

# The Importance of Praising God

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[ 0 : 00 ] The Lord will take us through. I want us just to look at this Psalm, Psalm 146, just as a whole. It's a wonderful Psalm and it's part of the Psalter that is known as the Hallelujah, because the last five Psalms all begin with praise, praise the Lord.

You notice that's how this praise the Lord goes Psalm 147, praise the Lord, Psalm 148, 149 and Psalm 150 and they all finish with the same to praise the Lord.

And Hallelujah, of course, is praise the Lord. So these last five Psalms are known as the Hallelujah Psalms. And it's very fitting that the Psalter closes in this way.

Of course, as we know, there is praise running right through the Psalter. But we're very conscious that a lot of the Psalms are Psalms of dealing with really difficult issues.

There's often a lot of pain, a lot of sorrow, a lot of heartache. We find the Psalmist so often pleading. There's the searching for forgiveness and grace and strength and help.

[ 1 : 14 ] But there's also so many of the Psalms are full of the adoration of God and the praise of God. So these themes run right throughout all the Psalms.

But here, particularly as we come to the final Psalms, we find that praise is a great theme. And I think that's very, very fitting because it ties in.

Remember the words in the Song of Solomon where it says, And that's almost a picture of the Christian on the journey home.

Because every day is taking us closer to home. And the closer to heaven that we get, the more praise should be in our heart.

Because that, of course, is the great language of heaven, of praise. And so these Psalms are the Psalms which so much speak to us about praising the Lord.

[ 2 : 22 ] And you'll find that the Psalmist, at the beginning of the Psalm, he gives this invitation or really declaration to praise. And it's causing me and should be causing you to focus upon the Lord.

Because this is what it says, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul. And then he goes on to say, I will praise the Lord as long as I live.

And this is where we begin to look at our soul and realize that the Lord is the one who has saved our soul. And if ever there was a reason, a cause to praise the Lord, it is here of what he has done.

And so this focuses upon the Lord and upon the Lord as our Saviour, that he has saved me. Now, you and I know we're so often caught up with all the chores and the grind of life.

And there's so much that bogs us down and occupies our time and our attention. And we get, we sometimes get very trapped into it. And we can feel flat and uninterested often in life.

[ 3 : 37 ] And we become hot and bothered with things and things niggle us. And we get petty and frustrated and so many different things. Well, here's the antidote to all that.

Here is a great instruction for us and to us to praise the Lord. And you see, once we begin to praise the Lord, it means that we look away from ourselves.

And self-pity, there are periods in our lives when we can't help but feel sorry for ourselves. But we can become overwhelmed with self-pity and we can become consumed by it.

And sometimes it's important for us to just say, Lord, help me to stop looking in on myself. Help me, Lord, not to be consumed with the difficulty of the situation I'm in.

And help me, Lord, to focus upon you. And that's what praising the Lord does. It takes us out of ourselves and up to the Lord and helps us to focus upon him, upon who he is and what he has done.

[ 4 : 47 ] And we will often find that our attitude, not only to ourselves, but to everything, to everybody else, changes when we begin to praise.

When we begin to focus upon praise, in a wonderful way, God comes into our lives. He's already in our lives, but he comes in a special way.

We're told that in Psalm 22, that God inhabits the praises of his people. There's something happens when we begin to praise God. And there's very often the phrase that's given to us, praise changes things.

And that is so true that we will find, even if it doesn't change the circumstances, it will certainly change our attitude. And so it's important to lift our eyes up from the creation to focus upon the creator.

And so we find then in verse 2, we notice the resolution of the psalmist where he says, I will praise the Lord as long as I live. And really what he's saying is, I mean to praise the Lord right throughout my whole life.

[ 5 : 59 ] This is part of the great focus of my life is, I am going to praise the Lord. And we should be in the habit of praise when we read so much of what happens in heaven.

What was shown in the book of Revelation, we see that it is a land of praise. And as somebody said that this world is a quiet practice for heaven.

That here we are preparing for heaven. And the more we praise God and exalt his name, the more that we are getting into the habit of the praise that will be part and partial of our lives.

But then you notice that in verses 3 and 4, there's a warning not to become man-centered. And how do we become man-centered or human-centered?

Well, I suppose there's a couple of very simple ways where we see people as the answer to our problems rather than the Lord. Now that doesn't mean that we never ask advice of people or that we don't share our problems with people or any of these sort of things.

[ 7 : 12 ] What it means is that we don't put all our trust and all our reliance upon what people are saying. The first and foremost, we should always be going to the Lord first.

He is where we go first and foremost. It is to him. And again, we become man-centered when we're more taken up with what people think rather than what God thinks.

And there's often a warning about that in Scripture. The proverb tells us that the fear of man is a snare. And you will find that very often the fear of man holds people back from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was doing on Zoom on Sunday night the Barber's Fellowship. And that was one of the things that I did mention.

One of the things that really, I suppose, played a huge part in my life, that played a very negative part before I became a Christian, was the fact that I had a fear of people.

