

Praise God for Redemption

Psalm 65, Psalm 65. Let us turn to Psalm 65 for this evening. Listen attentively to the word of God.

Praise is awaiting you, O God, and Zion, and to you the vow shall be performed. O you who hear prayer, to you all flesh will come. Iniquities prevail against me, as for our transgressions you will provide atonement for them.

Blessed is the man you choose and cause to approach you, that he may dwell in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, of your holy temple. By awesome deeds and righteousness you will answer us, O God of our salvation.

You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth and of all the far off seas. Who establish the mountains by his strength, being clothed with power. You who still the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples.

They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of your signs. You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice. You visit the earth and water it.

You greatly enrich it. The river of God is full of water. You provide their grain, for so you have prepared it.

You water its ridges abundantly. You settle its furrows. You make it soft with showers.

You bless its growth. You crown the year with your goodness. And your paths drip with abundance.

They drop on the pastures of the wilderness. And the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks.

The valleys are covered with grain. They shout for joy. They also sing.

Let us go before God with our prayer. And Lord, we indeed ask for your spirit to be with us. That we would enjoy with the text and have a good understanding and a joy as the psalmist has in reflecting upon your redemption and that you indeed provide atonement for us and the awesome deeds of creation we see in the remaining of the verses.

A reminder again of how your power and your might is directed towards the good of this world and by extension therefore to all who are on this world, your people in particular. Our Lord, may we rejoice in praise as we meditate upon this psalm we pray. Amen.

In this shorter psalm of praise and adoration of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, David offers two profound reasons for exalting the Lord our God. Praise for the salvation and answering of prayers of those who are redeemed. In the last part from verse 5 onward, I describe the more reasons of providence and of creation.

In other words, both the supernatural and the natural acts of God Almighty are sufficient grounds to honor and to worship and to glorify Him. Let's look more carefully therefore upon these things that we may renew our love and our adoration of Him through meditations upon the goodness of His salvation for us and as well as the preservation of our body and creation.

Praise God for His Salvation

So the first point, praise God for His salvation, verses 1-4, is what we would call a religious context, more precisely about the temple and the like.

He mentions the temple there in verse 4 of praising God and thinking of Him directly and explicitly about His works for us. Praise is waiting you, O God, in Zion, and to you the vow shall be performed, He opens up His psalm with these words. Praise is waiting for God, that is, that our Lord God is so full of goodness, love, righteousness, dispensing all kinds of blessings and goodness upon us as we read in the latter part of the psalm in particular, that everyone who knows this is ready to praise Him.

Praise Him, of course, especially in His house in the Holy Temple. We're just waiting to honor our God and Savior when the opportunity arises, which is often in our life, and especially on the Lord's Day. It's in Zion, the city of our God, the centralized place of worship as we know in the Old Testament.

We ought to be ready as they were ready whenever they came with psalms and songs and hearts full of praise for what God has done for the weak and will do in the future for them. And as the situation arises throughout the week. But he especially focuses here, it seems, on the time of worship, probably on the Lord's Day of the Old Testament, because again he mentions the house, he mentions the temple, and he mentions the vow here to be performed.

I always wondered, what is that? I read that, if you recall, in the opening call of worship this morning. I read a little bit about a vow shall be performed before you. And that is alluding to here and another psalm as well, as I recall.

The vow mentioned here and to you the vow shall be performed is probably referencing the whole activity of the sacrifice as well as the vow. What happened was uncommon in the Old Testament, that they would vow to God in the temple with a sacrifice. That if God blessed them, they would in turn take the best of their field and give them a sacrifice of praise, an offer to God in the temple, what they vowed to offer when He blessed them.

And so that is probably what happened here as well. The Israelites would offer these things, animals in particular, for answer prayer. Of course today we don't have to do that, thanks be to God.

I mentioned it before, I don't like to kill animals, I don't want to smell dead animals or anything like that. But we can still vow before God, if He blesses us, that we give back even more. We typically call that an offering as opposed to a tithe, that we give above and

beyond the tithe to God's people or to the work of the church or something along those lines for the goodness that He has bestowed upon us.

And we can continue to do such things before Him, it doesn't even have to be a vow, it can simply just be, you're recognizing before God that He has especially blessed you financially, materially in some way, you want to turn around and give even more to the work of the Kingdom. That's what the idea here is. And so, He has performed the sacrifice and executed that vow before God that He would give an extra sacrifice before Him.

The hearing of prayer, of course, verse 2 is what's emphasized here in the opening part as well. Oh you who hear prayer, to you all flesh will come. You can probably even take you who hear prayer and give it as a title as God.

To God. Because He's the only one who hears. All the other false gods, so-called gods, are deaf, dumb, and blind.

Isaiah mocks them for this, for it's expressed in their idols, the wooden and stone images that are just like the stone and just like the wood, can't hear, see, or do anything. And same with these false gods. But our God is the one who hears and understands and even answers our prayers.

That's the implication here, of course. Our God is not deaf, He's not mute, and the world knows this. To you all flesh will come.

We ran across that again earlier in another psalm that we read. Hey, the whole world is called to honor God. Not just the Jews.

Everyone is responsible. And in this case, of course, the whole world knows in their heart of hearts that they are created in His image, that they are rebelling against Him, and they hide from Him with their lies. Nevertheless, all flesh will come.

They will come before the Lord God and bless His name and honor and worship Him one way or the other. And we are blessed by His Holy Spirit and the power endued upon us that we have been converted. And we confess Him, especially on the Lord's Day that we cry out in praise before Him in Zion, wherever God's people are, is where His temple is.

And we pray to Him because He hears our prayers. And He hears our prayers because we are His people is the implication, of course, that we are called by Him. We have grace upon us.

And verse 3 unpacks that grace. This is the reason why we can come before His presence, metaphorically of course, because He's always everywhere. He's omnipresent.

But in a special manner so far as He does not bring judgment upon us, but grace and mercy. Because iniquities prevail against me, as for our transgressions, You will provide atonement for them. Our God, You hear our prayers because You have covered our sins.

Otherwise, You would not hear our prayers. For our prayers would be the prayers of those who hate You, in fact. They wouldn't really be prayers at all, would they? Do not forget, I had a conversation about this as I'm going through the Shorter Catechism advanced training on this with G.I. Williamson's book and our school at home.

And he reminded us that the unbeliever doesn't want to pray to God. Any kind of prayers he has to God are very selfish prayers about what he can get out of God. And nothing given to God like his heart.

But we, praise be to Him, are able to do this and come before Him because He has regenerated our hearts. He has atoned or covered. Another reminder, the Old Testament saints never looked to their circumcision, to the sacrifices to the priests in the temple.

They should not have looked for their redemption. But rather to what God would do for them and has done for them. They relied upon Him and trusted in Him for the covering of their sin.

That's the idea of atonement. David knew the only way to find forgiveness and redemption, the only way to heaven, was that God and God alone through His mercies bestowed upon Him would forgive him and wipe away his sins and cover his iniquity as though it never had occurred. David knew this.

Moses knew this. Abraham knew this. All the saints of the Old Testament knew this, brothers and sisters.

And we know this as well, praise be to His name. The animal sacrifices, nevertheless, which he probably performed there, the vow shall be performed before you, pointed to and represented this act of atonement, of cover over our sins of iniquity. That the blood of the lamb represented the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed to cover our sins.

David understood that God was not satisfied with a dumb animal dying on an altar. That was never the point. It was always a lesson for us to learn.

The saints of old, and for us in the past, of course, if you reflect upon these passages in the Old Testament, of the beauty and the great detail, in fact, of explaining through this symbolism of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The atonement that we have through the substitute, the grand substitute of our Lord and Savior Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of His people for all those who repent and believe in Him. But who will repent? Who will believe? Who has heard the word of the Lord and will submit to Him? Well, the answer is in verse 4. Blessed is the man you choose and cause to approach you.

This is so clearly God-centered salvation. Not man-centered, not what man does. His act of repentance itself is not even a grounds of redemption as though God's like, well, you've repented and that's good enough.

It's like you're obeying the law. It's sufficient. People teach that.

It's not true. And your faith doesn't do it either. It's Jesus and Him alone.

And that's only because He has called you by His name from eternity past that you would repent, that you would believe, and follow our Lord and Savior. As with the atonement, so with the whole field of redemption and salvation for His people. It is of God from first to last.

The psalm shouts this out from the rooftops as do so many other parts of the Bible. This is the first step, of course, of our salvation is that the Lord God chose us. Without that, I speak as a man's step because with God there is no time.

We would have no redemption. We would not be here this evening. We did not choose ourselves to get to heaven.

Romans 3 is very clear about that. And none are righteous, no, not one. None seek out God, it says.

They don't have this whole shape, God shape hole in their heart as people like to say. In the sense that I often hear it, which is they just really, really want to find God but they haven't found Him yet. That's not the case at all.

The whole shape is only so far as they know that they are incomplete and they are in rebellion against God unless they repent. They will have that gap and that pain and that misery brought upon themselves because of the rebellion. And here we clearly see the sovereign hand of God and David blesses the Lord for this.

He knows that he wouldn't even be here to fulfill his vow of sacrifice if God had not chosen him from eternity past. We covered this in Sunday School class this morning because I wanted to highlight and remind us that our sanctification is not just a very narrow idea only but involves everything around providence as well. How God guides you from the foundations of the world from before you were born and from your childhood on to the point of your conversion unless you were converted as a very young child, that includes that as well.

Because he chose you with an everlasting love and the active agents providential, almost every sermon is tied back to Sunday School class. The active agents, the primary agents is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You would never choose him without that.

So the Father chooses us, selects and arranges our redemption from eternity past. We who are under the dominion of sin and Satan. The fact is of course further highlighted there in the second part of verse 4, and cause to approach you.

So there you have the doctrine of concurrence. Although the one half is emphasized which is of course the almighty power of God, the irresistible power of grace under tulip, T-U-L-I-P- I being irresistible grace. Not that God bonks you on the head and drags you away like a caveman.

That's never been the idea of irresistible, but irresistible in so far as what God wills will come to pass. Through, of course, secondary causes and means. That's why I highlighted in Sunday

School class the secondary causes and means of providence, the doctrine of concurrence of two active moral agents in the same event. Because it's ordinary. It's not miraculous. The miraculous part is regeneration. You don't see that. What you see is the conversion. You speak in your mouth of repentance and faith. Baptism. The community there in your baptism because it's a communal event. And all these things. Ordinary. Mundane. Oh hum. But so glorious. And so wonderful that God is behind all that. And so in him drawing us or causing us to approach him, it's through all these tributaries of providence swelling up around us and carrying us into our goal of regeneration and of baptism and everything else.

And we do it most willingly as well. Because he changes our will. It is God who causes us to approach unto him.

It is God who works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure. That's how you say it in the New Testament. Here in the Old Testament he simply says God causes to approach you.

Satisfied. Verse 4 there in particular. We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house, of your holy temple, which of course represents God's special presence and his blessings upon them, the sacrifices and therefore of Christ and the gospel and the good news.

Wherever the Lord's people are, of course, there he dwells among them. That's where the temple is. No longer in the Old Testament.

No longer in Jerusalem and the like. In the New Testament it's wherever his people are. We are his temple.

We are the body of Christ and he is the head. And therefore we are satisfied. Because we have all things in Jesus Christ both for the body and especially for our soul.

Because we have that redemption. It's a wonderful reason for praise to sum up the first four verses. He answers our prayers.

He forgives our iniquities. And he calls us to himself unto heaven. These are reasons why and many more.

We ought to always be awaiting and willing and ready to honor him, to worship him, and to praise him.

Praise God for His Works

Then the rest of it, verses 5-13, he praises God for his good works, his wonderful works, his awesome deeds. Verse 5. The awesome deeds of God.

Verses 5 and 6. The awe-inspiring deeds. The miracles of Moses and of the prophets. Of the healings and the feedings and the like.

And they were never for their own sake. God didn't do these things because it was just a great wonderful show. An amusement.

But to help his people to wake up their eyes that they would see the redemption they need in Jesus Christ. The promised Messiah of the Old Testament. The awe-inspiring deed of not only of the miracles but of course and above all the atonement itself.

Pictured in the sacrifice of the animals and the slaughtering therein by the priest himself. And the altar and the temple and all these put together to show this need of a Savior and what he would do for his people. And atoning for their sins and redeeming them from the power of Satan.

To make peace between themselves and God is what the atonement does. To cover their sins and to impute the perfect righteousness of our Lord and Savior upon them. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not imputed wickedness.

The Psalm says and David picks it up in Romans. Paul picks it up in Romans 4. Established. Verses 6 and 7. God of our salvation you who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth and the far off seas who establish the mountains by his strength being clothed with power and instill the noise of the seas and the like.

The world that is all and that is all in it depends upon the omnipotent power of God Almighty. We read here in particular there you are the confidence of all the ends of the earth because they depend upon him. And they may not depend upon him in a conscious sense like humans do but all creation needs him or it will lead to nothing.

