

Ninth Sunday after Trinity

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Preacher: Rev. Daniel Avitan

[0 : 00] We continue on in the summer series in the Psalms. This morning we're in Psalm 65. Psalm 65 is the beginning of a mini set, Psalm 65, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

And they're Psalms of David. This one especially is a harvest psalm. But it's not just a harvest psalm. It seems like there's this allusion to a victory in battle or some sort of redemption that the Lord is doing.

It's a very interesting psalm. And in many ways it's broken up into three sections. In many ways it seems kind of disconnected. But it's very much a psalm that is unified in thought and in progression. So we're going to get into Psalm 65. If you have a Bible, please follow along with me. There should be some Bibles. There's no more Bibles left at the back. That is okay. Maybe share with a friend if you don't have a Bible and you want to follow along.

We are in the age of the influencer. Travel, vlogs, wellness, podcasts, workout gurus, you name it. You probably follow maybe all those categories and more on social media or YouTube.

[1 : 22] And there's a lot of good things to glean from such sources. However, more often than not, they're not simply advertised as tips and tricks to look and think and feel better.

But oftentimes they sell a vision of the good life, of utopia, of the key to unlocking human potential. Full human potential. In some ways, they take on salvific messaging. There's a problem with this kind of thinking.

Because it promises eternal satisfaction and eternal life using the tools and resources of this temporal world. And friends, I'll say this right off the bat.

We are people that have eternal desires and eternal hopes. Things that can't be met in the here and now.

[2 : 23] There's this interesting line from C.S. Lewis' book, *Mere Christianity*, that he wrote, I mean, decades and decades and decades ago. And it's a Christian favorite.

If you haven't read it, I commend it to you. It would be a great summer read. And this is what he says. The Christian says, Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exist.

A baby feels hunger. Well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim. Well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire. Well, there is such a thing as sex.

If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud.

Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing. Our text today is, like I mentioned, a psalm of David, a song of, it's a harvest song.

[3 : 35] But really, it's a song of praise that paints a beautiful picture of what real, eternal satisfaction, real salvation looks like.

It's, in fact, the only picture of utopia that we so desperately want but are unable to achieve. It's something that we crave and it's ever so elusive.

In short, this text praises and extols the triune God for his loving kindness. Another way to say it, for his grace.

That thing that God gives us that is completely undeserved, that he gives us, not because we've curried his favor, but because he is a kind, loving, and good God.

And it is provision for our very souls. So we'll see God's grace described in our text in three ways. First, how God's grace gives us our only satisfaction.

[4 : 34] And we see that in verses 1 to 4, especially in verse 3. The second thing we'll see is how God's grace is our only hope in this life. And we see that in verses 5 to 8.

And finally, how God's grace is greater and more robust than we could ever have imagined or hoped for. And we'll see that in verses 9 to 13. Another way, if you want to go into a bit more of a deep dive into Psalm 65, you can look at it also, the temple, the earth, and the harvest. And we see God's grace in all three of those as well. So let's look first at how God's grace gives us our only true satisfaction. Let's read verses 1 to 4.

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion. And to you shall vows be performed. By the way, Zion is shorthand for Jerusalem. It's the place where God dwells, His house.

O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts.

[5 : 42] We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple. This harvest song does not begin in the fields. It begins in the temple or the house of God in Jerusalem, in Zion, where God's presence is.

And it is not taken for granted, David or the people of God, that they have a privileged position based on anything that they have done.

But rather, it is a means of God's grace that they can even enjoy being in His presence. This is not the prayer of an entitled people. God extends His loving kindness.

He extends His grace to a people that really, truly have no business being in His presence. Yet, it is He who hears prayers. It is He who beckons all flesh to come to Him.

It is He who knows the frailty of people and atones for their sins. I'll just draw your attention quickly to one bit here. Verse 2, it says, O you who hear prayer.

[6 : 48] It seems like an obvious thing. But God hears what you have to say to Him. It is not an exercise in futility where you pray to the ceiling or to the walls around you as if God might hear it but do nothing about it.

