

Please open your Bible to **Psalm 145**.

Everyone wants to be appreciated. When children only hear parents disapproval or are largely ignored by their parents and hear no commendation, their spirits wither. Everyone on the planet wants to be appreciated.

But the desire to be appreciated can turn into something vicious and ugly— it can become the overwhelming desire to be praised by others— really, to be worshipped & adored by others.

Take the following verses for example:

How can you believe, if you accept praise from one another and don't seek the praise that comes from the only God? **John 5:44**

When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do— blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. **Matt. 6:2**

Seeking others praise in order to draw attention to ourselves is seen by just about everyone as selfish and egotistical.

So the question is—Is God's desire to be praised selfish and egotistical?

In his book **Reflections on the Psalms** C.S. Lewis says that the constant demand from God for others to praise him at one time seemed to him like God needed "***our worship like a vain woman who wants compliments.***"

But on further reflection, C.S.Lewis was given this insight:

“My difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can’t help doing, about everything else we value. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.” **C.S.Lewis**, Reflections on the Psalms p. 93–95

Josh Tong has taught this very truth to us in our Prayer Meeting recently and it has been so very helpful.

Commenting on this passage, John Piper goes on to connect the praise of God to our fullest joy:

“Lewis saw that praising God is the consummation of joy in God. Therefore, when God is pursuing — even demanding — our praise, he is pursuing the consummation of our joy...So if Jesus wants you to feel most alive, most joyful forever, what would he show you?”

John Piper

God’s desire & delight in calling us to praise Him is the very essence of his love to us! In letting us see what is highest and most beautiful and most praiseworthy, he is offering us the purest and most lasting joy available in the universe.

In a recent conversation I had with my friend Paul Carter (Pastor of Orillia Baptist Church) he was arguing articulately that worship of God, and the worshippers edification are ALWAYS connected. It is when we have the clearest faith sighting of God—it is when we truly see him AS HE IS—that our hearts are most joyful and overflowing with praise.

A month ago when I spoke to you, I said that Psalm 145 explains to us the truth that...

Because God's Kingdom is Unfathomably Great and Abundantly Good, We Will Always Have Reason to Praise Him!

Last month we took up the first of these two propositions— namely that...

(1) God's Unfathomable Greatness Excites Praise!

If you were here at that time you will remember that we discovered that Praise involves **our will** (vs 1-2) but should always stir **our emotions** as well(vs 7). But praise usually begins with **our thoughts** about God (vs 5).

Praise involves our entire being. Praise is a total response of the human heart to an exalted vision of God's glory!

Today we come to the second proposition—that is, that...

(2) God's Abundant Goodness Excites Praise! (7-9, 13-20)

In **verses 7-9** we have an incredibly important set of verses that give us deep insight into the very heart of God & his goodness. The theme of God's goodness is introduced in **verse 7**—we discover that God's goodness is large & overflowing—its abundant—If there is anything that God has **too much of**, its goodness.

One of the best ways evaluate how important something is, is to take note of how God evaluates it. An example of this is when Moses asked God to see his glory. The response of God to that request is very interesting:

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And God said, "I will make all my **goodness** pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' **Ex. 33:18-19**

Moses says—I want to see your **glory**—that is, your “**God-ness**”... “**the splendour of who you are**”. God’s answer is—my splendour — my glory—**IS my goodness**.

Then later when God reveals his goodness to Moses, he **defines it** for him:

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness... **Ex. 34:6**

Now that happens to be one of the most quoted descriptions of God in the OT. It is quoted multiple times. It is often used in places where people have sinned against God and it seems like only judgement awaits them—yet because **God is different than we expect**—because he is **infinitely good**, this description of God’s goodness assures us that he will welcome us if we turn to him!

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, **FOR he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love**; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him. **Joel 2:12-14**

God’s goodness is displayed in the way he responds to offences and offenders. He displays mercy (he withholds punishment from those who deserve it) and is patient (slow to anger) with those who fail.

How many people do you know who are like that? Remember—We are talking about a King here—the greatest of all kings. Kings have authority over their subjects—and this king has absolute authority.

The kings of the ancient world were NOT known for mercy. They were not slow to anger. They certainly were not loving to rebels. Do you remember the time in the book of Acts where Peter was released from prison by an angel? It gives us a snapshot of what most rulers were like:

Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. **Acts 12:18-19**

You fail? You die. What if God was like that? You fail? You die. The funeral homes would do a booming business. Our church would be empty. I wouldn't be here. Neither would you.

But the truly amazing—indeed staggering truth—is that God ISN'T like that. **He is gracious & merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love!**

This goodness of God —this disposition and inclination toward mercy, and reluctance to bring judgement—is not just for a few select people but is lavished on **all** his creatures. We see this in **verse 9**.

The word “**all**” occurs 17 times in this Psalm. It is stressing over and over again that every person on the planet is included in God's care —“**The Lord is good to all**”. You can insert your name there—“The Lord is good to Avery”. “The Lord is good to Noah”. “The Lord is good to Andrew”. “The Lord is good to Colombe”. “The Lord is good to Wesley”. None of us are excluded from God's goodness.

Still have a hard time believing this? Well, the Psalm gives us some notable examples of how God's goodness operates in our day to day lives.

Look at **verse 14**. When the loads of life press down upon us—whether relational loads, or heavy responsibilities we bear, or the load of our crushing and accumulating sins, we soon realize we cannot bear up under it.

These loads make us fall, like Jesus who could not carry his own cross to Golgotha. We are bowed down under the loads of life. But God's goodness is revealed by his willingness to be a burden bearer for us. He takes our loads & upholds and raises us up!

Listen to what the Scriptures say:

But when **the goodness** and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **he saved us**, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy...whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Titus 3:4-6**

God's goodness appeared clearly and unmistakably in the coming of Jesus Christ to save us from our sins. To bear a load for us that we could not carry.

I have always believed that when people are generous they display God in a wonderful way, because God is an exceedingly generous God. There is nothing stingy about God.

Proverbs talks about stingy people and how they are much more aware of the cost to the giver than of the blessing to the receiving person:

Don't eat with people who are stingy; don't desire their delicacies. They are always thinking about how much it costs. "Eat and drink," they say, but they don't mean it. **Prov. 23:6-7 NLT**

How different this is from God! Look at **verses 15-16**. One of the expert scholars on the book of Psalms explains the meaning of these two verses this way:

"Yhwh gives with an open hand, like a person feeding animals who allows them to take as much as they like. Yahweh does not dispense in small, measured amounts" **John Goldingay**, Psalms Volume 3 p. 703

God's goodness is displayed in his generosity. He gives his best, though it cost him very dearly:

What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? **Rom. 8:31-32**

God's lavish goodness is poured out on every person without exception...and it leads to the conclusion we find in **verses 20 & 21**.

In **verse 21** it leads to praise. To be recipients of such goodness and to not praise God is to show ourselves to be blind and ungrateful—as if all this kindness was our entitlement & right, instead of the undeserved gift that it actually is.

Praise is the **appropriate response** to such displays of lavish goodness.

It is appropriate for the morally upright to offer him praise. **Psa. 33:1**

How good to sing praises to our God! How delightful and how fitting!
Psa. 147:1

The second response is found in **verse 20**.

Notice that though God's goodness is lavished on "all" people, it does not mean that "all" will be saved. Quite the opposite in fact.

God "preserves"—saves— all those who love him. But the opposite—those who don't love him—that is, the wicked—who respond to his generous goodness without gratitude, love and adoration—"all" of those people will be destroyed by God.

This same truth is expressed in the same terms in the New Testament:

This is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not **perish** but have eternal **life**. **John 3:16**

Two destinations. Some perish—that is, they are **destroyed** by God. And some live forever—that is, they are **preserved**—saved by God.

The difference is not found in their DOING, but in their BELIEVING. Not believing anything, but believing "in Him"—that is trusting themselves to Christ.

Have you done that? That is the appropriate response to God's lavish goodness. Believing in Him. Loving Him. Praising him. Psalm 145 gives voice to the new life within a believer in Jesus Christ. They see God's goodness and it takes them out of themselves in joyful praise.

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