

Tuesday, November 21, 2023 • Read Psalm 104:31–35

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the psalmist pray would endure (v31a)? For how long? Whom does he pray would rejoice (v31b)? In what? What does YHWH do in v32a? To what? What does it do? What does YHWH do in v32b? To what? What do they do? What will the psalmist do in v33a? To Whom? For how long? What will the psalmist do in v33b? To Whom? When? What does he pray would be sweet (v34a)? To Whom? What will the psalmist be (v34b)? In Whom? About whom does the psalmist now pray in v35a? What does he pray would happen to them? And that what would happen to whom in v35b? What does he now command to do what (v35c, cf. v1a)? How does he conclude the Psalm (v35d)?

Why do believers exist? Psalm 104:31–35 prepares us for the opening portion of public worship on the Lord's Day. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **more than any other creature, believers exist to enjoy the Creator—as He does.**

From the creation to the Creator (v31–32). In the previous section (v27–30), the psalmist had turned his attention from the Lord's provision for the creatures to the personal nature of that provision—focusing more upon Lord Himself. Now the attention narrows even further to the Creator Himself. His glory, His joy, His personal interaction with the creatures.

- His glory endures forever (v31a). He is un-creaturally. They come and go, but He endures forever. And, in every moment of that enduring, He is glorious. Infinitely weighty. Of such immense substance and reality, that in His presence, the creature must know its infinitesimal lightness by comparison. He has being inherent to Himself; all others depend upon Him for our being.
- He rejoices in His works (v31b). He Himself is the great excellence. His works are wisely considered, powerfully executed, mercifully carried out, faithfully consistent. Everything about His works is excellent. However, none of these excellencies compare to the greatest one: His works are His. This is the great reason for our rejoicing in them. And this is the great reason for His rejoicing in them—and His rejoicing in His works is infinitely greater than our rejoicing in them! God is good, and God does good, and God rejoices in the good works that He does.
- He interacts with His creatures (v32). What an infinitely formidable thing it is for the creature to interact with the Creator! v32 takes us to Sinai, when the Lord made Himself known on the earth in burning and darkness and tremblings even from afar off (Cf. Ex 19:16, 20:18; Heb 12:18). And yet, this is the God with Whom we always have to do!

Known by redeemed, covenanted creatures (v33–34). Men are different from the beasts in that when they enjoy goodness from God (cf. v28b), they can conscientiously enjoy God Himself, and His goodness itself. But all men have sinned in their first father and fallen from this holy delight in the Lord and His goodness. However, by grace, v33 takes the prayer for the Lord's own delight in Himself (v31) and mirrors it in the delight that He gives the believer to have in God. What God has always done in Himself, He has given to man to do with man's own life (v33a), with man's own being (v33b).

Man was created for this, in the image of God, and delighting in the Lord is the great thing into which man has been redeemed, as he is renewed into the image of God in Christ. These redemption in Christ's blood brings man into a covenantal bond with God in which He doesn't just sing praises to God but sings praises to "my" God. v34 brings all of this together in a mutual delighting as, in the first line, the musings of the believer's heart are sweet to God, Who observes them; then, in the second line, these musings have produced the believer's own gladness in YHWH.

Application to history and to the heart (v35). Believers restored to a full delighting in God forever, in a way that is pleasing also to Him, is the end toward which not only the saint is proceeding, but toward which all of history is proceeding. When the Lord has gathered and perfected His saints, indeed the new heavens and the new earth will contain no sinners, no wicked. So, as we have learned from Rom 8:22–26, the creation, and the believer, and the Spirit all groan for that coming day when the resurrection has come, and the hope in which we were saved has become sight. This is the groaning, the longing of v35a–b.

So, the Psalm concludes as it began: "Bless YHWH, O my soul!" (v35c). The Spirit has traced for us from creation, through providence, to redemption, and eternity: all of this is moving toward believers' delighting in God. This is why we have being; this is why our souls have been redeemed. So, let me instruct myself from God's Word; indeed, let me receive His own instruction. Bless YHWH! But then the camera zooms out to all of creation, with the plural, general, cosmos-wide command: "Praise YHWH!" (v35d). Or, in transliteration of the Hebrew, "Hallelujah!"

Why do you exist? For what were you redeemed? When do you practice delighting in the Lord? What evidence have you seen of this working out into other parts of your life? Who else delights in this? Who can increase your joy in God? By what means does His Word teach us that He does so? What use are you making of those means? What fruit do you see from it? How do you practice the self-talk modeled at the beginning and end of this Psalm?