God hears prayers in order for Him to act, to answer the prayers. This is a means of grace from God. And we see this in this section because what is it that the people are praying to God for?

Verse 3, When our iniquities prevail against us, you atone for our transgressions. It's a people that know their place. A people that know that they don't have what it takes to stand in the presence of God they are honest about what is happening in their lives.

That they are sinful. That they have broken commands. That they have hurt people. That they have been hurt. And they need God to intervene. And God, He hears their prayers not to just hear but again, so that He can answer their prayers.

To meet their needs. To satisfy their longings and their brokenness that gets in the way of achieving what they desire. God hears your prayers.

[8 : 09] It seems again so elementary to say, but friends, God hears your prayers. He hears your prayers. When you pray, God hears. Sometimes it feels like it's not the case, but God hears your prayers.

When will He answer? How will He answer? That is up to Him. But God delights when His people pray to Him. God who is lacking nothing, who does not need to help you in order to fill some kind of void in His life, as if He needs to help Daniel because He has this desire to be a helpful person. God hears your prayers and chooses to act because He is a God who is loving. That also means that God is not overwhelmed with your prayers.

When you bring things to God that overwhelm you, I mean in verse 3, at the very least, these people have sins and brokenness and hang-ups, maybe addictions, who knows what it is.

There are many things that overwhelm them, but nothing overwhelms God. That's the God who hears our prayers and acts out of love, not out of compulsion, not out of a desire to fill a void, but because of His loving kindness, because of an extension of His grace.

[9 : 35] The guilt that troubles you, the hang-ups that have followed you your whole life, don't overwhelm God. He hears them and they are not impossible for Him to overcome.

In fact, He will. Nothing that shakes you will shake God. And that's a beautiful, wonderful truth. He is able to do it. This text also shows us that God is good and in Him there is no evil.

He did not create us in order to squash us or neglect us or abuse us. There is no ill intent in His design for you and for me.

In fact, it's the opposite. Consider that He desires to satisfy the longings and desires of your heart. Not the things that you want because they're shiny, but the things that you want that are shiny because you want a fulfillment that those things will never fulfill.

Those longings, those desires, He knows them and can satisfy them. Why? Because He has given you, He has created you with such longings, such desires.

[10:46] He has created you with intent in His image and in His likeness. And what does He satisfy us with ultimately? It's His presence. We see this in verse 4.

The longing of the human heart is to know God and be known by Him.

And we, again, alluding to my opening of the influencers, not all of them, but again, this idea that if you follow this program, if you subscribe to this newsletter, if you take in what I have to say, you will somehow connect with something that is transcendent.

You will be complete. But because the human heart is made to know God and be known by Him, we can be, we will be incomplete until we experience that.

Until we know that. Until God makes a way for us to know Him. So what does God, what does He satisfy us with?

[11:57] His self. But also with a guilt-free, redeemed soul. Because that is the entryway into His presence. God is perfect. And He can't have imperfection come into His courts.

He is a good God. He can't have evil come into His courts. So what does He do? He makes a way to deal with the evil. He makes a way to deal with the impurity.

He makes a way to deal with the sin. And we see this in verse 3. He atones for our transgressions. Really, this is a picture of the sacrificial system in the temple where the priest, on behalf of the people, would sacrifice an animal.

The sin would be laid on the animal. And the people, by the shedding of the blood of the animal, would be made right before God. Now, it was not perfect because it had to be done time and time and time again.

But it would ultimately point to what Christ would do on the cross where He would take the sins and the brokenness and the evil and the junk of the world upon His shoulders and die once and for all in our stead so we would be made right in Him.

[13:05] And this is what this first section verses 1-4 is alluding to. Friends, the Christian life, it may seem like it is full of prohibitions and doldrums and stuffiness.

But that would be a false view of the truth. Because again, verse 4, what does it say? Yeah, I mean, pretty good that we get to be in the courts of God to be in His presence.

