

Great are the Works of the Lord

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[0 : 00] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.

Full of splendor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever. He has caused His wondrous works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear Him. He remembers His covenant forever. He has shown His people the power of His works, and giving them the inheritance of the nations.

The works of His hands are faithful and just. All His precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

[1 : 18] He sent redemption to His people. He has commanded His covenant forever. forever, holy and awesome is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

All those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever. forever. May the Lord bless the preaching and the hearing of His word.

Which three apps would you keep if you had to delete all the rest? This was the icebreaker question that we asked a few weeks ago in our community groups, and it led to some fascinating discussion, because we were all trying to reason with everyone about why we should keep our favorite apps.

Some were based on necessity. You got those banking apps, of course, navigation apps we couldn't live without. But others were really based on more like interest and enjoyment. So, in your top three, do you really, really want to make sure that you have that one app that has the old person face filter, so you can just see how wrinkly you might be when you're 100 years old?

Is that really the one that you need? It's interesting to see what kind of surfaces as most important priorities in those discussions. But the reality is that we typically have tons of apps that represent our own personal interests.

[2 : 52] This is this little tiny computer we got in our pockets. It really lets us curate our own world, doesn't it? We get the news we're interested in, we explore the hobbies that we enjoy, and we can even, at least in theory, refine our community to the relationships that we find most stimulating.

How many times have you seen someone just kind of get bored of the conversation, they duck into their phones and they start carrying on a conversation with someone that's not actually physically present? So, we really can, in some way, to some degree, carry on conversations with whom we want, when we want.

Really, we live in a day and a time when personal preference is king. In fact, even our fast food choices, they've gotten on the bandwagon too.

For the last 40 years, Burger King has had the same slogan, have it how? Your way. That's right, have it your way, because they would tailor those beautiful burgers to your preferences.

But in 2014, Burger King, president of global brand management, his name is Fernando Machado, he changed the slogan to, be your way.

[4 : 05] I don't even know if many of you knew that. I just found that out. I didn't even know that changed. And he noted in an interview that have it your way focused only on the purchase, the ability to customize a burger.

By contrast, he said, be your way is about making a connection with a person's greater lifestyle. Interesting, the burger. You've got to connect it to your greater lifestyle.

We live in a world that really pushes personal preference to the top of the priority list. We live in a world that constantly says, have it your way.

However, as Christians, we have a God who constantly says, have it my way. In the Bible, we encounter a God who demands our praise.

In our culture, there are few things we continually need more than a biblical understanding of God and true worship.

[5 : 13] Author David Wells said that, worship is coming face to face with God, standing in his presence, bringing forth our praise to him for who he is.

If the greatest commandment is to love God with our whole being, then to come to him in worship is a duty central to living out that love.

Worship is not primarily a social occasion as we gather with others to worship, though we are always grateful for the other believers with whom we gather. Worship is primarily an expression of the worth of God.

Knowing God leads to praising God. And we want to be a people of praise. So we're going to begin a brief series on psalms of praise that focus our attention on the God who is worthy of all praise.

And this morning, we're going to dig into Psalm 111, and we're going to mine for the riches of God's grace. And I believe that the main point of this psalm this morning is to praise the Lord with all your heart for all his wonderful works and words.

[6 : 30] Praise the Lord with all your heart for all his wonderful works and words. We're going to break this into three points. Praise the Lord. Remember his works and words and fear the Lord.

So praise the Lord. This psalm is Hebrew poetry. And one feature of Hebrew poetry is using acrostics. And acrostics, maybe you're familiar with, where each line begins with a specific letter.

And in both Psalm 111 and 112, each of the 22 lines begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. So this is kind of a creative way to lock it into a person's mind and heart and goes through this progression.

Well, if you look at verse 1, what we render in English as praise the Lord is actually the word hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah is really a two-word phrase. Halle and Yah. That first word hallelujah is really a call to joyous praise in song.

[7 : 35] It means to boast. It means to celebrate. It means to make much of. Isn't this a strange command? Isn't it a strange thing to command someone?

Hey you, celebrate. Hey you, boast in this. Why command praise? Well, praise is really the overflow of what we believe is good.

Lord, when you eat one of those Almond Joy cookies from Food City, you just can't help but just get lost in that and go, mmm, mmm.

