## **A Truly Devoted Life**

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[0:00] Psalm 111, as you saw when the song started, that came from Psalm 90.

I don't think there's been a week since I have preached Psalm 90. We're at Psalm 111 tonight, so that gives you an idea how long ago it was that I haven't sung that song in a week.

I really love that song and I'm thankful for it. A good song you love more, the better you understand the passage, right? So the more I understand Psalm 90, the more I love that psalm. And since Kristen and Ben and Tracy did not invite me to sing with them tonight, maybe at the end, if time allows, after Tracy gives her update, we can sing that all together as a congregation.

I imagine many of you know that as well. Just a fantastic truth. Psalm 111, we start off with saying, Hallelujah. We say, Praise the Lord.

That's what David wants to do in his own life. He calls other people to do it. But David, psalmist, he leads worship to the people. He is a person who praises the Lord.

[1:06] He says, Hallelujah. And just like the heavens declare the glory of God, so should our lives. His greatness, his beauty, and his worth. The scope of how wonderful he is.

All of his perfections, all of his attributes. His infinite harmony and their relationship together. The more you study this Bible, the more you realize you can look at it upside down, sideways, and backwards.

And it's just in perfect unity. There's just nothing like it in all of the world. His worth and the fact that it is more precious and more valuable than anything in the universe.

And if you're a good student of anything, poetry, science, or history, a right student, a Christian that's studying those, it's going to bring you back to a place of worshiping the Lord and just how incredible he is.

And so Psalm 111, we see a truly devoted life. And let me read to you starting at verse number 1. Praise you the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.

[2:12] The works of the Lord are great. Sought out all of them that have pleasure therein. Sought out of all of them that have pleasure therein. That is, the works of the Lord are great.

That's what they're seeking after. His work is honorable and glorious, and his righteousness endureth forever. He that he hath made his wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

He hath given meat unto them that fear him. He will ever be mindful of his covenant. He has showed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are varied in judgment.

All his commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and righteousness. He sent redemption unto his people. He hath commanded his covenant forever. Holy and reverend is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding hath all they that do his commandments. His praise endureth forever. I'm going to read it one more time, and then I'm going to call on one of you at random to come up here and quote this psalm for me.

[3:12] All right? Anybody up to the challenge? Some of you, maybe when you're back in a wanted days, you could have done it. I'm not sure there isn't a kid in the other room that couldn't memorize it in about five or ten minutes.

Because they're little sponges. And when you get to memorizing Bible, you get better at it and do it. And I'm going to show you here that this psalm was written in a way to encourage the memorization of it.

Something we should do. I consider this summer when Awana is out having a way that us adults could compete against the kids in a Bible memorization. And maybe picking a psalm to memorize.

I was thinking last week Psalm 110 when I studied it. Now I'm thinking Psalm 111 because I've studied it. Next week I'll be thinking of Psalm 112. But I don't know. Maybe picking a chapter and the kids very likely would beat us.

But it's something we should work at. And there's so much to be learned from being a student of the Word of God. So many things that you would see.

[4:13] As you guys know, or as you would probably expect. Growing up in Hardin, Kentucky, I didn't really gather a great appreciation for poetry. All right? I don't remember spending a lot of time.

I don't remember in class thinking, I really like this. All right? Would you assign some more poems for us to memorize? I really enjoy this. All right? I don't have any appreciation of it. But being a student of God's Word makes me appreciate things that I would never have benefited from before.

I told John Pearson, I'm going to admit this, that before the piano concert on Sunday, I said, Brother John, don't tell anybody. But I probably wouldn't cross the road to hear Mozart. All right?

I said, I just don't know how to appreciate it on the level. I love Sam Ruttman. I know that I'm going to enjoy that. Sorry, Kristen. She cringes over there. All right? Ben's holding her back right now.

Thank you, Ben. All right? And it's not that I don't appreciate it. I just know that everybody else is hearing so much more than I'm hearing. But that night after hearing it some more, I'm like, okay, I get it.

[5:12] That was pretty cool. I would choose to listen to that some more. And so poetry is one of these things that in loving the Psalms that we learn about.