It says, Blessed is the one who you choose and bring near to dwell in your court so we shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple.

Especially the latter half of verses 4, we shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple. This speaks to on holidays, holy days in ancient Israel how there would be sacrifices but that people would take and eat the meat.

It would be a time of rejoicing, choice drink, choice food. Cares would be left in the past and we would celebrate and it points to a picture of a transcendent joy that awaits those who know and fear the Lord.

[14:17] A kind of joy that accompanies a glad heart and a light spirit. A kind of joy that can transcend the problems in the here and the now.

That's not a promise that we'll be happy all the time. The Christian life can be very difficult. It can, you know, it's difficult on the very basis that we want things, we are selfish, and we will kill and steal and lie and destroy to get them.

And it's hard to fight against that. Sometimes it feels difficult and hard and it's not a happy life all the time but it will be a joy-filled life because we know that whatever we have gone through, whatever we will go through, the worst that we have gone through.

And it's not the end of our story. It's not the thing that will come to define us. Rather, eternity will.

Joy, unspeakable and full of glory is our destination as it is said in other parts of Holy Scripture.

When your spirit is heavy laden with guilt from sin, exhausted with the inability to overcome, when you are beaten down by iniquities, know that there is a God that hears your prayers and delights in atoning your sins and welcoming you into his very presence.

[15:46] That's a thing we come to realize in greater depths more and more as we walk through the Christian life but friends, this is our life. This is what we can expect.

what rivals that kind of grace of the risen Lord Jesus Christ? What influencer did you watch yesterday on YouTube that offers you what the scriptures offer you and guarantee I would put forward to you that there isn't anything that holds a candle to that.

He does what we cannot do and how do we then respond with trust and praise that expresses itself in obedience, prayer, and constantly returning to him when we falter, when we sin.

The life of confession is a life of throwing ourselves once again at the kindness and grace of the Lord. But God doesn't only extend his kindness to his people. Is he the God of all the cosmos but only acts in a regional way?

Put it another way, is he the God of the whole world but it's only for Israel? Because this is a psalm that was written by King David to the people of Israel. The answer is no.

[17:03] Look with me in verses 5 and 8. God is indeed the creator of the cosmos, everything that is created. Therefore he is indeed the God of all people. So this next section, verses 5 to 8, will help us to see how he is not only our hope as people that put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ but he's actually the hope of all the nations.

Look with me, verses 5 to 8. By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, the one who by his strength established the mountains being girded with might, who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples, so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs.

You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy. In this section, we see how God is active in the world from the farthest seas and the ends of the earth.

8b, verse 8b, so the second part of verse 8, you make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy. That's a picture really of everything that stretches from east to west.

It's a picture of the entire world. God is the hope of all people, verse 5, and all people who see the signs of God are in awe of him.

[18:37] I'll just mention something and maybe this is helpful for you guys in your own Bible reading. If you look at verse 5, the second part of it, it says, O God of our salvation, the hope of all, and here it is, the ends of the earth, and you go down to the first part of verse 8 and it says this, so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs.

Whenever you see the same sentence or the same set of words or a title or something like that, and it kind of sandwiches a section, that is something that should draw your attention to the message of a portion.

So here, talking about the ends of the earth, this is a picture of God extending his grace not just to a region but to everywhere. And everything in between is going to fill in the gap.

So when you read something like this, your ears perk up and you see the ends of the earth, you see at the end the ends of the earth, go back, take a look at what it says and see the meaning, what is God getting at when he says the ends of the earth.

It's a bit of an aside, that's a little Bible reading tool that's very, very helpful. But here, it's just that. The ends of the earth is God's domain as well.

[20:00] He extends his grace across the known world. And what's really interesting here is that this is actually speaking of us.

I mean, we, on one hand, we are the people of God. Whenever we read something about Israel, in many ways, we are Israelites ourselves in a spiritual way. We are the people of God.

But we live six time zones away from Jerusalem here. We are very far. We are the ends of the earth here in Canada.

And God has confirmed his word by this very church service this morning. God has extended his grace out to the ends of the earth.

