

God's Preeminence and Providence

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[0 : 00] Father, it is our privilege to stand before your people to open your word.

! We ask the Lord that you would make your word plain and clear, that you would do what I could not possibly do.

To cause your people to be inspired by your word. To cause your word to come alive. Lord, grant to me articulation.

Lord, cause me to decrease as you increase. Be glorified, O Lord, at this moment. This is our prayer in Jesus' name.

And all God's people say, Amen. Amen. This morning, we continue our months-long series in the book of Psalms.

[1 : 16] Specifically, the 15 Psalms of Ascents. Psalms 120 to 134.

These Psalms were sung as the Israelites traveled from various places to Jerusalem three times each year.

One could imagine that given the nature of these journeys, if you can imagine it, these Psalms were history-filled.

They told stories of the experiences of the Israelites. They were hopeful and anticipatory in nature. Looking forward to something perhaps that God had promised. And they helped to remind these people of their distinctiveness, their uniqueness.

[2 : 28] That unlike others, they belonged to God. So these were songs that lightened their hearts, lightened their feet.

In the Psalm we come to today, Psalm 132, We clearly see all three of those components that we mentioned.

History of obedience. Hopefulness based on God's promises. And national pride. Having been chosen by God. I can easily understand how a song like that, being sung by a caravan, would help to ease the weight of the journey while bringing people together as they walked under an open sun on dusty roads.

Ultimately, though, as we consider this Psalm, as we closely examine Psalm 132, the longest of the Psalms of ascent, it is revealed very clearly that like the other pages of the Bible, this Psalm rests firmly on two pillars.

The preeminence of God. And the providence of God. Listen to the word of God.

[4 : 18] Found in Psalm 132. Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.

I will not enter my house or get into my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.

Behold, behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah. We found it in the fields of Jah. Let us go to his dwelling place.

Let us worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness. Let your saints shout for joy. For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

[5 : 46] The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back. One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.

If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I will teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.

For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his dwelling place. This is my resting place forever.

Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions. I will satisfy her poor with bread.

Her priests I will clothe with salvation. And the saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to sprout for David.

[6 : 48] I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame. But on him his crown will shine.

I believe as we've said that the essence of what this psalmist is saying to us is this.

believers should live in view of God's preeminence and his promise and his providence.

Believers should live in view of God's preeminence and his providence. what are we talking about here? When we talk about God's preeminence we all we are saying is that there is none like him. He is the greatest. He is far above all that we can think of or even imagine.

[7 : 58] He is preeminent. He is above all. Indeed the psalmist opens with these words that I think aptly summarize this entire psalm.

Listen to what the psalmist says. Remember O Lord. Remember O Lord. right away David recognizes God's preeminence and he appeals to his providence.

These words both introduce and summarize the psalm. They are pregnant both with recognition of who God is. He is the Lord. He is the Lord.

He is greater than the one who penned the words to this psalm. He is preeminent. And what he has the power to do.

David the psalmist writes remember O Lord. Remember O Lord. The psalmist appeals to his remembrance mindful that he has the power to bring to pass what he had promised.

[9 : 25] Preeminent and providential. Therefore I've chosen to examine this psalm under two heads.

God's preeminence and God's providence. And as we do as we consider this psalm we not only should consider those two attributes of God but we should also think about what they should cause us to do.

How do we respond to these truths as we live out our daily lives. We will see how in a moment how the Israelites responded.

How David responded. The question is how are we to respond. Psalm 132 the psalm that we have just read is full of history and symbolism.

The psalmist writes about the Ark of the Covenant in this psalm which would have been built more than 500 years earlier than when this psalm was penned.

[10 : 53] And just to give us some perspective listen to the words the instructions that the Lord gave to Moses when he commanded him to build the Ark these words found in Exodus.

And let them make me a sanctuary the Lord says that I may dwell in their midst exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture.

So you shall make it. They shall make an ark of acacia wood two cubits and a half and shall be its length. A cubit and a half its breadth and a cubit and a half its height.

You shall overlay it with pure gold inside and outside. You overlay it and you shall make on it a molding of gold around it.

God is very precise with respect to what he wanted them to do. God's preeminence is shown in the fact that this was to be done for him alone and not for anyone else.

[12 : 13] No one deserved this kind of attention. He alone is God. The psalmist recalls the fact that God called upon Moses to build this Ark of the Covenant.

But the psalm is not only filled with the history of the Ark, it's also filled and it speaks of the Davidic Covenant as well. Many, if not all of you, will recall that the book of Samuel records that the prophet Nathan said to David that the Lord has established his kingdom forever and that David would build the Lord a house.

And in response, in response, having heard the words of the prophet, this is what David said. David said, for there is none like you, Lord.

And there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. David, in response to being told that he would build a kingdom, that his kingdom will last forever, and that he would build a temple for the Lord, remembered that God is preeminent, that there is none like him, there is none beside him.

This word, preeminence, speaks of surpassing others. It speaks of superiority.

[14 : 10] It speaks of being transcendent, existence or experience beyond the normal. Revelation, in Revelation we hear John describes this transcendent one.

He says, worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

there's only one, one God. And Paul reminds us in 1st Timothy, chapter 6, which he will display at the proper time.

And he who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. So we see that there is none like God, and in this psalm that we come to, we see the psalmist appealing to this preeminent God, the only God, God, he appeals to him in verse 1, remember Lord, in David's favor.

[15 : 53] You and I don't appeal to someone in this manner who is lesser than we are. We see in this psalm that not only does he appeal to God, but we see his response to this preeminent God.

Listen to what the psalmist says. He says, remember, O God, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardship he endured, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the mighty one of Jacob, the mighty one of Jacob, God.

I will not enter my house or get into my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the mighty one of God.

The response that David has towards God is one that is, that shows where his priority was.

It shows that David was passionate and he pursued the building of the temple in this instance.

[17 : 20] What is the point we are making here? The point is that when we come face to face, when we understand who God is, when we understand that he is the preeminent one, it ought to cause us to behave in a certain way.

It ought to cause us to be passionate. It ought to cause us to give priority to the things of God.

David says, I will not sleep, I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place, for the mighty one of Jacob.

Begs a question. How do you and I respond to the preeminence of God? How do you and I respond to this one who is above all things, who created all things?

How do we respond? Are we unaware? Are we oblivious of his existence? or his presence?

Or do we, as David did, give priority to the things of God? not only do we see David's response in this regard, David being giving priority and being passionate and pursuing the works of Christ, we see also in verse 7, look at what David, look at what the psalmist writes to us.

[19 : 05] He says, let us go to his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool. And here we see corporate worship.

The psalmist tells us that this preeminent one, he deserves to be worshipped. Yes, he deserves to be worshipped individually, but let us come together.

Let us worship him together. David, when he brought the ark to Jerusalem, declared that they ought to worship him together, that they ought to worship the Lord together.

Not only do we see David appealing to this preeminent one in verse 1, but we also see it in verses 9 through 10. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy.

For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. David appeals to the Lord. David makes an appeal to the Lord, asking him to do what only he could do.

[20 : 29] Let your priests cause them to be clothed with righteousness, cause them to come into your presence righteous, righteous men.

Well, if the first half of this psalm dealt with preeminence, the second half deals with the providence, the providence of God.

what is the providence of God? When we speak of the providence of the God, what are we talking about? The providence of God is about the protective care, God of nature, of all of us.

God's general and specific involvement in creation. The providence of God is about his involvement in creation.

Having created it, God did not stop there, but he remains involved in his creation. The Heidelberg Catechism says, providence is God's God Almighty.

[21 : 51] and God's Almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so He governs them.

He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures. Jesus. The providence of God helps us to see that if there is one speck of dust on the ground that He is not aware of, or if He did not permit, then He can't be God at all.

The providence of God helps us to see that everything is under the will and the design of God. Everything that we are, everything that we have ever done, is under His control, is under His power. The providence of God gives us hope, no matter what our circumstances, whether it's something that is, whether it is something that is desirable, or undesirable, because we know that ultimately, God is in control.

He sets the boundaries of everything that happens in our lives. And that is why Job was able to say that the Lord gives and the Lord takes away.

[23 : 31] Blessed be the name of the Lord. It's because of the providence of God. That is why David, that is why the psalmist is able to say to the Lord, Lord, remember the promises that you have made.

These promises that survived generations, hundreds of years. It says, remember them. these promises made to men who were disobedient.

These promises, the providence of God survived a man who disobeyed the Lord and chose a servant over his wife.

the providence of God survived a woman who was to be killed being plotted against.

The providence of God survived a man who, a king who slept with one of his servants' wives.

[24 : 58] providence of God survived the destruction of the city that he said he enjoyed and would live in.

The providence of God survived army after army breaking down the walls of the city of Jerusalem. the providence of God. So how are you and I to respond to that? How do we consider all of this?

The way we do it is quite simply no matter where you and I are we ought to know that yes I'm not perfect where I am I don't want to be here but this is what I know that God is in control and he has built around me walls and listen there is no way you can get out of that you can't get out of it God is providential he orchestrates our lives he sets the boundaries for what happens in our lives that is why when we look at verse 11 of this psalm we find these words the Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back the

Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back only one that is providential can do that only God could say to a man that your kingdom will last forever even after he is dead even mindful of his sinfulness and the disobedience and the sinfulness of his children only one that is providential can do that God made a sure oath the psalmist said to David look at what he did further in verse 13 for the Lord has chosen Zion he has desired it for his dwelling place this

[27 : 47] God of providence this providence of God this all powerful God he chose Zion he chose Jerusalem they did not choose him but he chose them but you know the fact of the matter is that we look at this psalm in hindsight we have the benefit of seeing what came after and we know for example when David says that he's going to build a place for the Lord to reside we can refer in the New Testament to Acts chapter 17 where we find these words the

God who made the world and everything in it being Lord of heaven and of earth does not live in temples made by man nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives all mankind life breath and everything and everything in David's day David said I'm going to bring the ark so that the Lord can live among these people Lord tells us he doesn't live in temples so where does he live Romans 8 helps us with this Romans 8 verse 10 tells us but Christ is in you although the body is dead because of sin the spirit is life because of righteousness if the spirit of him who raised

Jesus from the dead dwells in you he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal body through his spirit who dwells in you David wrote about the Lord living in a temple you know that the Lord lives in you and the Lord lives in me through his spirit in the believers through his spirit so the question that clearly must be asked is how do we respond to that how do we respond to the always presence of the Lord in us David and the Israelites they had an occasional experience as it were but you and I have permanent experience because of what Jesus Christ did for us on Calvary this providential God look at what he says in response to the psalmist starting in verse 14 this is my resting place forever here I will dwell for I have desired it then he goes on to say I will abundantly bless her provisions could only be confidential to do that you could to look into the future he says I will abundantly bless her provisions I will satisfy her poor with bread her priests I will close with salvation and her saints will shout for joy there I will make a horn!

to spout for David I prepare a lamp for my anointed his enemies I will clothe with shame but on him his crown will shine God in ways that only he could makes these promises he makes these promises I will bless her provisions I will bless her materially I will satisfy her poor food I will give salvation to my people I will cause them to shout for joy I will change their disposition no matter what the circumstance

[33 : 06] I prepare a lamp for my anointed I prepare a lamp for my Christ his enemies I will clothe with shame but of him his crown will shine only God is able to do this only the one who is above all things only the one who is providential is able to cause these things to happen and so how do you and I how do we respond to all of this how do we respond to all of this we respond to it by doing what David did by finding the Lord by searching for him in all of our circumstances by understanding by seeking to know the will of the

Lord in the circumstances that we face good or bad how do we respond by having faith in the Lord knowing that that which he has promised it will come to pass and let me say that just as they did back then they saw through a glass darkly you and I we don't understand things perfectly and we gotta understand that we gotta respect that that not everything that we read in scripture we are going to understand on this side of Jordan but there's gonna come a day when we will and we will! who is this transcendent and providential God there's a song that we have often sung tells us who he is he is our God you know the song who can light the fires of a thousand burning suns blazing in the heavens there is only one he is our God transcendent there is none like him who commands the nations building up and tearing down silencing his rivals there is holy one he is our God he is our God providential he commands the nations building up and tearing down holy you alone are holy much less in your glory holy

God who would come to save us when we turned away his love conquer us with kindness there is only one there is only one he is our God he is our God the psalmist in Psalm 132 writes about our God this God whose promises survives the ages the one who kings looked up to and called Lord the mighty one of Jacob the transcendent one the one who blesses his people who lives with his people promises!

that he will deliver salvation to them that he will provide for them providential God act in the affairs of man let us pray father we thank you for your word lord we pray that you would cause us to get an even deeper understanding of who you are lord cause us to live in view of the truth that we have talked about today cause us lord to be ever mindful that you are a transcendent god that there is none like you that you are all powerful that you are the creator of all things and thank you lord that you have not abandoned your creation you remain involved you remain providential and so lord we pray in the name of

[38 : 10] Jesus that this truth will inform the way we live inform the way we! approach circumstances whether good or bad oh lord cause joy to rise in our hearts close us with righteousness in the name of Jesus we pray and all God's people say amen