Psalm 111 and Psalm 112, they're parallel in many ways in the themes that they cover and the ways that they're presented. Tonight we're going to look a lot about the greatness of God. And then the next chapter we'll look a lot at the blessedness of a man who has the right attitude towards God.

And that way they're parallel. They both have 22 different statements that are made. As I read, if you're listening, in each verse I made two different statements about God.

And then unlike in poetry as we know it where there's a lot of rhyming, in Hebrew poetry it's an aesthetic style where you would look at it and you would say the way that it's written. If you see it, that it's beautiful.

It's something that you'd want to do needlework of, a pillow and put it on your couch, all right? Or you'd paint it and put it on a wall. You would look at it and you'd say, I can tell that it's poetry.

[6:13] So why use an acrostic? Any of you ever been in a church service where the preacher used an acrostic? Me and Jeff are thinking of somebody who took a really long word and he would preach this acrostic to help you remember it.

And that's helpful at times and that's what's happening here with each statement of those 22 statements starting with a different letter. Before I show that to you, let me just give you a few reasons maybe why the psalm was in there.

One, it's just as Sam Rotman wants to give his very best in demonstrating his art unto the Lord. God, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the writers also are wanting to give their very best.

And so they're not going to want to write in a way that would be careless. They want to be very careful in what they're doing, right? They want to do something that was honoring to the Lord. Also, for the sake of memorization, which is a challenge to all of us.

In the training center, a student wrote me this week and they said, I used my Bible in my exam and I didn't ask you, but in all of our other exams, you allowed us to use the Bible. If I wasn't supposed to use the Bible, please let me know so I can correct that.

And I appreciate that, but in all of my exams, it's always open Bible because life is an open Bible test, right? And so they can't have other books, but they can have a Bible. And because of technology and access to having a Bible near them, we can often become lazy and say, well, I don't really need to have that quick access to it because I can find it quickly.

The chapters like this remind us that the Bible is written for us to hide in our heart. Memorization is one of those. Also, to demonstrate comprehensiveness all the way from A to Z.

That's what you're looking at. If somebody says, I'm going to give you A to Z on the reasons you ought to do this and cover all the bases, that is something that's happening. And in the Psalms, they're easy to identify.

In Psalm 25, 34, and 145, you're going to find they have 22 verses. And you know that the Hebrew alphabet has 22 verses, and so that will get your attention. There's some others, like this one, where there's not 22 verses, but there's 11, and they're divided out.

There's 10. I'm sorry. Some of you are like, what kind of Bible does he have? Isn't that right? There's 10, but there's two in each one of those. And then, so we look at the example here on the back of your page here, and if you wouldn't mind putting that slide up.

[8:38] Because this, I think you understand what I'm saying here is that each one of those statements start with a different letter. And I'll take you to the third letter. It's the white one that you showed earlier. And so it's the third letter, alphabet, gimel.

And so we start on this side. So the third statement in here starts with the third letter of the alphabet, and it goes all the way down, all 10 verses. And if you look on the back, a guy named Albert Barnes, you can just call him Al if you want.

Al here, he does the same thing with the English structure. And it's just giving you an example of what it looks like. And so memorizing it would be easier for us here. A door, both, confessly, the lighter, and them that search them, search them out.

And so that's a beautiful thing to see here on the poem. It also reminds us that this poem should encourage memorizing of it. And I've known of families that memorize the Bible verse for every letter of the alphabet.

I think that's an incredible thing for us to do. And we're going to jump into the psalm. And I was thinking about this. I don't think I have to give any kind of disclaimer on here to let you guys know I'm not a Hebrew scholar.

[9:46] All right. That you do not need to know Hebrew to appreciate Psalm 111. But I found it interesting. And I know you as Bible students would as well. But it reminded me when I went from playing basketball in the public school, going to the Christian school.

It was my very first game. And my coach yelled out. He said, stop hot-dogging. And I say, I'm like, what? He said, stop hot-dogging. So I dribbled over there and I said, what do you mean stop hot-dogging?

He said, you're spinning around, but you're not going anywhere. All right. And that was true. I really like to spin around. And I like to do things. But I wasn't really going anywhere. He's like, you need to go somewhere now.

Okay. And so that was a little hot-dogging a little bit we did there. And looking at the structure of the psalm. But let's make sure we go somewhere in the night. And see what God has for us in this psalm.

So praise you the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart. In the assembly of the upright. And in the congregation. So we have a declaration and we have a description. His declaration. Hallelujah.

Praise ye the Lord. And this is how he started off. And before he describes, I will praise God. He is going to do that. And he is leading the people in worshiping and praising the Lord.

And so there's this declaration. I will praise the Lord. As me and my house, we will serve the Lord. It's making a statement to the people that are with him.

And then we get to a description. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart. How are you going to do it with my whole heart? I'm not going to hold anything back. I'm not going to have a divided heart.

William Plummer says, It is no easy matter for us to avoid cold affections in worship. It is no easy matter for us to avoid cold affections in worship.

Theologically, when I think about that, I'm thinking, What do you mean it's not an easy matter? Like, God is so great. How could we ever have cold affections? But through life experience, we know that it's no easy matter to not have cold affections in worship.

[11:45] Which means kind of the inertia of life or the coldness of life often cools us, right? It's very easy to get to a place where we are not wholehearted in our worship.

So what would wholehearted worship look like? If wholehearted worship looks like running around this building, then I suggest that every one of us should run around the building.

If wholehearted worship looks like not moving, not hardly smiling, but being completely still and reverent, then I suggest that none of us ought to move a muscle.

Because that's both extremes, right? That's what some would say. Some traditions would say, I don't move because of this, because of reverence. And then other people would say that if you're not shaming the flesh and doing something that you don't want to do, then you're not really fully given.

And so if either one of those is fully giving our hearts, then I suggest that we do that. And our actions and our affections should be given to the Lord.

[12:48] The Bible speaks about raising our hands. The Bible speaks about saying hallelujah and saying amen and expressing and God laying on our hearts. So the affections ought to lead us to our actions of praising the Lord.

The statement, don't go through the motions. You know, you came here tonight, and I would say don't go through the motions. You've heard that said before. I don't find that saying to be very helpful. Because I would say that maybe you should go through the motions.

But while you go through the motions, you should pray to the God of heaven, restore unto me the joy of my salvation. You know, not doing right never helps the heart go in the right direction, right? So you go through it, and you praise the Lord, and you say the things that you should, and you sing the songs, and you look up at the screen. When I sing song 90, and I know all the lyrics, all right, if you ever want to use me in one of your singers, all right, I would look up the song in lyrics, because I found that many times I sing songs that aren't true.

I sing things, I make up words, right? And the words I make up aren't better than the ones that are the true lyrics. So when I would sing that song, I would play it, and then I would look at the lyrics, because I wanted to say the words correctly.

[13:58] And so in going through the motions, which you may do here, or in the morning devotions at your own home, I would say, yes, do go through the motions. Do come to church when you don't feel like it.

Do stand and sing when you don't feel like it. Do sing out when you don't feel like it. But as you're going through the motions, pray to the Lord and say, God, I don't want to do this with a divided heart.

Would you restore to me the joy of my salvation? And we should never be content with less. God deserves our all. Sunday morning is a Saturday night decision.

You probably heard that before, right? That there ought to be some preparation before we come together in the house of the Lord, is to say, God, I want to give my whole to this, my whole heart to this, everything that I have.

And then it's public. The psalmist delighted in hearing others praise the Lord. He says, in the assembly and in the congregation. And this signifies two different sizes. The assembly in the life group or Sunday school, you know, if you want to call it that, I'm okay with it, all right?

Just come to it, all right? In the assembly, in the small group time, praise the Lord. In the congregation, with the larger group, praise the Lord. It's enjoyable to be together.

And there should be no shame in that. Sometimes we go from one ditch to another, right? When we say that, well, it isn't about church. It isn't about getting together with church. It's all about a personal relationship. Well, let's not be so careful to go so far that we deprete.