Friends, this is the, I mean, it might seem like we are the center of the earth, okay? You might feel that way. You have a complex. You are at the ends of the earth. And God here has extended his grace to the ends of the earth.

[21:03] It is a wonderful, beautiful picture of God confirming what the scriptures say. there is a specific focus here also on creation. Verses 6 and 7 speak of God creating the land and bringing chaos to order.

Both themes that we see in Genesis, the opening chapters of Genesis. And we see two things about this, about God being creator. That God has left his fingerprints all over creation in terms of the complexity of creation.

creation. But it also speaks of God's infiniteness. So here we see that especially if we go to verse 8 where it says that the ends of the earth will be in all the signs of God.

That God has created mountains where there weren't any. He has calmed the seas that were raging. He has taken what didn't exist and made something out of it. He is the creator of all things. And just to put it in perspective, how infinite God is, I mean, don't fact check me. Maybe you should fact check me.

[22 : 08] I don't know. But in terms of what we have discovered in the known universe, if we were to take all of the universe, sorry, I'll say it this way, if we were to take all of the universe and kind of equal it to all of our oceans, the size of all of our oceans, we have discovered the equivalent to a 12 ounce glass of water compared to the rest of the oceans.

Universe, the cosmos, what God has created, I mean, does it have an end to it? I'm sure it does, but it's mind-boggling. It's impossible for us to understand.

And God has, he has spoke this out into existence. existence. And this God, who has left his fingerprints all over creation, his infiniteness all over creation, what does he want to do? He wants to create in his image for the purpose of extending his love and his kindness and his grace to you. We are, just in terms of matter, like a nothing compared to the infiniteness of space. And yet, God welcomes you into his presence. He is making a way for you to come and enjoy his very presence. He has atoned for your sins and he calls us his own.

[23 : 35] This is the grace of God displayed to the ends of the earth. And really, it is the only hope that anybody truly has. The God of our salvation is the hope of all the earth which leads us also to an uncomfortable truth.

If the triune God is the God of salvation and the hope of all the earth, that means other faiths and other philosophies that offer salvation and claim to satisfy our deepest longings, they're false. Again, that's a very uncomfortable take. There's no eternal hope in religions and philosophies that cannot atone for sins, that do not look to Christ as the once and for all sacrifice on our behalf. God of God, very God of very God. Who else can still the roaring seas? Who else can still the tumult of the peoples in our hearts, our souls?

Who can bring an end to all the violence, an end to all the oppression, an end to all the slavery and poverty and idolatry that finds itself growing in measures in our world?

[24 : 47] And it's the hope of the earth, it's Jesus Christ. And we don't see that end to the oppression and the violence and the slavery and the poverty and the idolatry, but it will come to pass.

And this actually leads us to our third and final section, looking at how the grace of God is greater and bigger than we could ever have imagined. Look with me, verses 9-13.

It says this, You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it. The river of God is full of water. You provide their grain, for so you have prepared it.

You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, blessing its growth. You crown the year with your bounty, your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.

The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, the joy, the shout, they shout and sing together for joy.

[25 : 50] This section, again, it might seem kind of out of place. We've moved from the house of God to a snapshot of God as creator, and now we find ourselves in the harvest. So how is this connected to the other two sections, and how is this the answer to all of the brokenness in the world?

All the heartache, all of the evil, all of the pain. It's connected in at least three ways. It's connected to the previous section as it tells us that God doesn't only create the world, but he sustains it. He is actively involved in the ongoing life of his creation. God doesn't create as a watchmaker would create, where he creates all the components, he puts them together, he sets the watch and then leaves it, because it's going to go on whether he touches it or not.

He's not like a watchmaker in terms of how he creates. Instead, he creates everything and everything has its being held together and has its being in him.

He sustains everything. He cares for and nourishes all that he has created. He gives and sustains life.