That's so good. It's delicious. It's like an instinctive reaction as soon as you put it in. This happens all the time. I mean, you've seen those guys, and maybe you're one of them.

When they're watching their team on TV, they are all in. They can't help but scream at the TV. When their team scores, they just go ballistic. They get up. They start jumping all over the place.

[8 : 45] That's praise. It's an overflow of their joy. When the groom stands at the front, he sees his bride for the first time coming down the aisle, and his face breaks out into a huge smile, and all he can say is, wow.

He's giving expression to his delight. So praise is the overflow of what we believe is good.

In fact, C.S. Lewis would say that praise is the culmination of delight. To not praise would feel stifled. It would feel incomplete. And I think he's right.

Could you imagine taking a bite of those delicious Almond Joy cookies from Food City and being silent afterwards? May it never be. Or what if you told those guys watching the game to just sit still and be quiet when their team scored the winning touchdown?

Can you even imagine? They would explode, I think. Or what if you told that groom not to smile and tell his bride that she's beautiful? It would be impossible.

[9 : 56] The praise actually completes the delight. And so, it's interesting here that the psalmist is commanding us to praise.

It's not just arbitrary praise, just make a bunch of loud sounds. Because there's two words embedded in that phrase, hallelujah. The second word, yah, which is the shortened form of Yahweh.

This is God's special name he revealed to his people in the Bible. It's the name used to differentiate him from all other gods.

This is helpful, I think, even for us, because the meaning behind a word makes a huge difference, doesn't it? When we ask someone the question, do you believe in God? They could say yes, but they may mean something totally different by that word.

Yes, I believe in God. I believe Allah is God. Or yes, I believe in God. God got all things moving, but he's not a personal God.

[11 : 04] You see, it can be really tricky. We can get lost in the word if there's not clarity. So God disclosed Yahweh as his personal name to clarify which God he is.

This is not just any God. This is the God of Israel, Yahweh. In the book of Exodus, God tells Moses to confront Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to demand the release of his people from slavery.

Moses is shaking in his sandals. The most powerful king in the known world. And he's supposed to go up and tell them to let everybody go. So this is what he says in Exodus 3, 13 to 15.

He's talking to God. If I come to the people of Israel and I say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name? What shall I say to them?

And God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you.

[12 : 05] God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel. The Lord, all caps, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever. And thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. The name Yahweh often appears in our Bible, even if you look down, as the word LORD in all caps.

It's there. This is important to note because the first words in this psalm are a call to praise, not a generic God, but a particular God.

It's a call to sing about, to celebrate, to make much of, to boast in Yahweh. So right off the bat, the psalmist is extending an invitation to worship, but he does not leave it open-ended.

The reality is that everyone worships something. Jesus himself spoke of the impossibility of serving two masters.

[13 : 13] You remember he said, you'll either serve God or the things God has made. It's interesting to note that he doesn't give any other options.

There's no such thing as independence for the person. If we aren't serving God, something will take its place.

So often it's not bad things that begin to take our hearts captive, but it's good things that begin to take our hearts captive. Things like family and love, sex, money, success, power.

They can be good things. But if we don't watch our hearts, the good things can eclipse God instead of highlight God.

It's been said that when good things become God things, they are bad things. When good things become God things, they become bad things.

[14 : 14] That's why Yahweh gave the first commandment. You shall have no other gods before me. He is exclusive and demands our all or our nothing.

So we see that the psalmist holds up Yahweh, the God above all other gods, and he calls us to praise this God, this God.

But he does not settle for simply calling other people to do the praising. Look at the very next words. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

He's not content to be a coach on the sidelines. This psalmist, he wants in. He comes to give thanks to the Lord with his whole heart.

The heart is often used as an expression to capture this idea of a person's will and affection. So the psalmist is saying he will praise the Lord willingly and enthusiastically.

[15 : 10] And he's joining himself to the company of the upright in the congregation. He's coming together to worship with the holy congregation as they gather to praise the Lord in the sanctuary.

In other words, he's joining with other faithful believers who desire to live according to God's word. The psalmist is showing us a picture of true worship.

He begins with his own heart. He expresses thankfulness in his own heart before being joined into the congregation. He's not coming just to put on a show.

He's not just showing up because that's the right thing to do or because that's what grandma expects of him. Jesus actually rebukes people who reduce worship to showing up and just going through the routine.

Remember in Matthew 15, 8 through 9, Jesus says this, This people, they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

[16 : 13] In vain do they worship me. But the psalmist is coming with his whole heart. This is the beginning of true worship.

His heart is brimming with thankfulness. But it's important to see that he doesn't just stop there. His personal affection gives way to corporate participation.

He joins himself with other believers for the express purpose of giving thanks together. This is not just a, like a just me and Jesus kind of mentality.

He doesn't have a sweet time of personal worship and then just call it a day. No, he joins himself to the congregation. There's something distinct that is being accomplished in this gathered context that is not happening in isolation.

I can't tell you how many times I have personally been affected by the corporate gathering. On the days when I don't, quote, feel it, I come in and receive encouragement from someone else who is freshly aware of God's presence.

[17 : 23] Or I hear a gospel-saturated lyric in a song that is just especially resonant that morning. Or I need to hear it. Or I receive a timely word from the Lord that just energizes my soul.

Or I see God's gifts flowing through his people as they sacrificially serve one another. These moments are absolutely irreplaceable in the Christian life.

They're essential to the gathered church. So people, just don't be deceived that this is a negligible aspect of the Christian life.

God delights to meet his people in the gathering as we come with thankfulness in our hearts together. If you've been here for any length of time, you've probably noticed that we start nearly every Sunday service with the words, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise him, all creatures here below. This song is a call to gather as a distinct people in order to rehearse a few precious countercultural truths.

[18 : 41] Like this psalm is calling us to do, we are gathering to recognize Yahweh the Lord. We are pausing from our natural tendency towards self-absorption to recognize this God.

And this God is distinct from us. We believe we are his creatures and he is our creator. We're dependent on him for all blessings. He's the source of all life.

He's the supplier of all gifts. So we often can become so captivated by the gifts and we miss the joy of knowing the gift giver. So we gather not just to think about God, but so we can rightly know and treasure God with our whole hearts.

But how can we treasure God unless we know God? If praise really is an overflow from believing something to be good, how can we know that God is good?

Well, the psalmist here directs us in verses 2 through 9 to the works and the words of the Lord. Point two, remember his works and his words.

[19 : 55] So the psalmist has already focused our attention on Yahweh. He's cleared the table of all other gods. If we're supposed to praise this God, then it's worth our time to see what this God is like.

If you've been in an interview for a job, you know you have to lay out some highlights from your previous experience to show your character. You have to kind of point to your past work to show what you're like to that employer.

Well, in a similar way, the psalmist is showing us what God is like based on his past action. His wonderful character is expressed in wonderful works and words.

Over these few short verses, we can see that word work pop up five different times. And all of these works are attached to Yahweh. They are his works.

So what are these works showing us? Just glance through verses 2 through 9. They are peppered with words that show us God's character. Righteous in verse 3.

[21 : 00] Gracious and compassionate in verse 4. Faithful and just. Trustworthy. Verse 7. Faithful and upright. Verse 8. Holy and awesome in verse 9.

Look at verse 2 with me. The psalmist begins with a really broad description before honing in more specifically. He begins his praise with, great are the works of the Lord.

It's like the beginning of a parade. We live really close to where the Christmas parade comes through. And you know the fanfare is coming from a distance. You can hear it. The horn blasts and the drum line and the candy throwing are all coming.

That's what is going on here. This banner is at the front of the march. And it says, great are the works of the Lord. It's the banner at the very front of the parade.

Not only are they great, they are studied by all who delight in them. In many cases, the word work, like it's used here, is referring to God's work in creation.

[22 : 06] In the world of science, there's no more prestigious institution than Cambridge University's Cavendish Laboratory. Maybe some of you have heard of this. It's the home to more than two centuries of Nobel Prize winning research, including the discovery of the structure of DNA.

So this is the real deal. And this verse, verse 2, is inscribed over the entrance of the laboratory. It's true.

That declaration is true. The heavens declare his handiwork. The mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler once famously declared that the pursuit of scientific discovery was simply thinking God's thoughts after him.

We are intended to be awestruck by God's creative work. We can trace out God's good design and marvel again and again.

