

*** The Heights Baptist Church * Series: The Psalms ***
*** Topic: Praise God! * Psalm 111 * 8/3/25 ***

MAIN POINT

Everything about God—who He is, and all He does—is worthy of our worship and praise.

INTRODUCTION

Name someone who was a hero to you during your childhood, or who is a hero to you now. What is it about them that caused you to hold them in such high esteem?

Psalm 111 is classified as a Psalm of praise. When we reflect on who God is and what He has done, our response should be worship and praise, both privately and together with other believers.

UNDERSTANDING

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 111

Note to study leader: As the class comes up with answers to the following question, consider writing their answers on the whiteboard.

Verse 1 starts with the command to “Praise the LORD (‘Halleluiah’), extoling Him with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.” How do the descriptions of how we are to extol Him add to our understanding of how we are to praise God?

“With all my heart” shows us that true worship is not just going through the motions of religious ritual but rather focusing fully on God as we praise Him. The Hebrew word translated as “Council” can be translated as “a circle of friends” (Blue Letter Bible), and the word translated as “assembly” can be translated as “multitude, or swarm”. So, we see the importance of worshiping God in both a small group of mature believers, and large groups of worshipers.

Look through this Psalm again. What actions by people are mentioned in this Psalm as part of our praising the LORD?

- Extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly (verse 1).
- Ponder the works of the LORD (verse 2).
- Delight in the LORD (verse 2).
- Fear the LORD (verse 10).
- Follow the LORD’s precepts (verse 10).

Note to study leader: Definitions for some the key words used in these verses include the following:

- *Praise: (literally, to shine) to make a show, celebrate, commend, praise*
- *Extol: (literally, to hold out the hands) to revere or worship*
- *Ponder: (literally, to tread, follow, or search) to diligently inquire or question*
- *Delight: (to desire something valuable) to delight in something pleasant*
- *Fear: Awe, respect, reverence*
- *Follow: (literally, to do or make) to bring forth, produce, or acquire*

How would you summarize these actions believers are to take as we praise God?

We see the outward expression of praise (to shine, make a show, celebrate, bring forth), AND the inward attitude behind our external expression of praise (diligence, reverence, delight, awe).

How does this description of praise in this verse compare to your own typical expressions of praise?

Why is it important to praise God both privately and in community with other believers?

The praise described in this verse takes place in the community of the congregation. Offering praise in community with other believers lends itself to mutual encouragement and multiplied worship. Expressing thanksgiving to God in community reminds one another of the work and goodness of God. This is especially helpful for those who find themselves in seasons of trial or doubt. Being reminded of the truth about God, even when experienced through the lives and experiences of others, gives reason for worship and adoration.

What attributes and actions of God are listed in this Psalm that should elicit our praise?

- God's great works (verse 2)
- God's glorious and majestic deeds (verse 3)
- God's enduring righteousness (verse 3)
- God causing His wonders to be remembered (verse 4)
- God being gracious and compassionate (verse 4)
- God's provision (verse 5)
- God remembering His covenant with us (verse 5)
- God displaying the power of His works (verse 6)
- God giving Israel the promised land (verse 6)
- God's works are faithful and just (verse 7)
- God's precepts are trustworthy (verse 7)
- God's works and precepts are established forever (verse 8)
- God's works and precepts are enacted in faithfulness and uprightness (verse 8)
- God has provided redemption for his people (verse 9)
- God has ordained his covenant forever (verse 9)
- God's name is holy and awesome (verse 9)

How would you summarize these items for which we are to praise God?

We see God's divine attributes, His marvelous works, AND how He blesses me through them.

What are some specific, tangible examples of God's work for His people in the context of Israel?

In verse 6, the writer described that they were rescued from Egypt, brought into the promised land, and defeated many enemies as they defended the land to provide the "inheritance of nations."

What parallels are there for the church?

- God has rescued us from sin (Romans 8:2 and Colossians 1:13-14).
- God has adopted us into His family (Ephesians 1:4-5).
- We are now citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20)!

As the psalmist wraps up this Psalm of praise, in verse 9 he mentions three attributes and actions of God for which we are to praise Him. Which of these three reasons for praise stands out to you?

In conclusion, the psalmist named three main reasons to praise God: 1. God has rescued the people; 2. He kept His covenant with them; and 3. He is holy and awesome. These three reasons are as true for us today in Christ as they were for Israel.

Why would the psalmist mention “the fear of the Lord” at the end of such a positive and uplifting psalm? How do the characteristics and works of God help us understand that phrase? How might “fear” in this instance help us grow closer to God while still maintaining a heart of joy and praise?

The word “fear” use in verse 10 is not the same as the fear experienced by those who face God’s wrath. Rather, this fear denotes respect and awe.

A CASE STUDY: MARY OF BETHANY

In a previous meeting of Jesus with Mary of Bethany, Luke 10:38-42 records that while Martha was distracted as she served her guests, Mary remained at the feet of Jesus. Mary was focused on what really mattered. Now, just days after Jesus raised her brother Lazarus from the dead, Mary continues to demonstrate her devotion to Jesus.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 12:1-3

Jesus went back to Bethany with His disciples less than a week before His death on the cross. During the meal in Bethany an extraordinary event happened. Mary took a pound of fragrant oil, valued at 300 denarii, which was equivalent of a man’s yearly wage, and used it to anoint Jesus’ feet.

What stands out to you about Mary’s actions?

Mary was at her usual place at Jesus’ feet. This act would make very little sense to the people witnessing this event. It was a servant’s job to wash the feet of their master and his guests. And in this culture, a woman’s hair was a very private, personal symbol of her beauty. Mary’s act of extravagant love and worship was totally focused on Jesus. We as followers of Christ must keep our focus on Jesus by giving Him the best of who we are and what He has given us.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 12:4-8

How did Judas respond to the situation, and what was his motive?

What does Jesus’ response to Judas teach us about worshiping God versus carrying out the ministries He has assigned to us, such as the Great Commission and serving the poor?

Greed was the motive behind Judas’s outburst. Jesus’ words didn’t mean we shouldn’t help the poor or carry out other ministries. Jesus is showing us that worshiping God is our highest priority. Jesus said Mary was preparing his body for burial. With it being less than a week until the crucifixion, and this perfume being of such high quality, it is likely the fragrance of her action went with Him to the cross.

APPLICATION

Looking at the concluding verse in Psalm 111, what does it mean that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom?

What does verse 11 say choosing to follow God’s precepts shows about us?

How can I better apply these lessons to my life?

PRAYER

Praise God for who He is and for the marvelous works He has done. Thank Him for the specific things He has done and is doing in our lives. Pray that God’s Spirit would help us recognize how God is working in our lives and that He would give us the grace to help us to develop a habit of wholehearted praise.

COMMENTARY

Psalm 111

This psalm is an acrostic poem. Each line of the Psalm (vv. 1-8 are two-lines each and vv. 9 and 10 are three lines each) starts with a successive letter in the Hebrew alphabet

1. “*“Praise ye the LORD,’ or, Hallelujah! All ye his saints unite in adoring Jehovah, who worketh so gloriously. Do it now, do it always: do it heartily, do it unanimously, do it eternally. Even if others refuse, take care that ye have always a song for your God. Put away all doubt, question, murmuring, and rebellion, and give yourselves up to the praising of Jehovah, both with your lips and in your lives.”*

Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

“*In the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation;*”—whether with few or with many he would pour forth his whole heart and soul in praise, and whether the company was made up of select spirits or of the general mass of the people he would continue in the same exercise.”

Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

“We must praise God both in private and in public, in less and greater assemblies, in our own families and in the courts of the Lord's house; but in both it is most comfortable to do it in concert with the upright, who will heartily join in it. Private meetings for devotion should be kept up as well as more public and promiscuous assemblies.” Matthew Henry Commentary on Psalm 111

2. “Because the works are great they cannot be seen all at once, but must be looked into with care, and this seeking out is of essential service to us by educating our faculties, and strengthening our spiritual eye gradually to bear the light of the divine glory. It is well for us that all things cannot be seen at a glance, for the search into their mysteries is as useful to us as the knowledge which we thereby attain. The history of the Lord's dealings with his people is especially a fit subject for the meditation of reverent minds who find therein a sweet solace, and a never failing source of delight.”

Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

“(1) All that truly love God have pleasure in his works, and reckon all well that he does; nor do their thoughts dwell upon any subject with more delight than on the works of God”

“(2) Those that have pleasure in the works of God will not take up with a superficial transient view of them, but will diligently search into them and observe them. In studying both natural and political history we should have this in our eye, to discover the greatness and glory of God's works.”

Matthew Henry Commentary on Psalm 111

3. “His one special work, the salvation of his people, is here mentioned as distinguished from his many other works. This reflects honour and glory upon him. It is deservedly the theme of the highest praise, and compels those who understand it and experience it to ascribe all honour and glory unto the Lord.”

Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

4. “Deeds such as God has wrought are not to be admired for an hour and then forgotten, they are meant to be perpetual signs and instructive tokens to all coming generations; and especially are they designed to confirm the faith of his people in the divine love, and to make them know that *“the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.”* They need not fear to trust his grace for the future, for they remember it in the past.”

Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

5. "He could not let his people lack meat because he was in covenant with them, and they can never want in the future, for he will continue to act upon the terms of that covenant. No promise of the Lord shall fall to the ground, nor will any part of the great compact of eternal love be revoked or allowed to sink into oblivion. The covenant of grace is the plan of the great work which the Lord works out for his people, and it will never be departed from" Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

6. The two lines of verse 6 form the center of the psalm, with 10 lines on either side. To give the inheritance of the nations reinforces the Lord's gift of land to Israel during the conquest of Canaan. The Lord handed over the promised land inhabited by other nations to His chosen people.

"He put forth all his power to drive out the Canaanites and bring in his people. Even thus may it please his infinite wisdom to give to his church the heathen for her inheritance in the name of Jesus. Nothing but great power can effect this, but it will surely be accomplished in due season."
Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

7. "Truth and justice are conspicuous in all that Jehovah does. Nothing like artifice or crooked policy can ever be seen in his proceedings; he acts faithfully and righteously towards his people, and with justice and impartiality to all mankind. This also should lead us to praise him, since it is of the utmost advantage to us to live under a sovereign whose laws, decrees, acts, and deeds are the essence of truth and justice."
Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

8. The Lord is not swayed by transient motives, or moved by the circumstances of the hour; immutable principles rule in the courts of Jehovah, and he pursues his eternal purposes without the shadow of a turning. Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

9. Redemption (Hb *padah*) denotes the exchange of a payment price for liberation (Dt 7:8; Isa 35:10; 50:2; 51:11) and it occurs in this noun form only three other times (Ex 8:23 "distinction"; Ps 130:7; Isa 50:2). The phrase His name is... awe-inspiring (lit "to be feared") implies a covenantal relationship (68:35; 89:7; 99:3; Ex 34:10; Dt 7:21; 28:58).

"When they were in Egypt he sent not only a deliverer, but an actual deliverance; not only a redeemer, but complete redemption. He has done the like spiritually for all his people, having first by blood purchased them out of the hand of the enemy, and then by power rescued them from the bondage of their sins. Redemption we can sing of as an accomplished act: it has been wrought for us, sent to us, and enjoyed by us, and we are in very deed the Lord's redeemed. "*He hath commanded his covenant for ever.*" His divine decree has made the covenant of his grace a settled and eternal institution: redemption by blood proves that the covenant cannot be altered, for it ratifies and establishes it beyond all recall. This, too, is reason for the loudest praise." Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111

10. "The word "beginning" in Scripture sometimes means the chief; and true religion is at once the first element of wisdom, and its chief fruit. To know God so as to walk aright before him is the greatest of all the applied sciences. Holy reverence of God leads us to praise him, and this is the point which the psalm drives at, for it is a wise act on the part of a creature towards his Creator.... The praises of God will never cease, because his works will always excite adoration, and it will always be the wisdom of men to extol their glorious Lord." Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Psalm 111