

## 05.30.10 / Psalm 95

**Passage Insight**

The invitation to sing praises to the Lord is one we should seriously consider accepting. Psalm 95 tells us that we should praise the Lord, reminds us why He is praiseworthy, and explains who we are in light of Him. Furthermore, this psalm points directly to Jesus in multiple ways. Let's take a look.

Verses 1 and 2 call us to worship the Lord, to use our very bodies to glorify the Lord, using our voices to bring Him praise. Jesus reminds us in Luke 19:40 that if we as His disciples do not praise Him, even the stones would cry out in praise of Him. Verse 3 describes the Lord as a "...great King above all gods." We read in Revelation 19:16 of Jesus that He has a name that rings remarkably similarly: "On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." As we read in verses 4 and 5 that the very heights and depths of the earth are in God's hand, consider Romans 8:39-40:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The height and depth and magnitude of creation have no power to separate us from the love of Christ because these things were actually created through Christ Himself, as we read in John 1:1-5:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Five verses in, and we've already seen multiple examples of how Jesus is the one worthy of our praise and thanksgiving, but the question remains, "What are the implications for us as readers of this psalm?" Verse 6 answers this question, and verse 7 tells us why this matters for us as followers of Christ. Verse 6 calls us to kneel, bow, and worship. The created being is called to recognize that it simply would not even exist were it not for the Creator, the Maker. Remember how we read in John 1 that all things were created through Jesus? We as humans are part of "all things" and as such are called to kneel, bow, and worship the Lord. We see again in verse 7 that this Lord is Jesus Christ when we read that we are "...the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." John 10:4 says of Jesus, "When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." And in John 10:27 Jesus Himself explains, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." The claim is being made that Jesus alone is worthy of being followed, of being trusted as the faithful leader of people. So when we ask how the sheep should respond to the Good Shepherd, the simple answer is with our very lives. Sheep were sometimes sacrificed if their leader determined it was best, whether for meat or to offer a sacrifice to the Father. While the astonishing reality is that the Shepherd became the Slaughtered Sheep in our stead and the Father no longer requires a blood sacrifice, the fact that we are His sheep still calls us to be living sacrifices for the sake of our Master's name and will.

We see in John 10:27 that a mark of followers of Jesus is a simple recognition of His voice. This voice is referenced at the end of verse 7, which gives us a simple warning: If you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. Massah means "testing," and Meribah means "quarrelling." In other words, we are to take the Lord at His word because He has already shown Himself trustworthy and does not deserve to be continually tested. How has he proven this? Remember the first part of verse 7, where we are told that we are God's sheep, the people of God's pasture. John 1

reminds us that all things were created through Jesus, and verse 7 reminds us that not only would we not exist without being created by the Lord, but we also wouldn't survive without HIS sustenance, feeding off of HIS pasture, something which, yet again, we had nothing to do with creating. We cannot create ourselves, and we cannot sustain ourselves, and so the only response is to recognize Him alone as the one who is praiseworthy. We see God's response to the testing and quarrelling when we read verses 10 and 11, and this response is well deserved. The generation was loathed by God for forty years and not allowed to enter His rest. Remember why this is the case. This is not on God. Life started in the garden of Eden with God's pure and perfect provision, and it was humanity who turned the screw, began the testing, and started the quarrel, yet God, because He is so patient, so good, so loving, and such a pursuant shepherd, decided to reach out to us, even in our sin, in order to save us by His death and resurrection (Romans 5:8). No, this is on us, who continually test God and quarrel with Him, asking Him to feed us constantly and doubting His goodness. The choice is ours: praise God or receive His loathing and be denied His rest.

As we close, let's look at verse 2, where we are invited to come into the Lord's presence with thanksgiving. Consider what this might look like. To come into His presence with thanksgiving is to have started saying thank you before you even got to Him. What needs to happen in your life to live a life of thanksgiving every minute of every day?

### Application Questions

#### Who Gets the Praise?

- 1) How do you deny God by convincing yourself that you are in control of your life?
- 2) When you do this, you are essentially saying that you are worthy of praise. What is God's response to this?
- 3) Somewhere you believe a lie about God (or failing to believe a truth about Him), and it's keeping you from trusting Him. What are you failing to believe about God?
- 4) What does Scripture have to say about this?
- 5) What have you seen in the lives of followers of Jesus that demonstrates God's trustworthiness?
- 6) If your heart is stirred toward repentance in this moment, what is a tangible step you can take this week to demonstrate your recognition of God's praiseworthiness and to enter into His presence with thanksgiving?

#### Entering God's Presence with Thanksgiving

- 1) As we read above, to enter into the Lord's presence with thanksgiving is to have started saying thank you before we even "get to Him." Where do you struggle to say thank you?
- 2) In your mind, what would God have to do for you to say thank you (I dare you to be honest with yourself here)?
- 3) How are you testing and quarrelling with God in this?
- 4) If you are in Christ, there is no penalty for any sin you have ever committed or will ever commit, and your future hope is beyond what you can imagine as good and perfect. Further, the cry of Psalm 22 is praise even in the midst of feeling forsaken by God. How can these realities drive you to praise in your current circumstance?
- 5) If you've been withholding praise from the Lord, what does repentance look like?

#### Entering God's Presence with Thanksgiving

- 1) Where is God's greatness exceedingly evident to you?
- 2) If you are in Jesus, you are His sheep, and you live off of His pasture. What does this provision look like in your daily life?

- 3) How do you tangibly, day by day, make a practice of worshiping, bowing down, kneeling before the Lord, your Maker?
- 4) How can you right now, in this moment, make a joyful noise to the Lord with your Community Group?

**Sources**

- Matt Stevens
- ESV Study Bible