

# Let the Peoples Praise You (Psalm 67)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Amen. Thank you, Clay and Grant. I am thoroughly excited to get to preach this morning, but I'm going to be honest, I could probably listen to y'all play and sing just a little bit more. And I think that'd be a wonderful service together. If you have your Bible, turn me to Psalm 67, right there in the middle of Scripture. Now we're going to be looking at this missionary song, as Charles Spurgeon calls it. It's a Psalm 67.

In my office, I have a very small book on missions, many books on missions, but one book particularly, in the introduction, Pastor David Platt reflects on the reality of lostness among the unreached.

And this is what he writes. He writes, I was near Yemen not long ago. Northern Yemen has approximately 8 million people. Do you know how many believers there are in northern Yemen? 20 or 30.

Out of 8 million people, the populations of Alabama and Mississippi combined, there are likely more believers in your Sunday school class or a couple of small groups at your church than there are in all of northern Yemen.

That is a problem. It is a problem because millions of people in the northern part of Yemen have no access to the gospel. They join millions and millions of other unreached peoples in the world who are born, live, and die without ever even hearing the good news of what God has done for their salvation in Christ.

[ 1 : 2 0 ] He continues to write this. He writes, it's the primary responsibility of every pastor, of every local church, to love people in that church and to love people in that community.

All toward the ultimate end of the name of Christ might be praised among every group of people on the planet. That's what the spirit of Christ wants.

So that's what every Christian, every pastor, and every local church should want. And so I want to spend our short time together this morning with one goal in mind. And that is that each of us may commit our lives to this mission of God, proclaiming the gospel among the nations.

Psalm 67, like I mentioned, Charles Spurgeon calls this a missionary song. But I hope that as we read this together today that we may be convicted and challenged and be thoroughly committed to prayerfully persisting and proclaiming God.

That all the peoples may praise God. Psalm 67, beginning in verse 1. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, say, la, that your way may be made known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

[ 2 : 3 8 ] Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon the earth, say, la.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase. God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him.

Now this simple, short missionary psalm gives us a beautiful insight into the worship of God, right? It's just a very simple, cursory read of this psalm. Look at the commands here.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let the peoples praise you, let the nations be glad and sing for joy. Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the ends of the earth fear him.

With a simple reading of this text, we can already get the main idea, right? God's praise among the nations. God being praised among the nations. And this praise of the nations starts with you and I.

[ 3 : 3 8 ] So in this passage, we first see that we are created and commanded to worship God. This passage is operating on top of a biblical principle that is throughout the scriptures.

And that biblical principle is that we are created for the purpose of praising and worshiping and glorifying God. We see this in the Old Testament in passages like Isaiah 43, where throughout the chapter it's clear, but in verse 7, he writes, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

Later in Isaiah 43, verse 21, the people whom I formed for myself, that they might declare my praise. Even more familiar, Psalm 139, verses 13 and 14.

For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Psalm 95, 6. O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker. Here's the idea. God made me so I should worship him.

[ 4 : 49 ] God created me. God crafted me. God knit me together. Therefore, I must worship him as my creator, as the almighty God. I was created. Therefore, I must worship my creator.

It's a simple truth, but it's one that, if we're honest, we struggle with. We fail to do. We're created to worship God, to live our lives absolutely and completely for him.

But even on our best day, we fall short due to our present sinful nature. So because we are tempted to worship elsewhere, we are further commanded in this passage.

We are created, but we are also commanded to worship God. Praise the Lord. Sing with joy to the Lord. Worship God. These are frequent commands in scripture.

And it's commanded because it's something we honestly just need reminding of sometimes. There are things that distract us, things that overwhelm us, that cause our praise to be absent to the ears of God.

[ 5 : 47 ] We choose to worship other things even sometimes. Think of the Israelites in Exodus chapter 32, right? They had been miraculously delivered from Egyptian captivity in the book of Exodus.

They had been delivered through the amazing and wondrous plagues that God had sent on those that held his people in captivity. God had delivered them. He had parted the seas so that he walked through on dry land with an enemy at their back.

He had led them with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. He had shown them his love, his provision, his grace, his mercy time and time and time again.

Yet when Moses went up to Mount Sinai, the people of God turned their back on God and turned to Aaron, the high priest, and said, Make for us a golden calf that we may worship it instead.

You see, our heart designed to worship God seems to work overtime, right? It seems to work overtime at finding other things to show worship and praise and the purpose of our lives instead of God.

[ 6 : 51 ] The theologian John Calvin refers to our heart as a perpetual factory of idols, meaning that our hearts are just conditioned and they're bent on finding things to worship, yet often it is not the worship of God, it is the worship of his creation.

As Paul writes in Romans 1, we exchange the glories of the immortal creator God for the fleeting works of his creation. We choose to worship lesser things.

That's the point C.S. Lewis makes in his book, *The Weight of Glory*. He writes, If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised us in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. We are far too easily pleased. So that's the story of Scripture, right?

We are created in the image of God, yet because of our sinful nature, we choose to worship other things. We rebel and we run far from God. But God demonstrates his love for us.

[ 8 : 01 ] And that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The beauty of the Gospel is that God loved us anyway. He would look at mankind, sinful and wretched that we are, and love us so much so that he would give his only begotten Son to die an undeserved death on a sinner's cross, so that by his blood and sacrifice our sins might be forgiven, and that we would no longer be children of wrath, yet sons and daughters of the Most High God.

We do not worship some deified dictator who demands our praise undeservingly. We worship the Creator God that breathed all things into existence, and made a way by his own blood, that we may have life and forgiveness of sins in his name.

He alone is worthy of our praise, and our hearts were created, fashioned, cultivated for that singular purpose of worshiping him. Yet if we, who know of God through his works and through his word, need to be commanded and reminded to praise God, what of those that have little to no access to the Gospel, who do not know of God, know knowledge of God, they're created with the same purpose, to worship God, they're commanded to the same practice, to worship God, yet they are unable to experience the forgiveness of sins, and unable to worship God, because the Gospel has not reached them yet.

This leads us to our second truth of this passage, though. We are created and commanded to worship God, but we are also burdened and blessed for the worship of God among the nations. Look again at the heart behind Psalm 67. There's an invocation being made, a request being made to God, and see if you pick up the language here. Verse 1, may God be gracious to you.

[ 9 : 52 ] I'm asking him to be gracious to us, and bless us, and make his face shot upon us, so that his way may be made known on the earth. Then again, another invocation, let the peoples praise you, O God.

Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the ends of the earth fear him. There's a request being made on this psalmist, that all of the earth may know of God and worship him.

There's a burden in the heart of this psalmist, for all of earth, all the peoples, to know of God, to know his salvation, to see his face, to know his saving power, and worship him, as they were created to worship him.

There's a burden in his heart, and I say there should be a burden in our heart, for those who do not know the Lord. If you remember, as we were working through the book of Acts, there's this huge shift, as the gospel begins to be preached to the Gentiles.

The apostle Peter saw a vision, and God began to extend salvation, the gospel proclamation, to the Gentiles, those who weren't Jewish, or part of God's elect in the Old Testament.

[ 10 : 56 ] And so we were looking at it as a huge shift, because it almost seems as though, when you read throughout the Bible, it almost seems as though, that God shows favor on the Israelites, and everyone else can just suffer his wrath.

It almost seems as though, if you read the Old Testament, it seems as though God loves a particular group of people, and everyone else, he just casts out, discards, and allows to suffer his wrath.

Yet there's another biblical principle, that I want us to allow to inform our understanding, of the mission of God in the Old Testament. It's throughout, but in 2 Peter 3, Peter, the apostle Peter writes this.

He writes that God wills, God wills, it is the will of God, he desires that none should perish. God does not delight, in the death of those whom he created for himself.

God wills that none should perish. So looking at this, God's scope of redeeming mankind, has always, from the very beginning, had the whole of earth in mind.

[ 11 : 58 ] God's redeeming purposes throughout scripture, always was intended for the whole of earth, all the peoples. He tells the first worshipers, Adam and Eve, what does he tell them after he created them?

Be fruitful, fill the earth, subdue it. After exercising judgment on mankind's sin, through the flood, God commands Noah and his family in Genesis 9, be fruitful, multiply, increase greatly on the earth, and multiply in it.

A few chapters later, Genesis 12, he tells Abram, I will make you a great nation, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you.

We could read the rest of the Old Testament as evidence, but God's plan has always been that all of his creation, all of his peoples, be in line with, and worshiping their creator.