[27 : 03] The second thing that connects this section to the previous section is that Jesus has described the evangelization of all people to a harvest. And we see that in Matthew chapter 9, starting in verse 35, and it says this, And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching

in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest. The God, the Father, draws all people to his Son through his Spirit. He has compassion on the crowds, compassion on all people.

Why? Because they are hopeless. They are helpless. They are like sheep without a shepherd who cannot defend themselves, who cannot find clean water or lush meadows to eat.

He desires to see a rich and bountiful harvest of the souls of men and women, young and old, and he draws all people from the farthest corners of the earth, including Canada.

[28 : 19] He causes grain to grow where it ought not to grow, which is this beautiful picture of God doing only what God can do, making the impossible happen. Flocks of sheep thrive where they ought not to.

He really, truly does the impossible. Finally, this section connects to the previous section because what we see here isn't just an annual harvest, but a picture of the end of the age or the eschaton or the culmination of all salvation.

And this is where it answers the question of the problem of evil ultimately. The river of God that is mentioned here, where is it? In verse 9, the river of God is full of water.

Now that might seem very much like a redundancy. The river of God is full with water. Well, of course it is. But, it isn't a redundancy. It is a picture of something that we see elsewhere in Scripture.

In fact, it is a picture of the healing and salvation that comes to the nations that only can come from God Himself. And we see it at the very end of the Bible. Revelation chapter 22, which is a picture of all things being made right.

[29 : 32] All evil being overcome. All sin being destroyed. Our enemy being cast away and us dwelling in God's presence forever. And this is what it says. Revelation chapter 22, verses 1 to 5.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life. There it is. bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and out of the Lamb through the middle of the streets of the city.

It's the heavenly city. Also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruits yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

No longer will there be anything accursed. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and His servants will worship Him. They will see His face.

That's a proximity. Talking about our proximity to God. They will see His face and His name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light and they will reign forever and ever.

[30 : 39] Friends, this is a picture of abundance and of perfection and of true utopia and satisfaction. Especially verses 11 to 13 we see this.

It has all of this in view. A ridiculous haul. A bounty that points to richness that is overflowing. Look in verse 11 and on.

You crown the year with your bounty. And I love this imagery. Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. It's like a wagon going through as people are harvesting fruit or grain.

It's just getting piled on. It can't hold anymore. It just falls down. It's a harvest that is completely overflowing. It's a picture of bounty.

Something that we could never hope for but we desperately need. It continues on. The pastures of the wilderness overflow. The hills gird themselves with joy.

[31 : 36] Meadows clothe themselves with flock. Valleys deck themselves with grain. They shout and sing together for joy. A picture of all things made right.

And that age to come can only be through Jesus Christ. Through the cross of Christ. Jesus himself is the source of life.

On the cross Jesus is strung up as a sacrifice for us and out of his side, out of his hands, feet, brow, flow life giving blood that so nourishes and feeds and grows all them that put their faith and trust and hope in Jesus.

His life poured out so that our life may flourish. And that is the good news of the cross of Christ. Friends, we are saved for eternity to enjoy the harvest with the Lord of the harvest. The life that is offered to anyone that would hear his voice, forsake their ways, and follow after him. Friends, this is not a life of lack. It is not a life of lack.

[32 : 47] It is a life of bounty and abundance and joy that is hard to comprehend. But it is ours, in a sense, for the taking. It's a beautiful extension of his goodness, loving kindness of his grace that he gives to his people.

Father, help us to be people that look to you for true satisfaction. Lord, we are people that so quickly forget and look to other things to satisfy, other things to heal, other things to atone for our sins, to distract from the difficulties.

But Lord, help us to come afresh to you, to trust in you, and to look to you. Lord, that we would trust in the life-giving blood of your Son poured out for us so that we may have eternal life.

Lord, we ask that you would help us to trust in him. And Lord, as we go our way this morning, Lord, help us also to be a joyful people and extend that invitation to others around us, to our friends and our family, our co-workers, our neighbors, the strangers that we interact with, all those that we may come in contact with.

Lord, remind us constantly that you are a God of bounty. And this is because of Christ Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen.