereign power that our Lord wields and no man can stay his hand. In fact, that is the passage I think about and that too speaks of the Lord's sovereignty, is that the words were

uttered by Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king. And when the Lord brought him to see his sovereignty, Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:35 said, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing." I wonder how often he brings you to see that all the inhabitants in this earth are reputed as nothing. "And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" I don't know about you, but I find myself saying those things a lot, that little word "why"?

I thought about that at the end of our vacation when the Lord provided a night of studying his word with a pastor and his wife and I think we studied close to three hours, and it was right at the end of the trip and we all kind of like, "Oh, wow. Man, we should've started this earlier. This would have been great." But it was the Lord's sovereign time and that sovereign moment and it will be in his sovereignty to provide it again, which I hope he does. I think about things like that. I make those little comments, "Well, man, I should have done this or I should have done that." And I find myself making them a lot and sometimes the Lord will stop me and say, "Woulda, coulda, shoulda, but I'm the Sovereign."

And he makes you to bow, and that's what I said about this pagan king, the Lord made him to bow to his sovereignty and to proclaim such a wonderful truth about "no man can stay his hand." Until that hand is open, we can do absolutely nothing. That's what Christ said, "Without me, you can do nothing." And in that hand, as I said, is all the treasures. All that the Father gave the Son that is dispensed through the Holy Spirit, you think about the fruit of the Spirit. Now, I'm going to read them to you in just a minute and I want you to think for a moment, ask yourself this question: when I read the fruit of the Spirit that's produced by Christ by the opening of his hand, you tell me if you can produce these on your own. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance or self-control.

And we have, and as I said, this passage that's so precious to me says he satisfies the desires of every living thing. There is a whole world of people out there that you'll run into every day that believe they do have a power greater than the Lord's; that they don't need his hand to open. They could either open it on their own by exercising their free will or through their obedience they will stir God up to do something for them. There is not a dependency upon the Lord, there is a dependency upon self, and that too must die.

"Thou openest thy hand," and, Lord, without the opening of that hand, I would have nothing. I can't bring events about in my life. I thought too as blessed as I told you that time was that I had that study, I walked away from it thinking, "Wow. I wonder if I'll ever be able to speak to my children that way when I'm that age and their the age of me." And I will it so much. I want to so bad because when the precious truths of grace are revealed, man is really put in his rightful place and that's the one thing I can say, as the Lord was taking us deeper in what we were studying, man was left out in the cold where he should be. Christ is being exalted. The finished work. We're talking about what the Lord's done, what the Lord's done, what the Lord's done, and your soul is just filling up, uplifted and uplifted and like I said, I've raised four, my youngest is 12 and my oldest is 20, and I

desire so much for them to know the Lord that way. I see so much and I can address them because they're the only children in the room, I know that so much in their life is wrapped up in what they believe life is and the things and people in life, but if Christ isn't life, if Christ isn't the Lord of whatever you are doing, there is just emptiness in it, and not only emptiness, the Lord, if he is the Lord of your life, he will prove to you that he is faithful to draw you to him and he's faithful to open his hand to put down all of those things that do get your attention or your desires because we haven't even gotten to that part because that's the next part that's so important.

When he opens his hand, what comes from it? Did you notice that? Satisfaction comes from it. For the child of God, when he opens his hand, satisfaction comes. We all want satisfaction of the desires that we have, but these desires that the Lord is speaking of here are to the living things. The desires are because they've been quickened who were dead in sins and trespasses. The desires are heavenward desires and the Lord is faithful to satisfy them. He brings the satisfaction and he brings it through blessings and he brings them through trials. And that's the thing, as I sat on that bed with this affliction, the Lord brought me to say to him, "How good thou art, Lord."