It has always been the plan of God. Instead, we don't see God showing favor on Israel at the expense of everyone else. Instead, God shows favor on his people so that all the peoples of earth may look to God's people, may look to us, and know that he alone is God.

[ 13 : 08 ] That he alone can satisfy, he alone can provide, he alone can save. The psalmist, who would have been a Jew, knows this. And though Jesus had not yet come, though the Holy Spirit did not yet indwell, though the great commission had not yet been issued, this psalmist prays that all the people of earth, which would include the Gentiles, may praise God.

He looks at the world around him and he sees brokenness. He sees the vain pursuits. He sees the sin. He sees the tragedy all around him. And his desire is that they may come to know God and worship him.

He is burdened by the lost in our world. Charles Spurgeon, he states on this passage that the great theme of this psalm is the participation of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah.

This is important. This is a big deal because he is burdened for the worship of God among the nations. And he knows that one of the primary ways in which the nations may come to know of God is through the blessings of God on his people.

So we are burdened for the worship of God among the nations. We are also blessed for the worship of God among the nations. Look at verses one and two again. Verse one, may God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us.

[ 14 : 34 ] That, so that, the purpose being that your way may be made known on earth. Your saving power among all nations.

The psalmist is praying for blessings and extended grace. He is praying that God's presence may be with his people so much so that the people around him may look to the people of God and see that he alone can save.

There's a few books in the library that I was looking at this week that have old bulletins from this church. And I just happened upon Sunday, May 23rd, 1976, this congregation ended their service by singing the Aaronic benediction, the benediction of Aaron from Numbers 6.

And I want to encourage you to think of Numbers 6 as we read through this and see if anything sounds familiar to you today. Numbers 6, verse 24, see if this blessing sounds familiar. The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. This prayer for blessing in the Old Testament, even from back in Numbers, is being referenced here in Psalm 67 for the purpose of seeing that God, we pray that you may bless us.

[ 15 : 54 ] But there's a purpose in this blessing. There's a reason for this blessing. And now I think we see that pretty clear as we look at this. There's a quote by James Montgomery Boyce who Pastor Brett quotes all the time.

But he discusses our desire of blessing and he writes this. He writes, usually all we mean by asking God to bless us is that we want God to help us succeed at something or enable us to make money or give us the job, house, or care that we desire.

But although such forms of material blessing are not excluded from this Aaronic benediction, this prayer in Numbers 6, they are only a part of it and a lesser part.

more desirable is that God would himself enter into a gracious personal relationship with his people. You see, the greatest blessing that you and I can receive is a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The greatest blessing that we can receive and partake in is a salvation and a relationship with Jesus Christ. So the prayer being referenced here is not for God to bless them materially.

[ 17 : 08 ] Instead, he's fervently praying that God may be close to his people, that we may know him, that he may shine his face on us and that we may set our face on him and be ever satisfied in his presence.

He prays that we may feel his warmth, his grace, and that we may be at peace in his loving arms.

He prays that we may experience God's blessing, that relationship, all the more, so much so that an unbelieving world may look on the lives of God's people and they may see peace in suffering, content in great loss, forgiveness in the face of utter betrayal.

The prayer is that we may experience God's presence, God's life, so much so that people may look at our lives and the brokenness that we experience and know that the only explanation for our lives in the face of all the brokenness we've experienced is that there's a God who's real that makes all the difference.

Lord, bless us. Be gracious to us so that the world may know that you are God. this Jewish psalmist is burdened by the lostness in the world, including the Gentiles and his prayer is that God may be worshipped among all the nations.

Again, look at Genesis 6 through 9. There's, again, the story of the worldwide flood. I referenced a second ago that after the flood, God told Noah to be fruitful and fill the earth again. Essentially, bear my glory, reflect me amongst all the world.

[ 18 : 41 ] But what do we find God's people doing two chapters later in Genesis 11? Two chapters later, after being told to be fruitful and fill the earth, spread yourselves out, fill the earth with my glory, we read in Genesis 11, verse 4, they say this, come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens.

Let us make a name for ourselves lest we be dispersed over the face of the earth. Essentially, they want to do the exact opposite that God had just commanded them to do.

Rather than living lives of worship in obedience and faith to the commands of God, they seek to make a name for themselves at the expense of the rest of the world. So God confuses their languages, scatters them, yet in the book of Acts we see what?

A great reversal. Though there's confusion from the Tower of Babylon in Genesis 11, there is clarity through the Holy Spirit. So in Acts, we see the reversal of this confusion and the Holy Spirit descends on God's people and the gospel begins to spread among all peoples once again.

So we're going to learn from the example of the Israelites and apply it into this passage here, Psalm 67, for us personally here, we as the church, we as the church must have a great burden for the lost in this world.

[ 20 : 04 ] What a tragedy it would be if we ever grew content in building a name and a building for ourselves at the expense of the rest of the world dying and going to hell. Places where the gospel has not yet preached.

Places like northern Yemen where there's 20 to 30 Christians in a region of 8 million people. We dare not neglect our own community, absolutely. But if we do not go to the nations, some of them will never hear of God and they will suffer eternity in hell.

All peoples have been created and commanded to worship God yet how can they worship God if they have not experienced his saving power? That's the point Paul makes in Romans 10 verse 13.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have not heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

How are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

[ 21 : 16 ] So how can they worship if no one has told them of God? That's the simple point that John Piper makes with a simple sentence.

Missions exist because worship doesn't. There are places in our world where the worship of God is not non-existent.

Therefore we must be burdened by the absence of worship among the nations and by God's blessing of a personal relationship with you with us and him through his son for each of us may our blessings lead to the worship among the nations.

And you may be sitting here like alright Evan you've convinced me that sounds great obviously I agree with you but what do we do? Well from this passage I believe a simple application is that we must prayerfully persist in the proclamation of God so that all the peoples may praise God.

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Charles Spurgeon says it this way if sinners will be damned at least let them leap to hell over our bodies and if they will perish let them perish with their arms about their knees imploring them to stay and if hell must be filled at least let it be filled with the teeth of our exertions let not one go there unwarned nor unprayed for.

[ 22 : 38 ] So if we're going to apply this passage we've got to start with prayer. We've got to start with prayer. I want to encourage us to let our prayer lives be saturated with the desire of God being worshipped among the nations.

Let your prayer life be saturated by passages like Psalm 67 where we pray invoke request God to be made known among the nations and for us to be a part of it.

Let your prayer lives be saturated for God's worship being known among the nations. As you pray for our mission team this week and I encourage you to do so pray not only for their safety and their comfort pray for the heathen that knows not yet the Lord.

Pray for these families to be blessed not only with a roof over their head but that they may see the blessings of God upon our team that is there and they may come to know the Lord and his salvation through them that he may see the sacrifices that they have made of finances vacation time comforts of home in order that families and other nations might know the Lord.

Pray for our missionaries that have given their lives to this work of reaching the nations I think of the International Mission Board and many other organizations where people have gone to other places so that the name of God may be known.

[ 23 : 49 ] Pray for these missionaries. Pray that God may raise up missionaries for our midst from us that we may go elsewhere and labor for the sake of the gospel. This is something we know we ought to pray for but do we?

I think so often we fail to pray for missionaries and fail to pray that God will raise up more missionaries out of fear. So often we think of missionaries living amongst the unreached we think of ones who have lost their lives for this mission.

Ones that Pastor Brett mentions regularly such as Ann Judson from Burma or Jim Elliott from Ecuador or William Borden who died before he even reached his mission field. We think of these and we have fear that comes in our hearts and say I don't want to pray that because that may be what happens.

But I want to encourage us to think the story of John and Betty Stamm. John Stamm gave his life to Christ at the age of 15 under the preaching of a blind evangelist in New Jersey while Betty was raised in China to a family of missionaries.

They met at Moody Bible Institute they fell in love and they both felt a strong calling towards the mission field particularly China. So Betty she went ahead and went to China and John came a year later and when they met back together when they both arrived in China and they were finally reunited they got married the very next day.

[ 25 : 13 ] John and Betty Stamm a married couple 25 years old ready to serve God in this field and so they lived there for about a year before they gave birth to their daughter Helen and during this time they labored and loved the people around them there was a civil war breaking out among them when their daughter was only three months old their family was seized by members of the Chinese Communist Party and John and Betty Stamm were martyred for their Christian faith.

As an aside as someone with a baby here's another part of the story their three month old daughter was miraculously found hidden in a sleeping bag two days later by a traveling evangelist.

So God preserved the life of the child but the parents gave their lives as a martyrs for the gospel and shortly before their death John had written to his father about the pressing dangers around them.

They'd been encouraged to leave, they'd been encouraged to flee yet they remained and he wrote to his father about the pressing dangers and he included these verses from E.H. Hamilton another pastor from that area and this is what he wrote afraid of what?

To feel the spirit's glad release to pass from pain to perfect peace the strife and strain of life to cease afraid of that?

[ 26 : 33 ] Afraid of what? Afraid to see the savior's face to hear his welcome and to trace the glory gleam from wounds of grace afraid of that?

Afraid of what? A flash, a crash, a pierced heart brief darkness light, oh heaven's art a wound of his a counterpart afraid of that?

Afraid of what? To enter into heaven's rest and yet to serve the master blessed from service good to service best afraid of that?

Afraid of what? to do by death what life could not baptized with blood a stony plot till souls shall blossom from that spot afraid of that?

Friends, I want to encourage us today don't let fear keep us from praying but even more so don't let fears keep you from doing as God has very clearly commanded each of us to do to proclaim God among the nations so pray Psalm 67 and as we pray let us persistently proclaim of God Thomas Brooks he was a Puritan he wrote that a soul under assurance is unwilling to go to heaven without company there should be something about the desires of where we are going and the knowledge of what God has done for us where we want all the more for others to join us in that so we must be a part of proclaiming the gospel be a part of sharing the gospel to those around you and should God call you elsewhere or give you the opportunity to go be faithful and go finally trust that God will receive his praise this passage ends with confidence that God will bless his people and he will bring a great harvest some point to this being just an answered prayer of God but I like to think of the finish line again of

[ 28 : 33 ] Moses in the book of Exodus he requested to see God's face in Exodus 32 33 and God replies back and says no one can see my face and live reflecting on that reality in response to what

we see in Psalm 67 requesting God to make his face known among us James Montgomery Boyce makes this point and I'll close here he writes this is profoundly true of course no sinner however devout or pious as Moses was can possibly look upon the face of God and survive that holy piercing sight but one day we shall we shall look upon God in the day when all his redeemed people drawn from every tribe and tongue and nation and purged of even the slightest taint of sin stand before his throne to sing praises to the almighty God and to the Lamb in that day God's face will shine upon us in fullest measure we will see him face to face and the beatific vision anticipated by Psalm 67 will be ours in that day our joy will be even greater because great multitudes from all the nations of the earth will be praising

God with us so we must prayerfully persist in the proclamation of God so that all the peoples of earth may praise God both now and forever more this morning will close in a verse of invitation and as they come or in a moment I invite you to begin praying now about how God may be calling you to bring about the praise of all peoples consider how God has blessed you and how he might be calling you to use your blessings to reach the nations you've probably heard Pastor Brett encourage you to put your yes on the table at some point and I want to echo that challenge by reading in closing here the finisher's commitment from the campus crusades and I pray that these words may be true for each of you so here's the finisher's commitment and I pray this may be something you may pray as well this is it with the hope that my generation might be the one to see Jesus' great commission finally fulfilled

I commit to become a finisher of the great commission understanding that to mean I will go if God should lead to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to one of the world's remaining unreached people groups I will pray persistently for the nations and God's glory revealed among them I will disciple others with the focus of mobilizing them to become finishers as well I will live a modest simple financial lifestyle and give sacrificially so that the nations of the world might be blessed through Christ I will with God's help to the best of my ability steward my life in order to maximize effectiveness in God's purpose of making his name known among all the peoples of the world I am not my own I was purchased with a great price my life belongs to God and his purposes that's my goal for my life and my family and I pray it may be for you as well let's pray father thank you for this time you've given us lord I pray that as we conclude and think through this passage and the implications it has for each of us may we be burdened for the lost in our world may you not allow us to be content with building a name for ourselves instead may we make your name known to all those who do not know you may we be finishers of the great commission ones who are actively and persistently proclaiming you to all those you allow us to encounter and God

I pray specifically that our church may send out more missionaries in the days ahead particularly to the places the gospel has not yet reached Lord that's my prayer Lord I hope that's our prayer and Lord I pray that you may do a mighty work today it's in your name we pray amen as we close we're going to sing a verse of invitation I invite you to stand with me and turn to hymn 75 in the presence of Jehovah and I pray that as we sing you may if there's any need you may have to respond today that you may come forward and see me otherwise let us sing together and worship our Lord God Thank you.