[ 8 : 33 ] What would people say? If I started going to the prayer meeting, if I started showing an interest in Christ, what would people say?

And the fear of man is a snare. It keeps you back from the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it's not just there before we come to faith. It's sadly something that follows us.

And that's why the psalmist is warning us here against that. And he says, don't think about people. Because put not your trust in princes, in a son of man in whom there is no salvation.

When his breath departs, he returns to the earth. On that very day, his plans perish. All these things that a person was planning and all that he was going to achieve in life or do in life or all that she had planned, it's gone.

There's never another day to do it or be involved in it. The thoughts go. Everything goes. The very breath and the body's returned to the dust. It's all gone.

[ 9 : 38 ] So it's utter folly to put our trust in other people and to look at their opinions rather than looking to the Lord.

We should always be thinking, what does God think of me? Rather than what do people think of me? That is what is so important. And then verse 5 shows us where real blessing and real happiness actually comes.

And you see what it is saying there. That it says in verse 5, Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord as God.

And I love that. If you had somebody that you knew was there to help you, and there's somebody that you could truly hope in, you'd say that's a great passion.

But that's how it is with God. He is both our help, our help in the present, and our hope for the future. And these things are intertwined so that we have this wonderful help from the Lord, and we

also hope in him.

[10:50] And you notice that it says that he's Jacob's God. And that, of course, is speaking to the covenant relationship. He continually in the scripture, God referred to himself as a God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob.

And just as he was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so many people think, why does he talk so often about the God of Jacob, the God of Israel? Because Abraham was the father of the faithful. Abraham was a great man of, a frontiersman of faith. But sometimes when we think of Abraham, we put him on this pillar, this pedestal, because he was such a giant.

But Jacob was more like ourselves. He was so human. He was so, sometimes he got it so wrong. And you see, there was a continual, what I love about Jacob's life is that God never stopped working in Jacob.

And you know, the beauty of Jacob's life is, it wasn't too great to begin with. But as Jacob got older and older and older, his faith seemed to get stronger and stronger and stronger.

[11:57] And the old Jacob, as he was approaching death, was a far greater man than the Jacob we meet earlier on. And that inspires us. And that God is showing us, what I did in Jacob, I will also do in you.

And I am a covenant-keeping God, and I will never, ever let you go. So that's a God that we have that is spoken of here. And then it goes on to tell us in verse 6, who this God is.

And that's what it talks about right down. The God who made heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them. You know, that's kind of mind-blowing. And when you think about it, your best friend is the Lord God.

Isn't that true? And he's the God who made heaven and earth and the sea and everything in it. That is really, you could almost say, a conversation stopper or a conversation starter or whatever you think.

But it really is amazing. And then we have this ongoing list there of what God is and what God has done. Tells us that he keeps faith forever.

[13:09] In other words, he never gives up on us. Never gives up. Despite our sin and our failures and our wicked weaknesses. And we see that he's completely just and he provides for those who are in need.

And he's a God who delivers, a God who heals, a God who restores, a God who lifts up and a God who loves. A God who protects and a God who, you know, you just look at all these things and we see God's attributes displayed through them all.

Let's run through these attributes just as we conclude. We see his power.

He's right to the blind. He raises a bow down and he supports the orphans and the widows. We see his righteousness because he loves it, but he also turns the wicked upside down.

And when you look at this psalm, you see this, it's like a catalogue of distress and it shows us just how sore this world is. You see all the different definitions.

[14:37] The oppressed, the hungry, the prisoners, the blind, the bow down, the fatherless, the widows. And that reminds us of what sin has done.

But then we look at what the Lord does and the blessings he brings. We see his justice, nourishment and liberation and illumination and raising up and upholding and keeping and all these wonderful things.

But the last thing that we see here is as it concludes and come just before the conclusion of the psalm, we see that God is a God of justice. And that he has to deal with evil and evil doing.

Because that's what it tells us that the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. And that is always what will happen. That God does with the way of the wicked is that he turns their way off course.

He's away from its goal. And you see, he makes the way of the righteous plain. But he brings the way of the wicked into confusion. And he turns, he overthrows them in the end.

[15:49] You know, this is a psalm that is, it's a very precious psalm. And I want, even when we finish our meeting tonight, to read it over again slowly. To digest it.

And to try and reflect over some of the things that we thought about just for a few moments. And realize, this is the God that we have. Look at what he's done for us.

Look at what he's doing for us in the present. Look at what he's promised to do for us in the future. No wonder it finishes with praise the Lord. Lord, oh God, we give thanks for your word.

And we pray that we may have hearts of praise. And that we may truly praise you for your goodness and mercy. Bless our time together. And we pray that it will be of benefit to us. And that if we have learned anything, that we may learn to praise you more and more. Watch over us and do us good. And cleanse us from our sin, we pray. In Jesus' name we ask it.  
[ 16 : 46 ] Amen.