

I Will Extol You

Psalm 145:1-21
Halifax: 4 November 2018

Introduction

Certain things demand to be praised.

- The great steak you had on Friday
- The top ten catches that Kevin Pillar made
- The fall leaves you saw when driving through New Brunswick
- The speech you heard on YouTube
- The new toaster you just bought
- The concert you went to.

Things can impress you so much that you find it impossible to keep silent about them.

- Praise is stirred up in your soul and then breaks out in your words.

But today, I am going to talk to you about the praise of God.

- I think we often find it hard to praise Him.
 - We seem to find it easier to ask him for help—and even to thank Him.
 - But when it comes to simply declaring His greatness, we falter.
- There could be many reasons for this.
 - Of course the one we might think of first is that we don't know Him as we ought.
 - That is certainly a contributing factor. Sin has blinded us.
 - An even worse reason for struggles to praise Him is that we don't love Him.
 - We actually make it harder for you to praise God at Covenant because we have returned to the apostolic practice of singing Psalms without instruments.
 - We believe that this is what we ought to do—that it is best to sing the songs that God has given us in the way the apostles appointed—but it is harder.
 - It is harder because every generation has things that they especially like about God and things that they'd rather not think about.
 - So in writing their songs of praise, each generation focuses on the things that they like and that makes it a lot easier to join in.
 - For example, many people today like to think that the devil sends the hard things and God sends the good things, but the Psalms say He is sovereign over all.
 - And even more difficult, in the hymns we write, God is praised for His mercy and grace, but not so much for His wrath and judgment, but in the Psalms of God, He is praised equally for both mercy and wrath.
 - Still another reason we might struggle to praise God is that we feel that our praises will not do Him justice.
 - We know that our praises are not worthy of Him—and perhaps they seem almost too familiar—like approaching a great king and telling him what a great job he is doing—it seems out of place... who am I to tell him that?
 - And besides, I am sinner, and unless I am focused on the mercy of God in Christ, I can find it hard to draw near for praise.

For these and many other reasons, praise can be difficult for us.

I have good news for you though.

- In Psalm 145, we have David (that is, Jesus the Son of David, our covenant head) asserting three times that God *will* be praised.
 - That means that He will indeed be praised—by Him and by us!
 - When Jesus our Lord and king says, “I will extol you,” He speaks as the Mediator of the whole church.
 - As such, He also speaks of us, saying, they will praise you... in other words, I will see to it that the people in my kingdom will praise you.
 - This gives us confidence that if we are in Christ, we will praise God.

There are three couplets in this Psalm, each with an assertion that God will be praised followed by an actual expression of praise.

- COUPLET 1: The assertion that Jesus will praise God (vv. 1-2) →
 - Followed by an expression of praise for God’s greatness (3).
- COUPLET 2: The assertion that we will join Him in praise (vv. 4-7) →
 - Followed by an expression of praise for God’s grace and mercy (vv. 8-9).
- COUPLET 3: The assertion that we will praise Him as individual saints (vv. 10-12) →
 - Followed by an expression of praise to Him for subduing us (v. 13), for providing for our bodies (vv. 14-16), and for providing for our spirits (17-20).
- CONCL: In conclusion, there is a summary assertion that Jesus and all of us *will* bless the LORD forever (v. 21)... and we surely will!

So there is a progression in who does the praising... it begins with Jesus, then progresses to Jesus and us, then to us individually praising the Father...

- And there is movement in what God is praised for as well...
 - From praise simply for His greatness without reference to what He has done...
 - To praise for His grace and mercy seen in His mighty acts...
 - To praise that He is a God who personally cares for each one of us.

So the great truth for us related to this Psalm is that:

- **Jesus came into this world to take those who were silent and turn them into the worshippers of God—**
 - not those who were forced to worship Him,
 - but those who cannot but worship Him because they delight in Him as being so very great and excellent in Himself, so gracious and mighty in establishing a kingdom for us, and so lovingly attentive to each one of us in that kingdom.
- Today I want to take some time to consider these things in hope that our praise will grow as Jesus declares.

Some of you who are new may be wondering why I am preaching from Psalm 145 instead of from Mark (since I am doing a sermon series in Mark now).

- The reason is that it is our custom, for years now, to have a Psalm of Focus that we sing that is in some way related to our regular sermon series.
 - We will sing the Psalm of Focus for several weeks (or even months if it is one like Psalm 145 that is divided into three portions) until we take up another one.
 - I always introduce the Psalm with a sermon so we can sing with more understanding.

- The reason I have selected Psalm 145 is because in Mark, we are getting into the section where Jesus does many works—casting out demons, healing people... that kind of thing.
 - By these works, He shows us the nature of God’s gracious kingdom and this ought to stir up praise from us to God for His greatness, power, and love.
 - That is the goal of Jesus—to make us worshippers of the Father from whom we have been estranged by sin.
 - In Psalm 145 when He asserts that we will praise God with Him, He is showing that as our mediator He will restore us to the Father.
 - That is tremendous news for us to sing about—looking to be transformed into better worshippers as we learn more of Jesus in Mark.
 - If that does not happen, then we will have wasted our time in Mark.

Listen now as I read Psalm 145 to you.

- This is the word of the LORD.
- And remember, though penned by David who was the head of the covenant people, he is quite happy to be replaced by Christ whom he calls his Lord who is the true covenant head.
 - Yes, David led the people to worship God at the temple, but we know that David was but a type of Christ and that it is Christ that brings us to the Father and makes us worshippers.

Hear now the word of God.

Psalm 145:1-21: «A Praise of David.» I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. ² Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. ³ Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness *is* unsearchable. ⁴ One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. ⁵ I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. ⁶ *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. ⁷ They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness. ⁸ The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. ⁹ The LORD *is* good to all, and His tender mercies *are* over all His works. ¹⁰ All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of

Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, ¹² to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. ¹³ Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations. ¹⁴ The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all *who are* bowed down. ¹⁵ The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. ¹⁶ You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. ¹⁷ The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. ¹⁸ The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. ¹⁹ He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. ²⁰ The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. ²¹ My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever.

May the LORD bless the reading of His holy word.

So again, in Psalm 145, there are three couplets... each with an assertion that God will be praised followed by an expression of that praise.

- Let's explore each of these.

I. The first couplet.

A. Jesus asserts that He will praise God (vv. 1-2).

- Look at His words in verses 1-2: **I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.**

1. What a strong assertion He makes!

a. Synonyms are piled on—

- *to extol* is to set Him above others,
- *to bless* is to express how wonderful or blessed He is,
- *to praise* is to tell of His excellence.

b. And look, He says that He will do it every day and that He will do it forever and ever.

2. This is the appropriate response of every person to the living God.

- Every one of us should have been praising Him daily from our birth and continue to do so into eternity because He is God and He is worthy.
- We are empty because we are not full of Him—and we dishonour Him who is the highest of all beings and source of our being and of all that we are and have.
- Our failure to praise is a wretched omission that can only be explained by the ruin of man in the fall... we are desperate, miserable creatures who have lost our way.

3. But here is our David... Jesus Christ... who has come in our flesh asserting that *He* will indeed praise the Father.

- How glad we should be that there is such a one to praise Him.
 - He restores order and sets things right again—praise be to His name—and now man is praising God as he ought to because our David is doing so.
- This is too much for King David to say of himself—this is what our true covenant head asserts as the one who brings us to God.
 - He Himself, as human flesh, was the first to go to God in the right way and He came to lead us to go to God in the right way—as those who praise Him.

TRANS> And now He actually does express praise to God.

- As I showed you, with each couplet there is an assertion that God will be praised...
 - Then the praise itself is expressed...

B. In this first couplet, God is praised for His greatness (v. 3).

- Verse 3 says: **Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.**

1. This is the highest of all praise.

- It is praise for the greatness that is in Him—not praise for what He has done here, but praise for who He is—for His personal excellence.

- It goes far beyond what He has done for me or what I know of Him—it is the greatness of the infinite God that we cannot fully comprehend or search out!
 - We can truly know of His greatness, but we can never take it all in—not unless a time comes when the finite can swallow the infinite!
2. When you praise God, this is what you do.
- You delight in His personal excellence.
 - It is different than thanking Him for what He has done—it is adoring Him for what He is rather than what He has done.
 - You can delight in a meal that a wretched cruel man makes and give thanks for it, but it is a far different thing to delight in the man.
 - Our catechism teaches us that our chief end is to glorify God.
 - We often think of that as what we do to make our glorious God known... that it speaks of living and speaking in such a way that others would see how great He is... and that is a part of it...
 - But too often we get so busy promoting His glory that we forget that we need to be adoring Him ourselves—not just promoting Him the way a salesman promotes a product that he doesn't care about himself.
 - We need to see that we are beholding His greatness and that we are delighting in His person in our innermost being.
 - Praise is to begin with true adoration for God in your heart and spirit and then break forth in your words and actions.
 - What a great example our David is here—beginning with His own praise of the Father's greatness before He talks of the praise of the people of His kingdom.
 - But indeed He does talk about His subjects praising God in the second couplet.

II. The second couplet.

- A. Jesus asserts here that both He and His people will praise God for His mighty acts.
- Verses 4-7 say: **4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. 5 I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. 6 Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. 7 They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness."**
1. Notice how the focus is on God's mighty acts...
- In verse 4, it is *God's mighty acts*, in verse 5, *His wondrous works*, in verse 6 *His awesome acts*, and in verse 7 *the memory of His great goodness*.
 - These mighty acts are the great things that God has done for us as His people...
 - Things like creating us and redeeming us!
 - These are the acts that Jesus declares to us and that we declare to each other in His kingdom, passing them along from one generation to another.
 - We catechise our children about what God has done so they can know Him too.

2. Our religion, in the great things, is one of official testimony...
 - We proclaim that God made the world in six days and gave us all that we have.
 - We are to praise Him for all that He has made.
 - And we proclaim His mighty acts of redemption
 - That He cleansed the world in the day of Noah, but in mercy spared Noah that He might always have a people to praise Him.
 - That He called Abraham, promising to bring forth a Saviour through his seed...
 - That He redeemed His people out of Egypt and gave them His law.
 - That He delivered them from their enemies and gave them the land.
 - That He raised up David and promised a greater than David who would conquer all our enemies and restore us in righteousness.
 - And above all that in the fullness of time, He sent the promised Son, His only Son, to be our redeemer and that He has bled and died for our sins and been raised again to sit at God's right hand until all His enemies are made His footstool.
 - These are God's mighty acts, his wondrous works, and we declare to our children and to one another from generation to generation.
 - Jesus declares them to us by His own mouth, then by His apostles and prophets in the Holy Scriptures,
 - And then by preachers of God's word that He appointed in the church to give official testimony of His mighty acts.
 - And He appointed that fathers would declare these acts in their families, daily in their homes.
 - The kingdom is established by believing in God's mighty acts of creation and redemption as declared to us by Christ and His servants.

➤ Then we have the second part of this couplet--

B. God is here praised for His grace and mercy with these words in verses 8-9.

- **8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. 9 The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.**
1. When we see His great acts of creation and redemption for us, this is the praise that appropriately ensues.
 - When we learn of creation, we see that He made all things for us—that there was no curse or death—that all was under our dominion and for our happiness.
 - There was food and water and sunshine and marriage and childbearing and meaningful labour and discovery and worship.
 - How the goodness and of God to all is seen—His compassion—His thoughtfulness toward all of us is seen all around...
 - So we praise Him for these excellent qualities that are seen in His mighty works of creation.

2. And even more, His mighty acts of redemption call for praise of His grace and tender mercy.
 - Here we had offended Him by our sin and He put His divine energy into action to save us—and that by giving His only Son.
 - To what lengths He has gone for creatures that were so unworthy that such great lengths were required to redeem them—nothing less than Christ crucified.
 - Gracious and full of compassion indeed!
 - Christ has begun this praise and promised that it will never cease.
 - Indeed, it will only grow stronger as the church grows to maturity and at last stands before Him in the great day to admire His excellence.
 - Nothing will make us happier than to be lost in the delight of His grace and mercy when we finally come to fully understand it!
 - Has this delight in His grace and mercy begun in you?
 - I pray that it has.
 - I want to see all of you in that great day when He appears before the presence of His glory, praising Him for His grace.
 - How tragic to be His enemy, cut off from Him, when His beauty is fully revealed in that day.

TRANS> Indeed, it is not enough to merely be among those in the church who corporately praise Him... as wonderful as the church's praise is...

- but you must be one who personally delights in Him as your Saviour and Lord—one who personally trusts in Him and praises Him.
- And that is the subject of the third couplet in Psalm 145.

III. The third couplet.

A. Jesus asserts that His saints will individually praise God (vv. 10-12).

- Verses 10-12 say: **All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, ¹² to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.**
1. The word *all* in verse 10 refers not only to God's works that praise Him, but also to His saints who bless Him.
 - At least, the parallel structure of the verse suggests that...
 - I suggest that it speaks of them individually because the praise that follows speaks of praise for His individual acts of kindness for those in His kingdom.
 - The works, of course, praise Him simply by their existence as the things that He has made—the sun and the moon and the stars...
 - but the saints praise Him with engaged hearts and tongues—they bless Him for His kindness to them that they experience every day.

