



Title: 'This the Season for Praise

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Go to verse 4 - ...Let those who fear the LORD say: ‘His love endures forever.’ In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and He answered by setting me free. The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The LORD is with me; He is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.” (Psalms 118:1, 4-9)

This Psalm is a triumphant song of praise and it is to be sung with great joy and expression. It is a call to communal thanksgiving. Many believe it was written by King David after a period of anxiety. When he saw the Lord bring about victory and a fulfillment of His promise, David calls the nation to praise God for His goodness and faithfulness. (Matthew Henry; The Treasury of David; The Expositors Bible Commentary) What we do know for sure is that it is to be sung to God and Him alone. The writer of this psalm is very careful to give recognition to the Lord.

It is right that the whole body of Christ gathers in public worship and sings and gives thanks unto the Lord.

There should be no murmuring spirit and no forgetting to praise Him. All complaining should come to an immediate halt and all self-glorification is to be destroyed.

Why? Because in at least eight places we read in the Bible that God is good. (1 Chronicles 16:34; 2 Chronicles 5:13;7:3; Ezra 3:11; Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1,29;136:1 KJV) Goodness is His nature and those who only praise the Lord when He does well for them should rise to a higher note and praise God because of who He is. He is good all the time.

The children of God should never tolerate one moment of unbelief, but rest upon what the Bible says about God, Christ and the Holy Spirit's influence. And the Holy Spirit moves all with ears to hear and a heart to obey to;

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Go to verse 4 - ...Let those who fear the LORD say: ‘His love endures forever.’ In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and He answered by setting me free. The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The LORD is with me; He is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.” (Psalms 118:1, 4-9)

Pray!

I would propose to you that those who learn to praise the Lord in every season of their lives are the ones who walk joyfully and victoriously over life's situations down here. They walk in a renewed strength, a continued hope and in full assurance that God's promises are true.

Just what are reasons for continually praising God?

Praise Him Because He Loves to Hear from Us

We can give continued praise to God because when we pray according to His will He is pleased to answer those prayers according to His plan. It is Christians who do not use the Lord as a bellboy; meeting childish whims they are the one who give heartfelt praise that is pleasing to God.

1 John 5:14-15 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of Him."

Christians often miss the importance of having the same heart in prayer that Jesus did, "Father... yet not My will but yours be done." (Luke 22:42; Matthew 6:10; Mark 14:36) When prayer is kept in its proper perspective, Christians can know that God longs to hear from his obedient surrendered children.

Christians not only can walk in confidence in Jesus Christ for their salvation and the sure hope of the resurrection, but they can have a special fellowship of prayer with the Lord as long as they stay linked to the qualifying clause, which is asking according to His will. Prayer becomes not only a time for petitioning but of yielding their lives to the will and work of the Lord. When Christians learn to want God's will as Jesus did, they will have the joy of receiving His answer to their prayers. (The Expositors Bible Commentary; Matthew Henry; Barnes notes;)

Now that the foundation has been laid, let us focus on the very special kind of "confidence" (*parresia*) Christians have in God hearing their prayers. This "confidence" means to have a freedom to enter into the "Throne of Grace" (Hebrews 4:16) with a freedom to speak all that is on the heart. We need never force our way in or compel God to hear us; He is waiting for us to come. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary; William Barclay)

Let this truth be placed deep within your heart. Christians who surrender to the will of God are able to enter the presence of God, know God personally and intimately. They have the same confidence as the beloved John who wrote, "And if we know that He hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of Him." (1 John 5:15) They know the joy of actually having the Lord guide and direct, look after and care for them just as parents care and look after their children. They have full assurance of the Lord's provision and protection, and strength, a grasp of His joy and victory over trials and temptations. (Practical Word Studies in the New Testament)

Their assurance in approaching God is in Christ's name and under His authority is absolute. It must be understood that some answers, whether no or yes are recognized immediately, others later and some are not recognized in our lifetime. (The Expositors Bible Commentary) The prayers that are offered up will not be disregarded and will be answered in the faithfulness of God according to His plan and timing. (Barnes Notes; The Pulpit Commentary; Thru the Bible)

The Lord just loves to hear from Christians who pray like George Muller who wrote, "I spend hours in prayer every day. However, I live in a spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk and when I lie down. His answers are always coming. I have seen prayers answered time and time again. When I am persuaded that a thing is right, I go on praying until I get a clear answer from the Lord. I never give up. I have been praying every day for fifty-two years for two boys, sons of a friend of my youth. They are not converted to Christ, yet, but they will be." (God's Revivalist)

When you live a life in a spirit of prayer, rest assured that the Lord hears those prayers and they will be answered according to His good purposes. It is the Holy Spirit who moved the apostle Paul to write this closing instructions to the Thessalonians, "Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Praise Him Because of His Enduring Love

God is worthy of praise because of His attentive ears toward our prayers and because of His enduring love.

Psalm 118:2-4 says, "Let Israel say: 'His love endures forever.' Let the house of Aaron say: 'His love endures forever.' Let those who fear the LORD say: His love endures forever.'" (Psalm 118:2-4)

"Love" is better translated as "loving-kindness" in the New American Standard Bible. "Loving-kindness" (*hesed*) meaning to give acts of kindness and show mercy on the repentant. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament) The application is that the Lord God made an everlasting covenant of "loving-kindness" through the forefathers of Israel and goes on down to those who are Abraham's descendants by faith. (Genesis 15:5-6; Romans 4:11-12,16; Galatians 3:1-14; Who's Who in the Bible)

Israel sinned. This caused them to end up in Egypt and they sinned in Egypt. They provoked the Lord to anger in the wilderness, went astray again and again

under the time of the judges, transgressed time and time again, and yet the Lord still regarded them as His people. He was faithful to chastise them to draw them to repentance. God put his rod away every time Israel repented and He showed His compassion and His favor toward them. (The Treasury of David)

The Lord's "loving-kindness" is the national hymn to all who know Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. How many times has God looked upon your sin and still called you His child? How many times has the Lord laid upon you His chastisements, as a Father would discipline his son? (Hebrews 12:5-7) How many times have you been found walking in and enjoying the favor of God on your life when you really did not deserve it?

Just as the psalmist tells the nation Israel to praise God for His goodness to them in Psalm 118:2, Americans whose motto is "In God We Trust" are to praise the Lord for His "loving-kindness. God has blessed this nation greatly because of the reverent fear of God our founding fathers had and because of those who are in politics today seeking His will and direction.

Just as the psalmist tells the house of Aaron to praise the Lord, those who are called into the ministry are to praise the Lord. (Barnes Notes; The Pulpit Commentary; The Treasury of David) They are to praise God by defending God's truths, and keep up the Christian faith by worshiping in Spirit and truth according to the written Word of God. Just as God had called great prophets of old and great revivalists in our lifetime, He is still raising up true shepherds who know that their calling is to preach and teach the Word of God. Until Jesus returns, God will always have those who study to show themselves approved, workmen who handle the Word of truth unashamedly. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Just as the psalmist tells those who have a reverent fear for the Lord to praise God he tells all who are born again to praise the Lord because God's love goes on to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments. (Exodus 20:6)

There is a long history of seeing God's loving-kindness being shed upon the obedient. We see Franklin Graham following the footsteps of his father Billy Graham and all through the Christian music ministry we see generations of Christian singers carrying on the Lord's music to those who love to hear God's truths proclaimed in song.

The Lord has truly shown His enduring love upon this nation, even though she has sinned against Him greatly. He most certainly has raised up men who stand for Biblical truth and continues to call the next generation to Christ.

**Praise Him Because of His Presence and
Strength in Trials**

It is a season for praise because His presence and strength are promised in trials. Psalms 59:16 says, "But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble."

God will not forsake those who are His own. The children of God who are walking in obedience can walk in confidence that the Lord will respond when they call to Him. Even though those who live in this world do all they can to hinder the work of the Lord - the flesh, the world and the devil cannot put a stop to what God is doing through His faithful servants. The servants of God can sing praises to the Lord because He is a mighty deliverer. He protects His people both collectively and individually.

Awesome proof of the protecting and providing hand of God found in 1 Kings 17. In this portion of Scripture the prophet Elijah had just given Ahab who was, up to that time in history, the worst king Israel ever had. (1 Kings 16:30-33) This prophet gave a message from the Lord pronouncing a judgment of no dew or rain. (1 Kings 17:10)

After his act of obedience to God we read that "...the Word of the Lord came to Elijah." (1 Kings 17:2-3) God told Elijah to go and hide himself in the Kerith Ravine. Listen to what the Lord told Elijah, "You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there."

First God sets Elijah in a safe place and then provides for him. Through this form of provision we see that God is in absolute control and that even the birds of the air obey Him. Elijah gets the water he needs from a brook and his food delivered from ravens which, in themselves, are unclean to eat. (Leviticus 11:13-15) The Bible says the ravens brought Elijah "bread and meat" to eat in the morning and evening. (1 Kings 17:6) After the brook dried up "the Word of the Lord came to [Elijah again, telling] him to go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there." Again we read, "I have command a widow in that place to supply you with food." (1 Kings 17:7-9)

As Christians serve the Lord, they will at times have to deliver an unpopular message and they will find themselves facing real enemies of God. Only God knows what desert experiences they will have to go through in order for them to see His protective and providing hand in their lives. He is fully able to protect and provide for those who are sold out to Him and His work.

The King James Bible interprets Psalms 59:16 as, "But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble."

Walter B. Knight wrote about a young man named John Ting. He nickname was God's fool and he was a member of the "Little Flock Evangelist." He had been given awesome faith by God.

Once when they were being chased by bandits, He and his companions arrived at a river which had to be crossed. The river was overflowing its banks and he knew it to be deep. The situation seemed humanly impossible but Ting said "Our God is a mighty God. If it be His will, He can open the way for us through this river."

He prayed simply and earnestly, "O, Lord hold back the waters, and make the way of escape from our enemies!" Then he and his friends stepped into the raging waters and to their amazement they saw the water steadily dropping. In just a short while they had crossed safely!

Christians can praise God, for whom He protects, the flesh, the world and Satan cannot destroy. As matter of fact the psalmist's instructions say that the appreciative Christian who has revelation to see and understands God's protective hand is to sing aloud of God's mercy, of His love and protective hand. They are not to remain silent but speak publicly of the mercies of the Lord.

The Lord allows His servants to come into great trials and troubles so they can see His deliverance. The apostle writes, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us..." (2 Corinthians 1:8-10)

This Thanksgiving season, take time to sit and meditate upon all that the Lord has delivered you out of and seen you through. Know that He will always be with and in you through the Spirit of Christ. Why not spend the rest of the month just praising Him thoroughly before entering into petitions? Spend more time in praise and less time in petitions through the Thanksgiving season.

Praise Him Because of the Supremacy of Christ

We have a God who is worthy of praise for He is our "fortress [and our] refuge in times of trouble." He is also worthy of praise because of the "Supremacy of Christ."

Colossians 1:15-20 says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the Head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy... and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:15-20)

In Colossians the apostle Paul is expounding on the need of showing Christ's significance to the whole of creation. It is all about Him. There are three powerful truths that the apostle Paul deals with here. 1.) Jesus' Deity. 2.) His relationship to creation. 3.) His position to the church body.

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. "Image" (*eikon*) here involves the two ideas of representation and manifestation of God in the flesh. Our Lord is essentially and absolutely the perfect expression and representation of God His Father. (Vines Amplified Expository Dictionary of the New Testament) The apostle Paul is affirming the teachings of Jesus, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. (John 14:9)

Jesus is no feeble copy. Rather He is the very essence of the person of God. (Word Meanings in the New Testament; Practical Word Studies in the New Testament) The impact of this truth should have an illuminating effect on the heart of the Christian who wants to express a life of praise. Jesus is the perfect manifestation of God. (Practical Word Studies in the New Testament)

"First born" (*prototokos*) as it is used here is saying that Jesus is placed above His creation. (Zodhiates) Jesus Christ is the Supreme Being of the universe. (Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible)

The apostle Paul makes Christ's Supremacy very clear, and the beloved John does as well, for he writes, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:3) The beloved John, the apostle Paul and the whole of Scripture makes it very clear that Jesus is "not a part of creation" (Zodhiates) but creation was made "for Him." (Colossians 1:16)

Barclay so wonderfully wrote in his exposition "...it is the Son who, as it were, holds the world together. That is to say, all the laws by which this world is an order and not in chaos are an expression of the mind of the Son. The law of gravity and all the so-called scientific laws are not only scientific laws; they are divine laws. They are the laws which make sense of the universe. They are the laws which make this earth a reliable and a dependable world. Every law of science and of nature is, in fact, an expression of the thought of God. It is by these laws, and therefore by the mind of God, that the universe hangs together, and does not disintegrate in chaos."

The very Christ that holds the universe and everything in it all together is the same Lord who is the head of the church. This is a very key and important truth found in this text. In Ephesians the emphasis is on the fact that Christians are the body of Christ down here on earth. In here in Colossians the emphasis is upon the head of the Body, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Thru the Bible)

Christ being the Redeeming Head means He is the source of the life of the church and he is Chief, Leader or Guide. Jesus is the foundation of authority and power. (Barnes Notes; The Pulpit Commentary) "Supremacy" (*proteuo*) meaning "to be first, chief, have the highest dignity." (Zodhiates)

Let us take time to consider what is involved in this Headship.

1.) Jesus is the center, He said, "Because I live, you also will live. ... you are in Me and I am in you" (John 14:19-20) This is one of the most wonderful statements found in the gospels. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of life for the disciples, not just on the other side but for here and now as well. (Thru the Bible; Expositors Commentary) