

Thanksgiving - Greg Keelen

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 November 2022

[0 : 0 0] Psalm 138, this psalm, if you could put it in the category, it would be a psalm that you would categorize as praise. It's a wonderful psalm, penned by David, inspired by God. This is a psalm that we would put in the category praise.

The term praise is going to occur three times in the first three verses. That's the portion I get of this psalm. The term singing is going to pop up. The term worship is even going to come up. This psalm was inspired, penned, and preserved with the intent that us, the reader, would leave praising God.

If I could admonish or challenge you or edify you from this text, my main point would be this. We ought to praise God. You may ask, well, first thing first, what is praise? What does that look like? Scripture treats praise as the natural response to those who believe God is in response to his person and his actions.

You can thank Moses after hearing that God's going to save Israel. You can thank Abraham after God preserves Isaac. Thank Noah after God delivers him. Essentially, it's this. God's greatness and majesty is shown, and we've got to respond by telling him he's awesome.

I like the way Adrian Rogers explains it. He says this. Thanksgiving enjoys the gift. Praise enjoys the giver. Praise is even commanded from God to those people. We look at verses like Psalm 68, 22.

[1 : 0 3] It says this. The Lord says, I'll bring thee again from Bashan, and it will bring my people from the depths of the sea. Psalm 1 Peter 2, 9 is going to say this. You're a chosen generation of royal priests, so the holy nation would kill your people. That you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you.

As Christians and believers, we are commanded to praise. Believers, those who follow God, we should praise. Even look at the book of Revelation. In the end times, you're going to be praising the Lord. He belongs to God alone.

1 Chronicles 16, 25 is going to say this. For great is the Lord, greatly be praised. He is to be feared above all gods. God alone gets praise. He expects praise. But not just that. God is also pleased with praise.

It makes him happy. Look what the Bible says in Psalm 147, 1. Praise to the Lord, for it is good to sing praise unto our God, for it is pleasant and praise is comely. God likes him, we praise him. But let's be honest.

I mean, it's easy to praise God when things are going well. I smoked a turkey last night and about three hours in, I was praising the Lord. And the bark was forming nicely. My temperature was rising like I wanted to. Wood was looking good. I was praising the Lord.

[2 : 0 0] But then you hit traffic the next morning. You're driving. Something bad happens. Whatever it is. Sometimes it can be kind of difficult to praise the Lord. Right? We read passages like this and then life happens. Or a trial, you get that bad news, text message, email, phone call.

You turn on the news. You see something bad happens. Life just gets hard. Bad day at work. So much happening can seem hard to stay mindful and present enough to praise. If anyone understood, and I dare say had obstacles to praise, it'd be the man that penned this psalm.

If you look right above the top, you see this was a psalm penned by David. Sometimes old David was just going through it, y'all. We look at it. He experienced death. Some of his friends had died. Some of those he had fought in war with had died.

He lost children. Had children turn on him. He had to deal with sin. Sometimes sin that he committed. Sometimes sin that was committed against him. He had enemies, both political and personal. David had it rough.

But yet he still pens this psalm for us in Psalm 138 about praise. Despite all that he endured, he was still able to say, I will praise and I will worship and I will sing. Let's go to praise school.

[3 : 03] Bryce read that psalm so wonderfully for us. Today we're going to be looking at the origin of our praise, the object of our praise, and then our obligation to praise. Psalm 138.1. I will praise you with my whole heart before the gods.

I will sing unto thee. Where does praise start? What is praise? How do we define these terms? First things first is praise is personal. Let's look at what the psalmist says. He says, I will praise.

He says, I will do this. I will worship. I will sing. I will praise. Praise is something that is personal. It's something that can be done publicly. But if its origin is not personal, I dare say it's not praise. Someone cannot praise for you.

The term I will is a term of personal dedication. And David here had dedicated himself to praising the Lord. We must decide to praise. Praise is a state of mind. It's not something you do by accident. The psalmist has this resolve to praise God.

And I challenge you. Let's live life with the resolve to praise the Lord. Praise is personal. But not just that. Praise is also private. He says this, I will praise you with my whole heart. Notice that after David's resolve, he gives another aspect of how he's going to praise God.

[4 : 02] He says with his whole heart. Then the Bible, the heart is more than an organ. You can refer to it as the internal man. His thoughts, his feelings, volitions, all areas of the word, thought and life. And it's this heart that David commits to the Lord.

We can and should bring God our hearts. To praise without the heart, as Jesus teaches us, is pretty vain. Matthew 15, 8 and 9 is going to say this. This people draweth nigh to me with their mouth, nigh to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

But in vain they do worship me. So if we worship, we do all the right things. Hands are held high. Say all the right words. But our heart is not set to praise. God sees that as vain. But not just that.

We're also commanded to love the Lord God with our whole heart. Jesus says that's the most important commandment. We should have a song in our heart dedicated to the Lord. According to Ephesians 5, 19. It's going to say this. He says, speaking unto yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing to make a melody in your heart to the Lord.

Notice it's all in the heart. He commits his heart to worship the Lord. Notice there's only one condition with the heart that David brings as well. He says, I'm going to bring my whole heart. He doesn't say, I'm going to bring my perfect heart, my good heart, my just right heart.

[5 : 04] He says he's going to bring his whole heart. You can take your broken heart, your hurt heart, tender, fearful, bad, abused, whatever it may be, and you can bring that heart to the Lord, the entire thing, and he will turn it into a heart that praises.

I like what he says in Psalm 147, verse 3. He heals the brokenhearted and he bindeth up their wounds. Our Lord loves the brokenhearted. You can take your heart, give it to the Lord, and he will turn it into a praising one.

Listen to what Jesus said about his relationship with broken hearts in Isaiah 61, 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison, them that are bound.

Give the Lord your heart, he'll turn it into a praising one. But not only is praise personal, not only is praise private, but praise can also be done publicly. He says, I'll praise you in the whole heart before the gods I will sing unto thee. Before the gods, you read that, you're like, whoa, before the gods, like little G gods, is David about to walk into the temple, find Dagon, and like, all right, I'm going to worship Yahweh right here.

It's not quite what it was going for. The word behind gods, there's a few things it refers to in the Bible. It could be angelic beings, it could be maybe the idols of the nations, maybe some rulers and justices, kings, queens, magistrates.

[6 : 11] Regardless of who is being referred to, the action is all the same. The outcome is the same. I'm going to praise the Lord with my whole heart, no matter who's around, no matter what I'm going through, no matter where it's at, no matter what it may be.

Notice that every possible outcome, something we've observed people worship, or depending on in Scripture, whether it be this word before magistrates or kings or rulers or other gods, I remind you that the Lord is the best provider, the best Savior, and by design, he's the best to be worshipped and praised as well.

We should turn away from the things we're dependent on and turn to the things of God, turn to the Lord. But not only do we see the origin of praise and look at the object of praise, David not only tells us that he's going to praise, but then he tells us the object of his praise.

Verse 1, we read that, unto thee, these, most, these, God. David is praising God clearly. Notice in verse 2 he even says, I will praise towards a temple. The temple wasn't even built yet. He's referring to the tabernacle in Shiloh, God's place of worship.

God had made a central place of worship. You know, you just couldn't go into Israel and worship wherever you wanted to. He had a very specific spot for it. And David made sure that he would praise towards where God dwelt. That paradigm and his affections are something we could take from.

[7 : 15] This is something we were challenged to do as well. Colossians 3, 1 is going to say this. If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth in the right hand of God. His praise was directed towards where God was.

And if our praise in life, the things we lift up and magnify aren't directed towards where God is, you might need to redirect them. But David also begins to praise the name of God. What an example for us. Let us make big of our Lord's name.

If you look up the name, like just quote name in the Bible, you see it pop up a ton in the book of Acts. It says everything they did, a lot of times they did it for the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord grew, the name of the Lord advanced. And in life, I think a lot of times we should do what we do for the name of the Lord.

David praises God's word as well. We learn that God magnifies his word above his name according to this passage. Let's read verse number two. Our worship towards the early temple, praise the early name for thy love and kindness, for thy truth.

For thou hast magnified thy word above thy name. You read that, like what does that quite mean? We learn that God has put his word above his name. This is a stunning and remarkable statement showing the incredible regard has for his word.

[8 : 14] In the Bible, the sense of you're only as good as your word is quite true. He holds his word in greater sense in his very character because the two are tied together. If God breaks his word, he breaks who he really is. And what he's saying here is God is going to keep his word.

Thus, his word is great. When he says it, it's going to happen. What he says it is true. What he says it really will come to pass. Even if the situation and circumstances look like it may not happen, it will happen.

It would be as if God was saying, I value my integrity above everything else. And above everything else, I want to be believed. This verse does not mean that God has other qualities that would be moved to second place. It simply means this.

He's going to do what he says doing. His word is wonderful. We have seen where the praise begins. We have seen where praise belongs to. Real quickly, we're going to look at where praise should go. Praise is not just empty adoration. David really meditated on aspects of God and it gave him a spirit of praise.

Let's look at some of the things that would oblige us to praise. We can praise the Lord for his love. 138.2. Bryce did a great job reading it. It says, I will praise the Lord, or verse number two, for thy loving kindness.

[9 : 15] We have a loving God. A God who was loving then. A God who's loving now. David knew that love, and if you're here this morning, you would know the love of God. 1 John 3.1 is going to read this. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

If you're here this morning and you're a believer, you have been loved. God loved you so much that he sent his only begotten son, Jesus, to the life you couldn't live, to die a death. You should have died in your place. And by faith you believe and receive that. That's love.

He showed his love. Romans 5.8 says, he commended his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. John 3.16, we all know this verse, for God saw the world that he gave his only begotten son. And because of that, we can praise the Lord for his love.

If you're here this morning, you're going through something, going through a trial, you can leave knowing God loves you. Not only does he love you, he likes you. He loved you so much he wanted real fellowship with you. And we can praise him for that.

We can also praise him for his truth. He says he can praise him for his loving kindness and for his truth. If there's something really neat is our Lord is the sole proprietor, sole owner of truth. In a world full of lies, our Lord has the truth.

[10 : 14] This truth does so much for us. First, John 14.6, Jesus, the way, the truth, and life, this truth saves us. We live according to truth, according to the book of Ephesians. We praise the Lord for his truth. But look at what else David praises the Lord for.

In the day when I cried out, thou answered me, and with strength, thou strengthened my soul. We can praise the Lord because he also answers prayer. Psalm 138.3 is going to say this. We just read that.

I'm not going to say it again. We notice an important pattern in the reason David gave for his praise. It's important to praise God for who he is, but it's even more important to praise, it's even just as important to praise God as for what he's done. God answered David when he cried out.

There's a principle. When we cry out to the Lord, he also answers us too. 1 Peter 5.7 says, cast already care upon him for he cares for you. You're going through something, going through a trial. Cast your care upon the Lord because he really cares.

He's really concerned and he really does hear. Philippians 4.6 says, be careful for nothing, everything with prayer and supplication. Let your requests be made known unto God. He realized that the Lord answers prayer.

[11 : 11] He prays the Lord because he was loving. He prays the Lord because the Lord had truth. And he prays the Lord because God answered his prayer. And to my friends in here who wouldn't know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, the most important cry out for help you can ever do is this.

You cry out to the Lord and ask him to save you. Romans 10.13 will read this. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Whatever we're going through, no matter the storm, no matter the situation, no matter the trial, we should be people who praise the Lord.

David gives us a few wonderful examples as to what to praise the Lord for in this passage. And tell us we hear from the rest of the psalm. Let's leave it today praising.