We're not showing appreciation to gathering together. Corporate worship's part of our lives that you're not supposed to do. This is not an individual sport that you just do by yourself. Yes, you do it at home alone and worship with your family, but you're supposed to gather with us and you're supposed to enjoy it.

So let us never say, make a statement to say, I can never worship with that church because they were just too small. Or let's also never say, oh, I can never worship with that church because it's too big.

That is not what determines our ability to worship. Are we being shown the works of God? If I'm in a small group and I'm being shown the works of God, I can worship. If I'm in a large group and I'm being shown the works of God, I can worship.

[16:01] The size doesn't matter. The congregation or an assembly doesn't determine about worship. Then also worship has to be toward God. Praise the Lord. I will praise the Lord.

Just like I didn't understand poetry or appreciate poetry, but being a Bible student creates that. I don't also like English very much, okay? We'll find something I like later, all right? I didn't like English, but you know what I learned in saying the Bible?

I learned that worship is a transitive verb. They tried to tell me this all through school what a transitive verb was. I never remembered. The kids are in the other room. Because I didn't care, all right?

Because I'm like, I just didn't care. Because I'm like, nobody's asking me throughout the day what a transitive verb is. But then I realized that a transitive verb requires a direct object. And so worship is a transitive verb because it has to be directed towards somebody.

We don't just worship. We worship God. See, I'm never going to forget what a transitive verb is because it matters to me now, right? And so we do not meet to worship. That is to experience worship.

[17:03] But we meet to worship God. We didn't come here just to feel something, just to experience something. But we came to worship the God of heaven because he is worthy of it. You fought traffic.

You've been working all day. You came in here and you're tired and you fought that. And you said, when you came in the door, you said, I got a million things I got to do afterwards. I got all this going on, but God gets my entire heart.

He gets everything because he deserves our worship. Our worship is directed towards him. So let us never confuse what is central to what is a byproduct. If you seek peace, you will not find it.

If you seek Christ, you will find peace. If you seek joy, you will not find it. If you seek Christ, you will find joy. If you seek holiness, you will not find it. If you seek Christ, you will find holiness.

And if you seek experiences of worship, you will not find them. But if you worship the living God, you will experience something of what is reflected in the Psalms.

[18:03] And so I have experienced worship. I have experienced having a ton of weight taken off of me and just disappear in worship here with you and God's people.

Not because the experience of just worshiping, because it was directed towards the God of heaven. And we need this in our lives. Our kids ought to see this in our lives.

William Steele wrote to his congregation on the occasion of opening one of the terms at the University of Aberdeen. And in that letter, he says to his congregation that every year when the new students are coming to the University of Aberdeen, he gets panicked, phone calls, and letters from parents whose children are going off to school, begging for him to track them down and to make sure that they don't get into trouble and try to minister to their souls.

You know, I've had some of those phone calls here at the church. A friend or a kid moves to this area and a parent, you know, panicked. You know, my kids moved to this area. Can you please go to them?

It's worth making that phone call. I'm glad the parents do that. But Mr. Steele writes to his congregation and he said, You know what? I found over the years that all the tracking down doesn't do a whole lot of good, because what's most important in rearing children in the knowledge of the Lord is what is done before they go off to college for their first semester.

[19:19] And then he proceeds to say, It's interesting because Mr. Steele was an old bachelor. He says, Here's how you rear children. And he used this outline. Prayer, example, precept.

That's how you rear children. Prayer, example, and precept. That prayer for their kids. And then the example and then the precept.

David praying to the Lord, but he provides an example to them of worshiping. And then he gives the precepts. He gives the truth. He says, This is why I do what I do.

Verse 2, The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all of them that have pleasure therein. The works of the Lord are great. His deeds, but not just his deeds, but all of his creation.

All the things of God are great. Even the little things are great. Everything about God is great and greatly to be praised.

[20:18] It's worthy of our study. It says, Sought out of all of them that have pleasure therein. Many of you have commented about Sam Rotman's testimony, right? Because he's an academic, he's at a school, and he comes and hears Christ and makes a decision.