And even those who deny the existence of God like atheists depend upon him and are therefore in confidence of him although they claim to have confidence in math and the like. They do in their hearts but in reality it's really upon God that is materially but not in their hearts because they have not faith. God's might and power dependable and unshakable is the picture here.

Everything is dependent upon him. He has established the mountains. The grand majesty.

We live with them. We forget about how wonderful the mountains are at times until we finally stop and pull off the busy highway and look at them along the front range. And one thing you notice if you've been here a long time like I have or Bob longer they don't seem to change.

It's the same outline. Nothing moves. An earthquake happens and the mountain doesn't jump at all.

So from a human perspective they're immovable. They are sure and established. They're going to be there for another thousand years.

And if God established that how much more is he the power and the might behind all things. If that which seems great in our eyes is but nothing before him God is all the more greater. That's why there's always this comparison and contrast of God to his creation that he created these magnificent mountains that reach to the sky.

And he sustains all of them. The implications of course is he also establishes the seas, the noise of their waves and the tumult of the peoples. And there he, you who will still the noise of the seas, verse 7a doesn't seem very significant to us when we forget back then in the ancient near east the sea represented chaos as you can imagine.

The God of chaos and the like. And you can't control the sea. You're at the beckoning of the ocean.

They had ocean travel of course. They didn't have the kind of powerful things that we have but if you watch some of the videos you see the boats they're being tossed to and fro. They can't do much sometimes especially in a storm in the sea.

Even with our best technology today. But God can and God does indeed still the water as he did in New Testament when he said be still. And the sea was still and he walked across it.

That's God. That's God's omnipotent power. The implication always being in these verses behind this, this great scary world of ours which sometimes seems scary to us in the modern age because we're so insulated and protected from the world that is living off the land like a farmer but the rest of the world for thousands of years they'd live by the skin of their teeth every cycle of the year because they didn't know if they're going to get enough rain if a bear or lion would devour their kids and their flocks and locusts and what not.

It was scary. They understood how powerful nature was. We do too intellectually although we don't always see it until we finally get hit by a tornado or a hurricane as we had last year.

God's behind all that and if he's all behind that he can also be behind your salvation is the implication. You think that's powerful? God's greater than that. He's greater than your sins.

And so you can praise him all the more. Creation evidences the awesome deeds of God, verses 8-12. They also who dwell in the furthest parts are afraid of your signs.

You make the outgoings of the morning and the evening rejoice. The fear of God is a good thing but unfortunately this fear is probably not the kind of godly fear that we all have but is those who recognize the terrors of creation of the world even if they don't always recognize God explicitly in this regard. Certainly the many pagan religions do recognize there is a god and that there must be all kinds of gods or something behind these things of this world of creation because it can't be by chance and they're right but it's only one god and it expresses therefore in particular of course when it comes to tumults and hurricanes and terrifying things the judgment of God and therefore they're going to be afraid of these signs of God's power in creation and they ought to be.

On the flip side, creation rejoices. You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice. The rotation of the earth, not simply that but it's shorthand for all that's involved in there the animals in the morning, chirping and the like, the birds rejoicing in God even though the world that is humans may be fearful of the signs of creation.

In verse 9-12 we have a picture of sustaining and enriching and guiding creation. Almost a picture of what we learn in science from the rain coming down to the earth flowing into the

furrows of the land that's softened up and then the grain sprouts and rejoices and who eats the grain but the flock and it mentions flocks at the end of verse 13. So in your science class for your kids you can go with the Psalms and they do.

I know some of the books do that. Psalm 65 for example because they see that as well. They understand that without the rain they're going to die.

Their flocks will die and they're going to die because they need to eat the flocks. They need to eat the grains and of course they need the water to survive. He is saying as we all acknowledge as Christians, God's behind all of this.

The water of the earth, verse 9 you visit the earth and water it and you greatly therefore what? Enrich it. The rivers of God is full of water. You provide their grain because the water comes and feeds the earth.

On Friday was a very wet day. We needed it for our grass, for our streams and our lakes and especially of course for our farmers and if anyone appreciates God's goodness in rain it is those like the farmers who live close to the earth and that's what he's picturing here for us. Providing the grain, verse 10 describes the movement from the rain to the running water.

You water its ridges abundantly that is the earth. You settle its furrows. It becomes soft and it comes down to a path and you make it soft with showers he describes there and you bless its growth.