As I said, it's an amazing thing to bring that word to me to say, "Lord, this dropped out my hand." The Lord undid his hand and he said, "This is the affliction I give to you for your soul," and he drew me to him. My dependency was on him, not anything the doctors were saying, and it is still today. By him. By his sustaining hand. And I think about the hardships and the temptations and all that the Lord's providence brings in our life that Romans 8:28 says works for our good. Well, that good is a satisfaction in the soul. We're not left destitute. We're not left wanting. That's what the Psalmist said, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. I shall not be in lack of anything because of this Shepherd whose the Shepherd of my soul. And he provides so abundantly and above anything that I could ever imagine." I would not have imagined that, what happened, but the Lord said it was needful.

Isaiah in Isaiah 26:8 said, "The desire of our soul is to thy name." There is a desire that the Lord gives his children. Now, we all have inordinate desires. You could think of them right now. You could think of things that you want in this life but the child of God is brought to desire the Lord above all things because he opens his hand and he satisfies that desire. You know, so many times I think when we speak of the finished work of Christ and we preach about what Christ has done, I think sometimes you're left out there to go, "Well, if you're saying there's nothing I do, does that mean nothing's going to be done?" Of course it is, but it's done by the one with all power. It's done by the faithful one. Which one is more faithful, you or the Lord? And I can't answer that for you.

But the great effect of grace in the soul is this desire that the Lord puts there toward him. Did you hear that throughout this Psalm of praise? Did you hear David? "Lord, I'll bless thee. I'll extol thee." There is a desire to glorify and to praise the Lord, and I'm not talking about this charismatic get up in the aisles and scream and holler and run around. I'm talking about a felt presence of the Lord in the soul, and you don't want those times to end.

That's how it was that night because even when we started like we were about an hour in, we kept thinking and the comments were being made, we had other plans, like to do some things together, "Well, we're going to get to that. We're going to get to that." But we couldn't because the Lord kept taking us deeper and deeper and that's what our souls desired. He's truly a faithful Lord. Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." That's the whole thing. It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. I pray as long as the Lord gives me breath to stand before you and preach the Gospel, that the Lord empowers me to always not allow any creature merit or any creature power. All that the Lord has done is perfect and he doesn't need you and I and the little strength that we have and he doesn't need you and I to perform something that he is inadequate to do because he has all power, he has all sufficiency.

Paul said it this way in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." You look at it that way, that what you have in you if you have Christ in you is because of him, and that power and the life and the resurrection life that Paul wrote about later in Philippians, he said, "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death." The power of the resurrection. Do you have that resurrection life? And if you do, if you believe the Lord has given you that life, what do you ascribe it to? Studying? Works? Paul said that the power may be of God and not of us. That's very creature debasing language by the apostle.

It's one thing to profess Christianity and it is, we have a lot of those, but it's totally another thing to be a broken-hearted follower of a despised Christ. I have to put that word in there, a despised and rejected Christ. It's not hard to be a follower of the Jesus that loves everyone that the world purports, but to be a true believer and follower of Christ, that road is very narrow. Wide is the gate that leads to destruction but narrow is the way in Christ. God's will is his children shall. When God wills it, it shall be done for them. I love those "shalls." It just speaks to that sovereign power of the Lord to perform it, and he puts the desire in the soul.

I often think when I think about desire and I think about how the Lord works, the Lord usually takes me back to Mary and Martha and how the one was cumbered with so many things. I find in my life, sadly to admit to you, but in my life, it seems like it's filled with more of those Martha times than it is those Mary times. But it shows me something about the sovereignty of the Lord in the day of his power, to bring me off of those things that I'm cumbered about; to bring me to his feet to say, "Lord, teach me. I just want to hear your voice." I'm cumbered about all these things, "Lord, you've got to take me away from those things." And Jesus' words to Mary were, "Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." Do you know why? Because it's in his hand. It's in his hand. She's in his hand. That salvation and that desire is not taken from the child of God. Oh, those enemies come to rob us of it but the Lord is faithful to bring forth and he opens that hand and he satisfies the desire of every living thing.

