

“Praise His Marvelous Works”  
Psalm 111  
(Preached at Trinity, August 5, 2012)

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’ve often seen, the Psalms are filled with glorious expressions of praise. **Psalm 111** is the first of three psalms that begin with הַלְלוּ יְהוָה – Hallelujah. And then after skipping Psalm 114, Psalms 115, 116, & 117 each end with hallelujah. This section of the Psalter is known as the Hallelujah Psalms.
2. Psalms 111 & 112 serve as companions.
  - A. Psalm 111 displays God’s goodness in His mighty works. Psalm 112 speaks of the man who follows this God.
  - B. Both are acrostic psalms. With the exception of the first line, each of the 22 lines (not verses) of Psalm 111 begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
  - C. There are nine acrostic psalms in the Psalter including Psalms 9, 25, 34, 37. Probably the best known is Psalm 119 because the sections are so clearly defined. We don’t know for certain why they used this acrostic pattern. Possibly it was used for poetic beauty.  
It might have aided in memorization which is why we still use acrostic today.
3. The theme of **Psalm 111** is the goodness of God displayed in His works. The word “work” is in **Verses 2, 6, 7** with equivalent words in **Verses 3-4**.  
As the psalmist observes the wondrous works of God his heart is overwhelmed with praise. I’ll divide this sermon into three parts. The first verse sets forth the **Description** of the praise. The last verse gives us the **Duration** of the praise. And sandwiched in between we find the wondrous works of God **Defined**.
  - I. The Description of the psalmist’s praise
    - A. The psalmist describes the intensity of his praise  
"I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart"
      1. This is the only one way to praise God. It is the only way to approach God—with the whole heart.  
How few praise God in this way
      2. Most people do not praise God at all. They receive from Him. They enjoy His goodness—and then they curse Him.  
**Romans 1:21 KJV** - "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
        - a. The second word for praise in **Verse 1** is הַלְלוּ
        - b. They dismiss Him. They suppress His glory.

3. And then there are those who praise Him half-heartedly. This describes most professors of Christianity today. Their heart is just not in it.  
**Matthew 15:8 KJV** - "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me."  
**2 Timothy 3:5 KJV** - "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof . . ."
  4. Our heart will always pursue the things we love.  
**Matthew 6:19-21 KJV** - "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: <sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
  5. Your heart will expose your true condition before God  
**Matthew 12:34-35 KJV** - "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. <sup>35</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
- B. After describing the intensity of his praise he gives the context of his praise  
**Psalms 111:1 KJV** - "in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation."
1. We praise God while alone. It consumes our life. But the people of God praise Him together. We are a part of a body. The Christian should never be seen outside the context of the community. The Psalms often present praise in the context of the covenant community.  
**Psalms 34:3 KJV** - "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."
  2. This must be the heartbeat of our church—that we gather together with our whole heart and praise God. Is this what people see when they visit us?
- II. The Delight of the psalmist's praise – we find here God's wondrous works defined
- A. His works are great – **Verse 2**  
**Psalms 111:2 NAU** - "Great are the works of the LORD"
1. Those who delight in Him make His works their chief interest  
Those who delight in God also delight in His works.  
"sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."  
**NAS** - "*They are* studied by all who delight in them."  
עִרְשׂוּ – to enquire, study, ponder
  2. He discovers them to be great
  3. Do you study the greatness of God's works? Do you marvel in their greatness? Do you take great pleasure in His works? Does it lead to praise?

4. You might stop to consider this: the greatness of His works is sometimes veiled.

Spurgeon: "Those who love their Maker delight in his handiwork, they perceive that there is more in them than appears upon the surface, and therefore they bend their minds to study and understand them."

- B. In **Verses 3-9** the psalmist illustrates the fruit of his meditations upon the goodness of God.

1. **Verse 3** – they display the character of God  
"honorable, glorious, righteous"

a. The word for "honorable" means "majesty" or "splendor"  
In fact the two words here are close synonyms.

b. And "righteous" – All of God's words display His righteousness.  
Notice, God's holy character is unchanging  
"and his righteousness endureth for ever."

c. There is no greater work nor display of His glory than in the redemption of His people.

**Ephesians 3:20-21 NAU** - "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever."

His righteousness is displayed gloriously in redemption.