Sample prayer: O Lord of glory, You are from everlasting, to everlasting. Forever, You are unchangingly glorious in Your being—infinite in majesty. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You exist in perfect love, adoration, and delight. And in all Your good works, You delight in Yourself. Now, we come to You as those who are made in Your image and redeemed into Your image, so that we also might delight in You. We will sing to You as long as we live. We will sing praise to You, our God, while we have our being. Grant that, by the ministry of Your Spirit, our meditation would be sweet to You, and that we would be glad in You. We long for the day when we do so perfectly, in a new heavens and new earth. But even now, grant unto us to bless You with all our soul, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP104E "Forevermore May the Lord's Glory Stand" or TPH104B "My Soul, Bless the Lord"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 104 verse 31 through, 35. These are God's words. May the glory of Yahweh endure forever. May y'all pay for choice in his works. He looks on the earth and it trembles. He touches the hills and they smoke. I will sing to y'allah as long as i live.

I wasn't praise to my god. While i have my being. Made my meditation be sweet to him. I will be glad in your way. My sinners. Be consumed from the earth. And the wicked, be no more. Bless y'all play. Oh my soul. Praise yahua. So far the reading of gods inspired and And there and twerk.

As he comes to the close of this psalm, which has traced through Have creation and providence. How he comes especially now to redemption. The idea of which was already shown, And the way he continually renews the face of the earth and points even to a new heaven, And a new earth.

And now, as he's coming, especially to redemption and to the lord's interaction, With the believer, the attention shifts in verses 31 and 32 to the lord's own. Uh response. Because the creation. Is. Is. A secondary. All of it's uh responses just show it to be creaturely. Whereas the great thing.

Is what the creator himself? What god himself? Um, Is. Is doing even with respect. To his own glory and to his own works. And so god's responds then, Uh, to his works. Versus 31, and Um, And 32. Forms our response. To his works. Which is. To delight in him.

Like he delights in himself in his work. But not only do we delight in him, but he even takes pleasure in our pleasure. And so there is the knowing mutual knowing mutual, Loving mutual delight. That takes place between god and the believer. And, As the believer, adores god. Together with god, who adores God, who worship, who brings glory and honor.

To himself. And then there's application of that. High in the last verse verse 35. The desire. For all of creation and providence history, redemption to come to its end. And the psalmist addressing his own soul. To even now. Have that portion have that delight? That is the end towards, which all of this is going so first, then in verses 31 and 32.

Attention upon the creator himself may the glory of yahweh. Indoor forever. Uh, his glory of course, is his weightiness. Which is. Infinite. Very comparison to the creature. He is uncreaturally creatures. Have to depend upon him for existence, but he has an existence inherent to himself. Creatures come and go we exist in time, but he endures from outside of time.

So, the glory of yahweh is infinite weightiness and the forever endurance of Yahweh that he is outside. Uh, of time and so There is the godness of god in the first half of verse 31, which helps us in the poetic couplet To understand what is really being said. In the second, half of verse 31 may.

Y'all way rejoice. In his works. Now, his works are excellent. Uh, they are. Uh, wise, there are powerfully executed, they're mercifully carried out their faithfully consistent, everything about his works. Is excellent, but the great excellence of his works. In the second half of verse 31 is not any of these particular characteristics, but the fact that they are his And so, as the lord considers, his works, what he rejoices in especially is that they are his Um, That they are the works of the glorious.

God they are the works of the everlasting. God The. Uncreated creator. The only. Independent infinitely. Glorious, eternal god. And this is, Very exciting. Uh, when you think of versus like, Ephesians 2. Verse 10 for we are his workmanship. Created in christ, jesus. And you realize that in the good works that are prepared beforehand that we should walk and then god's pleasure in them is not just Are not primarily.

How well we do. In what we do? Well, it's pleasure and then Uh, in our good works is that we are. His work. And our good works are his work. In us. And so, god takes a divine pleasure in the believer. Something of course that is not surprising to us.

When we remember how it was that god willed and planned to save us. And that that was by union with his son, for the father, and the son, and the spirit being very god of very god. Uh, live in. Uh, mutual Love and adoration and delight and devotion. Um, From everlasting to everlasting and what god has done in his generosity.

Uh, to us as he not only made us in his image. That of all the creatures. We would receive good things but we would know the good god in his goodness. But then he has also redeemed us into his image in union with his son. And so his glory endures forever, he rejoices in his works.

And he interacts with his creatures. Uh, but the interaction is Uh, too much. Uh, for his uh, for his creatures. He looks on the earth, it trembles he touches the hills they smoke this of course, is Uh, reminding us especially of sinai. And the, the thunderings, the shaking of the whole mountain, and the lightnings, and the whole mountain seeming as if it were on fire and the smoke going up and even Um, In addition to what verse 32 describes, the sound of the trumpet that gets louder and louder.

Indicating that what you've seen is, not the result of the fullness of the expression of god's godness. But that, this is just the first, slightest note, Of the The expression. Of himself the interaction. And so, there's this. There's this uh, comparison, this contrast Verse 32 and verse 33. Of the difference that grace makes in the heart of the believer.

All creatures, tremble. And smoke. At the touch of god. Except for those who are upheld. By the grace of god. This is why we have to be conformed to the image of christ. In the last day, that that we will have not just Souls that have been made perfect and holiness without which no one will see the lord.