I think about going to the butterfly exhibit down in Chattanooga at the aquarium. We can watch a caterpillar emerge from a cocoon and see its vibrant wings.

[23 : 15] We can be captivated by the mechanics of a grasshopper's legs as it bounds the equivalent of us jumping over a skyscraper. Or we can marvel at the bigness of stars and planets and galaxies whirring around in boundless space.

It's mind-boggling. Or you can have your mind bend as you think about the fact that we simply cannot reduce the things around us to its smallest parts. This has been baffling scientists for ages.

We can look in a microscope and see some molecules. But molecules are made of atoms and atoms we found out are made of quarks. I don't even know what a quark was. And now scientists have hit the wall because there are things even smaller than quarks called prions.

And there's things even smaller than that. We just can't conceive it. It's incredibly infinite and our brains are just limited. All of this is meant to cause us to marvel at the creative work of God.

He made it all. Our study of these things is intended to cause delight and a desire to study even more, to think God's thoughts after him.

[24 : 24] The careful, diligent study of God's great works will lead us to greater praise. And so now we've whet our appetites with the great works of God.

But the psalmist, he bids us to come deeper and to delight. Works is a very general word referring to everything God has done, including creation.

But this psalm is mainly about God's wonderful works in history on behalf of his covenant people.

So we have the opening banner of the parade. But now the psalmist takes us on a parade of specific memories.

Moments in history to be remembered. In fact, verse 3, if you look at it, it says, He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered.

[25 : 26] The text literally means he's caused his works to be made into a memorial. God's people have many memorials and religious rituals that they observe.

But the premier memorial was the Passover feast. This memorial day was instituted so that God's people might be reminded year after year how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

In preparation for their exodus from Egypt, you might remember God actually gave them instructions to observe this memorial feast. He said in Exodus 12, verse 14, So the psalmist makes sure that his worshipers make this connection to this event because the very next thing he says in verse 3 is, The Lord, Yahweh, there's that word, the Lord is gracious and merciful.

This is an echo of what God said to Moses as he received the law. Exodus 34, 6, The Lord, Yahweh, passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord of God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

So the psalmist is drawing the congregation's attention to the story of their rescue here. He's placing them on that mountain with Moses and reminding them of the character of their saving God.

[27 : 02] That's what he's doing here. It's one thing for a father to say that he loves his son. But when that father rescues his son from drowning in a raging river and that father wraps his arms around that shivering, shocked son, and he says with tears in his eyes, I love you, son.

That's something quite different. The reality of the rescue substantiates the claim of his love for the son.

That's what the psalmist is doing here. He's bringing the congregation back to the reality of their rescue, and it displays the character, the graciousness, the compassion of their God.

He made a way when there was no way. But the parade does not stop there. The psalmist traces out more displays of God's gracious character.

In verse 5, he makes what seems, what I thought was a really strange point. And maybe it sounds strange to your ears. It says he provides food for those who fear him.

[28 : 15] What? How do those things go together? Why is this here? Well, the minds of the congregation were steeped in the stories of their ancestors.

They would have quickly known that the psalmist was talking about wandering in the wilderness after their release from Egypt. Many were wondering as they're walking. Can you imagine being with them, walking after being released from Egypt, out into the middle of nowhere?

Did God save us only to let us come out here to die? What's the game plan here, God? How will we survive? We don't have any food.

And what did God do? Manna.

Manna. He gave them food from heaven. He provided exactly what they needed, when they needed it.

[29 : 21] He sustained his people. And not only that, in verses 6 and 7, it says that he has shown his people the power of his works and giving them the inheritance of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just. So the Lord promised to bring his people into a land and give them a home. Deuteronomy 7.1 says this, When the Lord, Yahweh, your God, brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you.

So the psalmist is reminding the congregation that the Lord followed through on his promise. He did it. Settling Israel in Canaan's land was a demonstration of his faithfulness.

But by driving out the Canaanites, he also revealed his justice at the same time. The Lord judged the nations because of their wickedness.

In fact, amazingly, the reason Israel was in Egypt so, so long was in part due to the fact that the Amorites, one of these nations, were not yet ready to be judged.

[30 : 41] Look at Genesis 15, 16. This is one of the reasons. And they shall come back, Israel shall come back here in the fourth generation because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

He's waiting to execute his judgment. It's all part of his providential God-ordained design. These stories would have been a powerful reminder to the people of God's provision.