And it's a powerful testimony. And when we have them in, we should invite people. We always hate it, though, when people say, Well, the great scientists of the day don't believe in creation. Because all the great scientists of the day that created anything worth having, you know.

Like, sure, maybe they invented an iPhone not believing in God. But let, you know, who discovered inertia? Who discovered all the things that really matter? We're God-fearing people. And Sam Rotman reminds us of that.

Outside of the school in Cambridge, England, at the Cavendish Laboratory, named after the 18th century English chemist, it is distinguished by having the words of Psalm 112 above the entrance of the building.

So when you come into that building, it says, Great are the works of the Lord. They are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. When they go into that laboratory. A great verse for people studying science is to say, We should seek after the works of the Lord.

[21:24] And we should look at them. Look at them up in the skies. You can look at them. You can get as small as you want in this world and see the wonder of the Lord. Or you can get as big as you want. And you'll be amazed at His worder. His work is honorable and glorious.

And His righteousness endureth forever. Verse 3. His providence in this world. The pleasure of studying about the greatness of God is ours forever. They endureth forever. Just like those scientists could go into that lab and seek out the works of the Lord and the pleasures therein of finding it and being amazed by them, which a Christian scientist would.

They wouldn't just be amazed at the research, but they would be brought to a place of worship, right? Of constant wonder. We will never exhaust that. And all of eternity, it will endure forever.

We will never get caught up on our knowledge of God to the point that we would cease to wonder and be amazed about Him. It's honorable and glorious and endures forever. We are called upon to remember His works.

He has made wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He made wonderful works and He wants us to remember, which means that it's a real shame when we forget His works.

[ 22:33 ] I love this quote by Sam Rotman. I won't get it just right, but he says, The great miracle of this world is that God saves and changes sinful men. The great miracle of this world.

That's a work that you should never forget, that God wants you to always remember. And how could we ever forget when we think of how gracious and compassionate our God is? God never forgets His promises.

Verse 5, He has given meat unto them that fear Him. He will ever be mindful of His covenant. Something that when we praise Him, one of these statements out of the 22 statements when we're praising the Lord is that He is mindful of His covenant and He never forgets us.

And so we praise Him. And God doesn't hide His works that He wants us to remember. Verse 6, He has showed His people the power of His works that He may give them the heritage of the heathen. That God, He makes a promise to the children of Israel.

He gives them the land in which He promises to give them. And He shows people His power. You know, God's not hiding His power today. God's not hiding His works today. They're very much visible to those that have eyes to see and that are looking for them.

[23:41] And we can look to Him and we can worship. All right? If you don't want to get up for the sunrise, you can get the second show at the end of the day. Either one of those are pretty amazing. All right? And you can check it out. And there's things all around us at all times that you can see.

And you might see it through nature, or you might see it in a conversation with a friend where he changed somebody. I've been studying 1 Thessalonians chapter number 2, looking at the characteristics of the Apostle Paul.

The gospel changed that old boy, didn't it? I mean, Paul was one day he would have walked in the church and they would have all thought he was going to persecute them. And the next thing they were describing him as gentle. The gospel changed him.

So in a conversation with Paul, you would have said, I remembering the works of the Lord. He has been faithful and true. The works of his hands are verity and judgment. All his commandments are sure.

Like this quote by Spurgeon, talking about God's truthfulness and his judgment. He has no fickle dispit, commanding one thing one day and another on a different day. But his commands remain absolutely unaltered, their necessity equally unquestionable, their excellence permanently proven, and their reward eternally secure.

[24:47] The truthfulness and the surety of our God, who's never changing. Verse 8, They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. So God, it stands fast forever, it's upright, it never changes.

Unlike me as a father, who will tell my kids one thing one day, or my punishments aren't always equal, one day the crime was more important than it is, another day, it's always changing, that relationship isn't stable when I'm not being sure and faithful, but God is consistently the same and faithful and right, and that's one of many things from A to Z that we should praise him for.

God's great work of redemption, verse 9, He sent redemption unto his people. He has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and reverent is his name. God's great work brought about redemption.

He works in this world in redeeming people. And so what should we learn from all of God's great works? We're going to praise the Lord. Here's 20 something praises about him and 22 statements.