So that what we will be though it has not yet appeared. We know that we will be Like him, but also even physically the body that we have now are unable To inherit the imperishable incorruptible, glorious. Hebrews 12 and first john, With three and first Corinthians 15. Um, all those passages.

And so, as a as, Psalm turns his attention to our experience of god. It's an experience of god that mirrors or imitates gods. Um, Uh, god's own pleasure within himself. That is to say in in verse 33 we join the rejoicing of this second half of verse 31, which we already begin.

To make application of when we're up in verse 31, i will sing to yahweh as long as i live. I will sing praise to my god while i have my being. Oh, my dear children. If you ever, And God's providence and i know that it is often the case.

So i'm not under the illusion that you won't, but if you ever in god's providence, start to doubt the purpose of your existence or feel as if it would be better if you did not. Remember what scripture says? Is the purpose of your existence? Your life exists for singing to yahai.

I will sing to your way as long as i live, you're being exists. For singing. Praise to your god. I will sing praise to my god. Why i have my being And i'm sure that even as i began to describe this to you, You remembered the answer to the first catechism.

Question the shorter. Catechism. Man's treatment is to glorify god and to enjoy him forever. But you're not to learn theology in the abstract. Here to learn theology in reality and especially in the reality of your connection to god, my chief end. Is to glorify god and to enjoy him forever.

And so, even in moments where you're not necessarily questioning the purpose of your existence. You just ask the question. Why? Why did whatever? Well, one of the answers and the great answer as far as it touches you. Is that i may sing to your way. That amazing phrases to my god, not just our god.

My god. The one who has redeemed me for himself. He has taken me to be his very own redeemed covenant person. And he has given himself to be. My very own redeeming covenant. God, he has bound me to himself and himself to me. He is my god. And so, we exist.

To delight in him to sing to him. And, you know, verse 33 is that Excuse me. Verse 33 is that musing that muttering. To yourself. This is actually the word. See y'all that Chapter 3 and the battle plan. For the mind book was making reference to Here in the first half of verse 34, My musing and my heart.

That praising him as the purpose for my existence, even that as sweet to him. That is his great work. In time in creation in history. Is making us to be his very own people who now, participate in the pleasures of god. And so, if he rejoiced in his works, Of giving like food and shelter to the beasts.

How much does he rejoice in his work? Of making us to delight in him. Through union with jesus christ. Made my meditation be sweet to him. And as we realize, then That this was The. Pleasure of god in purposing. All these things. That gives us the reciprocal gladness, i Will be glad.

In yahweh. And so verse 34 is this virtuous cycle. In which there is a Continual reciprocating, increasing delight and pleasure. Forever. And when that day comes, The rear new heavens and a new earth. One in which righteousness, dwells. One in which there are no sinners. One in which there are no wicked.

The first two lines, which make up the first half of verse 35 are not just. I wish god would banish all the people that i can't stand how bad they are. But i'm looking forward to god's banishing, all the sin and wickedness, that is even left in me. First not just that there aren't going to be any Of the wicket.

But there's not going to be any wickedness left at all. In the new creation. And so the first half of verse 35, as a longing verse For glory to come. It is the groaning. As we have gone from creation to the redeemed, even to god himself, we followed the same pattern.

Haven't we? That we did in the middle of Romans 8. The creation groaning. With eager longing, for the revealing of the sons of god and we who have the first fruits of the spirit groaning, Um, for the day for the adoption, that is a redemption of our body and the spirit himself groaning.

And so, as the psalm has followed Of the similar pattern. So also now Um, We groan. For the, the Virtuous. Uh, cycle in verse 34 and the new heavens and the new earth. But even then we can already Make application to ourselves. We command our soul. The psalm began.

First one this way. Bless yahweh. Oh my soul. And then the last line prays yahweh, Um, in hebrew is literally, hallelujah. And it's a plural command. So now it's not just my soul. It is. A desire and instruction exhortation to anyone and everyone and everything. Our blessing yahweh now.

And our instructing ourselves to bless the lord. Now, Is a participation. In the everlasting joy. That belongs to the life to come. Well. May the lord give you not only to know these things. Uh theologically and be able to come back to Psalm 104 and read and understand all these things.

But may he give you to make the same instruction to your soul. To begin, taking the pleasure in the lord himself to enjoy. Even now, Some of the heavenliness of heaven. And may, he hear our prayers. And bring the day. Let's pray. Her gracious garden our heavenly father. We look forward to The great day.

In which? Christ returns and we are resurrected. And our rejoicing is perfected soul and body. Forever and increased. Forever. We praise you. Who are right? To delight in yourself. And who in everlasting eternal electing. Generosity. And love. Have adopted us to delight in you. In the union, with your son and dwelt by your spirit.

That we may enjoy the pleasure of god forever. And that you oh god may be pleased. With what you have done in us. Forever. We ask this in christ's name. Amen.