Can you imagine? They would have been standing here, these people listening to this psalm, they would be able to look around at one another while singing to marvel that God had spared their ancestors in Egypt. All of their ancestors survived only because God rained down manna from heaven.

They would have looked around in astonishment as they worshiped, knowing they were standing literally on the ground that God had miraculously given their ancestors as an inheritance.

But why would God do this for them? Why did he perform all of these wonderful works for them? We are meant to see a connection between God's works and his words.

[31 : 53] Notice the word covenant is mentioned twice. First in verse 5 and then again in verse 9. A covenant is a solemn commitment between parties, guaranteeing certain obligations would be fulfilled.

Verse 9 says, He sent redemption to his people. He has commanded his covenant forever. He remembers his covenant forever.

The psalmist is showing us that all of God's wonderful works are bound up in his wonderful words in the covenant that he made with his people.

His word is the basis for all of his actions. God pursued Abraham and made a promise to him. Genesis 12, 2 through 3. This is the promise he made to this pagan wanderer, this nomad.

He said, I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

[33 : 04] But old Abe didn't have any kids, did he? How was this going to happen? God made a way when there was no way.

And he had a son. God was true to his word. But how would he become a great nation is the question. I got a son, but how are we going to become a great nation?

A multitude of nations. God told Abraham that he would make his offspring into a multitude of nations and would give his descendants the land of Canaan if they kept the covenant. And years later, when famine came, the descendants of Abraham went to Egypt to survive.

And it was there that God grew them into a great people. God was true to his word. But they were held as slaves.

What now? But God made a way when there was no way. And he sent great signs to demonstrate his power.

[34 : 13] The Egyptians released God's people, but then they pursued them. God rescued his people and judged their enemies. God was true to his word.

And when they wandered in the wilderness, they thought they were all going to die. But God made a way when there was no way. And he fed them food from heaven. God was true to his word.

And then God made a covenant with Moses and the people. God gave them his perfect law and made them into a nation set apart for him. God was true to his word.

But they still had no home. They needed a place to dwell. They were smaller than all the other nations. But God made a way when there was no way. And he drove the nations out before them.

God was true to his word. All of God's wonderful works are connected. They're animated by his words. So why did God act on behalf of these people?

[35 : 11] Why did he redeem them from Egypt? Deuteronomy 7, 6 through 9 wonderfully says, For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord, Yahweh your God, has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you.

For you were the fewest of all peoples. But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers.

That the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery. From the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore, know therefore that the Lord your God, Yahweh, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

Do you see what he's saying? The motivating factor of God working for his people was not based on anything other than his love.

[36 : 29] He is the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love. God's wonderful works of redemption were brought forth again and again for his people because he is faithful to his word.

And it's all an expression of his rescuing love. So now, the psalmist's parade of memories is coming to a close.

And after he takes us through the wonderful sights and sounds of God's works and his words, what is the banner that he chooses to close the parade?

Point three, fear. Fear the Lord. Verse 10 concludes with the words we've really become quite familiar with in our series in Ecclesiastes.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This well-known phrase captures the right way to approach the Lord.

[37 : 37] Now you've seen a glimpse of his character through all of his wonderful works. Yahweh, the Lord is God. If you want to know what it means to be wise, it begins with fearing this Lord.

So does fear mean we should cower as if he's a bully coming to pommel us? Absolutely not. The fear that's being described here is an affectionate reverence and awe.

Let me explain what I mean. I love waterfalls. Maybe you do too. I enjoy looking at pictures of waterfalls, but even more, I love going to them in person.

Just recently we went to Piney Falls, which is on top of Grandview Mountain. It's beautiful. I've seen a few pictures of this waterfall before we went, but it couldn't compare to the experience of encountering the waterfall.

I could hear as we got closer that increasing rumble of the rushing water. When we took the bend and saw the water just exploding off the top of this 70-foot cliff and then it kind of cascades onto a lagoon down below, the sound of the water was louder than Tennessee Vols Stadium.

[38 : 59] The mist is flying all through the air. It's up, floating, and it's dampening everything within a quarter mile. As we got closer, I could feel the thunder of the water shaking my whole chest.