That's what the water does as you know. And he's saying that simple event, what happened on Sunday was an act of God. It's the Lord taking care of his people, taking care of you.

We read that this morning again in the Confession, chapter 5, paragraph 7 that God has a special providence for his people and guides and directs all things for our good. And not just on Friday but again on Saturday that you had a nice beautiful Sunday day and you were preserved and protected for our need of him because we need water. You just literally can't live without water.

The next worst the next thing you really can't live without is air of course, oxygen. Harvest year blessed, verses 11-12 You crown the year with your goodness, presumably with a harvest, a good harvest because the water to the grain and the grain to the feeding of the people. Your paths drip with abundance, your paths, God's movement of creation.

They drop on the pastures of the wilderness and little hills rejoice on every side. Interesting the picture he describes here of God moving as it were through history and through creation itself. When he moved on Friday he brought much moisture for us.

Praise be to his name. The green grass, the budding trees, the little hills rejoice on every side. Not that they're moving around but that things are what? Sprouting up on them.

The grass, the bushes and the animals of course moving around and multiplying because they got the food from the bushes and the grass that came from the water. It's like they're alive. The sustaining of the pastures and the hills, verse 12.

They drop on the pastures of the wilderness and little hills rejoice as I read in verse 13. They are clothed what? With flocks. That's the final end product.

And of course the flocks are guided by the humans. The water, the streams, to the grain to the animals eating the grain and the humans guiding the flock and eventually sustaining themselves by that flock. And they rejoice, verse 13.

The valleys also are covered with grain because there's so much moisture that God has blessed his people, blessed the people of the earth, and not just the people of the earth. Who else is being blessed by this? The children of men. And when God blesses them, that is those who are not Christians, other fellow humans, when God blesses them as he did bless on Friday, why does he bless them? Romans 2 tells us that they may acknowledge God and find him.

That's why he does it. That they would repent his long sufferings for their repentance, he says. The blessings he gives upon them is for their repentance.

Not for them to rejoice in it and forget God, which is unfortunately the case for too many. The valleys are also covered with grain and they shout for joy. They also sing.

All the prior verses are motivations of praise and laud and honor to God almighty. From the physical source of water comes the life and the beauty of creation around us, the grain and the green hills, up to the full abundance of the flocks and the full grain there in verse 13. In other words, the entire process is of God from first to last.

Evidence of his great mind that he uses secondary means to accomplish things in creation, guiding all the abundance for our good and for his glory. That's what we should meditate upon when we see these good things given to us. Sunny days, because we can't keep having moisture all the time, we've got to have some sunny days for the plants to grow better, especially for our food.

So it's another inspirational source for David and ought to be an inspirational source for us, brothers and sisters. That we can sit here as well and meditate and see these things and maybe write it down and contemplate the goodness that God has done for us in creation and behind that, ultimately, in our redemption. We read here, therefore, the final product, of course, that this too is of God.

All this goodness and blessings upon us. And so the lesson here is to always remember God is in charge. He is behind all these things.

He is guiding and directing them for our good, for the good of our soul especially. And we ought to praise him accordingly and thank him. And not just praise him on Sunday, but praise him when it's appropriate all the day long.

We should, as well, not only on Sunday, but every day, as I said, take some time to dwell upon his goodness, to put things aside in the evening or the morning or the midday perhaps. That's why it's good to have a lunch and just look out at the clouds, at the mountains, at the

beautiful trees and plants around you, at the animals and your family and say, thank you, Lord. This is a wonderful thing that you have bestowed upon me.

That you are intimately involved in my life. These things didn't come along here by happenstance. They are so formed for my good that I can give you all the more glory and praise, both for redemption and creation.

Both in prayer and in praise, singing his glory all the day long. Let us pray. We rejoice.

We pray that we would be glad, God, for what you have done and continue to do for us, for our body, but especially for our soul. As David starts out in the opening part of the psalm, that you hear our prayers, that you have covered our iniquities, you have made atonement for our sins, that you have chosen us, God almighty, that all things, therefore, we can recognize as awesome deeds and righteousness that you answer us, Lord, that you water the earth, that you preserve us body as well as soul. As all of this clearly, verses 9 through 13, can parallel the spiritual life, that you've watered us with the Holy Spirit, that you've given us the food of your body and of redemption that we have in Jesus Christ and that we are growing as the people of God as your flock.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, blessed be your name, and may your name be blessed by us as we sing your praises not just on this day, but every day throughout all eternity. Amen.