2. **Verse 4** – after reflecting upon the works of God the psalmist discovers they are worth remembering. God has purposed that they be remembered.

a. God has given us the gift of memory. We are to fill up our memories with the glorious works of God.

b. It is in the remembrance of God's works that our hearts are lifted up in praise.

c. Israel fell into sin when they failed to remember God's wondrous works

**Psalms 78:11 KJV** - "And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them."

**Psalms 106:21-23 NAS** - "They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt, <sup>22</sup> Wonders in the land of Ham, *And* awesome things by the Red Sea. <sup>23</sup> Therefore He said that He would destroy them"

d. We must be continually reminded of God's great compassion displayed in His works

3. **Verses 5-6** – God is ever faithful – He never forgets His covenant nor His covenant people - "he will ever be mindful of his covenant."

a. The psalmist is reminded of God's rich provision for His people  
"He hath given meat unto them that fear him"

b. God provided richly for Israel. He brought them out of Egypt with great substance. He fed them with manna, opened springs of water. He provided for them richly in Canaan. They continually witnessed the "power of His works" (verse 6).

Finally, God gave them Canaan, the heritage of the other nations.

- c This has great implications for us. He feeds and satisfies our soul  
There are those who are never satisfied, always filled with discontent, always looking for something more or something different.  
Those who are filled with discontent have closed their eyes to that which truly satisfies.  
**Psalm 107:9 KJV** - "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."
- d. Jeremiah Burroughs wrote: "I have sufficient portion between Christ and my soul abundantly to satisfy me in every condition." He adds, "to be well skilled in the mystery of Christian contentment is the duty, glory and excellence of a Christian."
4. **Verses 7-8** speak again of God's faithfulness
- a. His works are faithful and just - "verity and judgment"  
**1 John 1:9 KJV** - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. The NASB translates it "truth and justice"  
This fits well with what comes next:  
"all his commandments *are* sure"  
"They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness."
- c. All of God's purposes will stand fast. They will not fail; they cannot fail. All of His works are a part of His redemptive plan for His people.
5. **Verse 9** sums up the glory of God's works  
"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever"
- a. On one hand this is referring to God's great deliverance of Israel from the hand of the Egyptians. He remembered His covenant.  
**Exodus 2:23-24 KJV** - "the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."
- b. On the other hand this had a much greater fulfillment—the ultimate fulfillment. It is all flowing forth from God's eternal covenant of redemption.  
"he hath commanded his covenant for ever"  
This speaks of Divine decree settled in eternity.
- c. God is saving His people – He has accomplished and is accomplishing their redemption.
- d. He is awe inspiring in all His Divine essence  
**Verse 9** - "holy and reverend *is* his name." (Name describes being)  
אָוֶרָה – "awesome" or "awe inspiring" – It describes a condition of being smitten with awe.

### III. The Duration of the psalmist's praise

- A. The psalmist describes the everlasting nature of the praise of God  
 "his praise endureth for ever."  
 1. This is because His works have an everlasting effect  
 2. This has been consistent throughout this psalm  
**Verse 3** - "his righteousness endureth for ever."  
**Verses 7-8** - "all his commandments *are* sure. <sup>8</sup> They stand fast for ever and ever"  
**Verse 9** - "he hath commanded his covenant for ever"
- B. Who is it that recognizes this?  
 1. The wise man recognizes the greatness of God's works.  
 2. This is the man who recognizes the splendor and majesty of God. He stands before God with awe and holy reverence. This is the wise man.  
 3. The word for "beginning" means first and chief  
 To know God and walk with Him and properly reverence Him is first above all things.  
 "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom"  
 4. The Godly man who walks in the ways of God is wiser than all of the wisdom this world has to offer.  
**Psalms 119:99-100 KJV** - "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation. <sup>100</sup> I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."  
 5. Godly wisdom always results in right behavior.  
 "a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*"
- C. Contrast this with the man that ignores the glory of God  
**Psalms 92:5-6 KJV** - "O LORD, how great are thy works! *and* thy thoughts are very deep. <sup>6</sup> A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this."  
**Psalms 14:1 KJV** - "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."  
 1. These are two different words for "fool" but they have similar meanings:  
 It means "senseless" – like a brute beast  
 2. Unbelieving eyes are shut against the marvelous works of God.

#### Conclusion:

- Often we hear people say, "God, we worship you not for what you do but for who you are." That may sound spiritual and they may be sincere but we must never dismiss God's glorious displays of Himself in His works.  
 The Bible calls us to praise God not only for the excellence of who He is, but also for what He does.
- May we be students of the mighty works of God, always studying how glorious He is, how wonderful are His works.
- And as we witness the mighty works of God may it draw us to glorious praise, everlasting, unending praise.