2. They delight in His kingdom in which they are brought so near to Him as a God that they can call upon and who will answer them.
 - Their salvation is rich and personal, so the praise here is specific and individual... though shared with all who are around them as they testify what God has done for them as individuals.
 - He is the kind of king who personally cares for each of His subjects... He is so great that nothing goes unnoticed.

➤ Let's look at the praise that ensues from this...

B. Here we each praise God for His personal acts of kindness toward us (13-20).

1. First, that He has personally brought us under His dominion at the appointed time.
 - Verse 13 says: **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.**
 - There are two ways in which God may be said to have dominion.
 - In the sense that He is sovereign over all, including Satan and rebellious men... Certainly He has dominion over all of them in that way...
 - But here in Psalm 145, it is the second sense in which He may be said to have dominion that is spoken of... when He rules over those who are voluntarily subject to Him.
 - This is the kingdom of righteousness that Jesus establishes among those whom He redeems.
 - They are pardoned of their sins by His blood, and they are born again of His Spirit so that His law is written in their hearts and they follow Him obediently.
 - They are not yet perfected, but they walk in the light instead in the darkness... though they are at war with sin in their members, they serve Him instead of sin, being made alive by the Holy Spirit and having the washing of regeneration.
- If He has brought you under His rule, personally into His kingdom, how you will praise Him for His kingdom...
2. Secondly, He is praised as the one who sustains our lives in this world.
 - In verse 14-16, we say of Him: **The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down. ¹⁵ The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. ¹⁶ You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.**
 - Many have pointed out that these are things that He does for all His creatures—as long as they live—and that is true...
 - But the context from verse 13 is of those who are under His dominion—in His kingdom—whom He especially looks after.
 - That He upholds all who are falling and raised up those who are bowed down.
 - In other words, when we are sick or injured or weakened, He is the one who keeps us alive.
 - We have no one to praise for this but God... it is He who keeps our souls among the living until His appointed time.

- And as it says, they also look expectantly to Him for their provision.
 - He is the one who opens His hand and satisfies every living thing—if He did not, they would perish—but He especially does this for His saints.
 - So this is the praise that is on our lips as those who know that we daily receive our bread and our lives from His hand.
 - That He does this for others should not diminish our praise, for we are the ones that see His hand in feeding us and sustaining us.
 - It is ours to delight in His personal care and to respond to Him as the Father of all mercies.
- 3. Thirdly, we should individually praise Him for preserving us in His kingdom—for being so near to us for whatever reason we may call upon Him.
 - Verse 17-20 says: **The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. ¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. ¹⁹ He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. ²⁰ The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.**
 - Clearly, this speaks of His people...
 - referred to as those who call upon Him in truth, who fear Him, and who love Him.
 - And who are saved and preserved in contrast with the wicked who are destroyed by Him.
 - Our great delight is that He answered us when we saw that we were lost in sin and cried out to Him for mercy... that is to call upon Him in truth...
 - He heard us and He answered us...
 - We have the blessing of access to Him by prayer, and we constantly see Him at work to keep our feet from slipping into ungodliness.
 - How many times He has called us back when we were going astray so that we could continue as His people...
 - How faithful He is to give us the bread of life and the living water whenever we ask Him, to give us of His Spirit when we call on Him, and to forgive our sins when we confess them to Him.

TRANS> We are heard, not because we are righteous in ourselves, but because He has accepted us in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

- He is the one who started this praise, and now we individually enjoy personal access to God while the wicked are all destroyed.
- We have the blessing of eternal life, a personal faith and connection to God, and we praise Him for being a God who has received us.

Conclusion: Surely He is a God to be praised in with our LORD Jesus Christ our head and the captain of our salvation.

- He Himself concludes the Psalm with a summary assertion that God will most certainly be praised by both Him and us.

- In verse 21 He asserts: **My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever.**
 - See to it that you are among those who bless His holy name.
 - All flesh does not mean each and every person—for the wicked will not bless Him.
 - It means men and women and boys and girls and people from every tongue and tribe and kindred and from every walk of life who are redeemed...
 - You are among them if you are among those who praise God through Jesus Christ.
 - It is only then that you know Him so as to praise Him for His greatness and for His gracious mighty acts and for His personal care of you as a member of His kingdom.
 - Each week, we will join together in singing these words of praise to Him as we make our way through Mark and see His saving work displayed in His signs and wonders that He did among us.