Every child of God must be satisfied and brought to true contentment and that's what I was saying to the children. And I know, one thing about being a dad is when the children are younger, your voice seems to be heard a lot more, but as the children get older, there's just not a desire to hear that voice much anymore. But that's okay. My desire is that they hear the Shepherd's voice and that he proves to them what he has proved to me, is that he is life, and he is the only reason for life, and he's the only reason I can stand before you now with joy and peace and love because of his life in my soul. I often wonder what it would be like to not have that life and how miserable it would be to just grope in the dark and keep looking and looking and looking and looking for something to satisfy. The next whim, the next desire, whatever it would be and never be fulfilled. But my Lord says right here he satisfies the desire of everything that he has made alive. Every living thing.

Turn with me a little bit over to Psalm 107 real quickly. I read this this morning and this Psalm 107, I'm going to leave you to read the whole Psalm at your own perusal but I wanted to pick out, this is another Psalm of praise or a Psalm that David wrote and he says this phrase throughout this Psalm and we're going to begin in 21 where that phrase is. "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" He says that a lot throughout that. You can see it over in 8, you can see it in 15.

Let's go on to 22, "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing. They that go down to the sea in ships," now, I want you to listen. I hope the Lord directs you experientially into how deep this is because he says something here I hope that it's something that you've experienced because every child of God must be brought to experience it this way.

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep." It's in the depth of the soul.

"For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof." He openeth his hand and these waves come into our lives.

"They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble." We know the Psalmist is talking about soul work now because he brings the soul into it and he says, "Their soul is melted because of trouble." Have you ever been there where your soul seems to be so cast down as the Psalmist is many times? But here's the verse I was trying to get to,

"They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." Have you ever been brought to the end of your wits? That's what he does to the child of God, he brings them to the end of themselves and all of their planning and all of their scheming and all of their mind work. That's a terrible thing the way our mind runs at times, but when the Lord brings the end of the wits' end, he brings it with these trials or these afflictions or whatever way that he brings it into your life and the end of it is, an emptying of yourself so that he fills you with a desire for himself. He satisfies that desire

and he gives that desire but it must be when we're emptied of self because we can't serve two masters.

"They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven." Then that 31 again, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Yes, the Lord must bring us to our wits' end, to fill us with himself. I thought about that as I sat in that room. I had thought about this passage, like I said, two or three weeks earlier and I never knew that the Lord would bring it so powerfully to me that night and tell me that's the text for today because that's the way he works in my life and he is faithful to do that. But I don't think that's how I would have chosen it for me to be taught that way, but I can stand today and say that I am thankful. Only by him can I say that.

And the last thing I'd like to say is just to focus on that last little part, "of every living thing." I've made reference to it a couple of times. The dead, they have no understanding. They can't understand the depth of Christ and what he's done and they grope in the dark to make a Christ that's of their liking. And I know, I've been taught, that I'm not going to be the one that can persuade man, that it's the Lord himself who must do that. It's the Lord himself who must open the heart. It's the Lord himself who gives life. David said in Psalm 79:11, "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die." We're appointed to die. We were all dead in Adam, however, the great Lord of life has given us life in his Son, resurrection life, and he gives us desires toward him. And not only does he give us desires but he satisfies them. You think about how many desires, inordinate ones we have and how we can't satisfy them. We can't, but this great faithful Lord, he openeth his hand and he satisfies the desires of every living thing.

In closing, I'm going to read the rest of this Psalm. "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them." You sit there and you say, "Oh, what about that fear?" He said, "I'll put my fear in their hearts." All of him. All of him.

"The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy." That's why I said when the Lord reveals his judgment and his justice, the child of God is made to bow at his sovereignty and say, "Yes, Lord, it is good in your sight."

"My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."

Dear heavenly Father, may you add thy power and thy clarity and, Lord, may you indeed satisfy the desire of your giving to our soul this hour and the hour to come as it pleases you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.