I slowly worked my way under the waterfall, and I felt the power of the water just beating down on me. I could only stand up for a few seconds before I had to get out.

But my heart was thumping as I worked carefully around the waterfall and this big drop in the lagoon. I knew that any moment I could fall down this precipice and just be shattered.

Well, looking at the picture of the waterfall and standing in the presence of the waterfall were really different experiences. As I was immersed in the reality of the waterfall, I was gripped by both a reverence and an awe.

It was incredibly beautiful and simultaneously dangerous. I delighted in the stunning view while approaching it with appropriate respect, carefully.

[40 : 12] Personally experiencing that waterfall fueled my reverential awe. In a similar way, the psalmist has gone beyond a simple snapshot of God and has immersed the congregation in the reality of His wonderful works.

He has shown them both His thundering justice and power in judging the nations, but He's also shown them the astounding beauty of His steadfast love and compassion and grace.

Every moment spent studying the works of this God will only lead to an affectionate reverence and awe that is intended to shape every aspect of our lives.

When the psalmist talks about the beginning of wisdom, he's not just talking about the starting point of wisdom as if it's this starting line that you move beyond after you begin. The beginning could be more accurately thought of as the foundation from which we build everything else.

The fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom and is something to be put into practice. Fearing God means rightly viewing all of life in light of God's amazing power and authority and purposes.

[41 : 29] To not fear God is to misunderstand and to misappropriate every aspect of life. For how can we rightly understand how we're to live as created beings in creation without reference to the Creator?

John Calvin rightly understood that they who fear not God and do not regulate their lives accordingly to His law are brute beasts and are ignorant of the first elements of true wisdom.

The prophet declares all the wisdom of the world without the fear of God to be vanity or an empty shadow.

And indeed, all who are ignorant of the purpose for which they live are fools and madmen. But to serve God is the purpose for which we have been born and for which we are preserved in life.

And so, you see, we come to a crossroads here. The psalmist has summoned our attention to behold the God who reveals Himself as Yahweh and He demands our praise.

[42 : 45] He has recounted the Lord's wonderful words and works. And He has declared that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So, to turn away from this God is to turn away from the very purpose of your life.

So, if you're not a Christian this morning, I want to urge you to turn from yourself and toward the living God so that you may truly live.

Life will only make sense in reference to your Creator. And He invites you today to come and surrender your life to Him. And then, the psalmist opened the psalm with the words, Praise the Lord!

He was doing it to focus the congregation's praise on the God revealed in the stories of their ancestors. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! But this congregation, Trinity Grace Church, we live on the other side of the cross.

And we have even more cause for praise. Take a moment and just look around. Take a moment and just look around at the faces around you.

[43 : 57] We have a congregation, the faces that you're looking into, of redeemed people by the living God. Hallelujah! We, like Israel, were slaves.

Each one of us. We were slaves to sin and had no hope of escape. But God made a way when there was no way. He provided the perfect Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, to be slain for sinners like you and me.

He died that we might live. Hallelujah! We, like Israel, were wandering in the wilderness. We were spiritually famished and dead in our sin.

But God made a way when there was no way. He provided bread from heaven in Jesus Christ, who said, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. Hallelujah! We, like Israel, were not a people worthy of God's special love.

And instead, we were worthy only of His righteous judgment. But God made a way when there was no way. God demonstrated His love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

[45 : 04] Hallelujah! We, like Israel, had no place to call home. We were orphaned by our sin. But God made a way when there was no way. Jesus Christ died so that we might be brought into the family of God to dwell in His presence forever.

Hallelujah! Behold, the living God is our God. The Lord. He is the Lord. The Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger with you, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness to you.

Hallelujah! All of His wonderful works and words were leading to our salvation in Christ so that we might live today for the praise of His glory.

Hallelujah! So, let us, Trinity Grace Church, be a people who praise the Lord, the one true living God, with all of our hearts for all of His wonderful works and words in your life and my life and our lives.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Let's pray. Oh, Lord, You are a gracious God. Amen. Kind in all of Your ways, good in all of Your works.

[46 : 24] And, Lord, we turn to You now and with awe and reverence, we say, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! You rescued us when we could not make a way for ourselves.

Thank You for Your kindness to us, and we respond now with praise. In Jesus' name, Amen. You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at