And what should be the final result of a time of praise like that? Verse 10, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that do his commandments, his praise endureth forever.

[ 26:03 ] There's no reason for me to preach to the crowd that's here on a Thursday night who made the decision to do. But can I tell you, if your life is getting so busy and you say, I don't have time for worship and praise the God, then you're just really living life in a blind manner.

Because the wisdom that you need for the line of work that you're in, the wisdom that you need to be a mom or a dad, none of that's coming to you without a proper fear of the Lord. And so you're not going to have what you need in life.

You don't have enough time in life to not stop and to praise the Lord to the point that it brings you back to the fear that you should have. People today and every day, I'm sure, are more interested in entertainment and in pleasure, but they have little interest in wisdom.

But that's not true about God's people. Studying God's will should end with the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. So this fear of the Lord that brings to life everything, it brings to life everything in the Christian life.

It animates everything in our Christian life. Now without it, it's all dead. If you don't have a fear of the Lord, there's no knowledge, there's no wisdom in any of the areas of your life.

[ 27:10 ] And praise ought to bring you to the point where we would fear Him. Next week in Psalm 112, so this ends verse 10, it says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and good understanding hath all they that do His commandments.

His praise endureth forever. And then verse 1 says, Praise you the Lord, blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments. Verse 10 tells us the fear of the Lord, and the next chapter is going to say that the man that does that, he delights in His commandments, that is going to be a blessed man.

A blessed man is going to fear the Lord, he's going to praise Him, he's going to have wisdom in this world. You know, it's not the best quote, but I don't know what came to me on the spot here. What's John Wayne say? Life is hard, and life's even harder when you're dumb, or right, you know?

And that was John Wayne. I wouldn't say that, but John Wayne said that, okay? And I won't say that, but man, life is not what it should be when there is no wisdom, right? When you're living life without wisdom, it is harder than it needs to be.

And you're not going to be living life according to the wisdom if you're not fearing the Lord. And what's going to bring you to a place of fearing the Lord? It's to recognize His works in the Lord. A time of praise, a time of worshiping, the creator of the universe is going to bring you to a point where you properly fear Him, you reverence Him, the Lord.

[28:23] It started with praise the Lord, and it ends in the same way in verse 10, His praise endures forever. And so how should we be moved to praise by this psalm? We have an opportunity to understand in the context of the original audience, these 22 different things that were said to them, their redemption from Egypt through the Red Sea, and we make application, but also we have the opportunity when we read a passage to not only see what they would have understood, but we also, now that we live where we do in history, we also get to see how Jesus has lived out the psalm for us.

Matthew 22, 37, And Jesus saith unto them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is likened to it. Thou shalt love the neighbor as thyself, and on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

It's saying it like this. So you can't remember 22 things even though in alphabetical order, and you're like, I just can't remember all 22 things. That's okay. You can hang those 22 things on this. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and in doing so, you'll love your neighbor as yourself, because it's been perfectly fulfilled in Jesus.

It told us in the beginning of the verse that we should praise the Lord in the midst of a congregation and assembly. That's what we were told to do. In small groups and in big groups, praise the Lord. What does it say in Hebrews chapter number 2 that's quoting Psalm 22?

It says, Saying I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee, that Jesus praises the Father in the midst of the assembly. Jesus fulfills this psalm.

[29:56] Jesus does all the work in all of the aspects. We saw his works in creation, his works among his people, and his salvation. We look to Jesus. And in looking to Jesus, we remember the works that we're called to remember.

And Jesus never forgets his promises. He has been mindful of his covenant. So the prayer of this psalm as we end the night expresses our praise to God and we can rest trusting in his work and not our own.

So let me encourage you. You're going through a time, you need to praise the Lord, you feel like you're going through the motions but you know you shouldn't be going through the motions, you're saying, God, restore to me the joy of my salvation, bring back to me the proper fear that I would have.

Walking through this psalm would be an incredible thing to look at all those statements and meditate and to consider what God is saying. I'm going to pray for us. I'm going to ask Tracy to come up here and give us a quick...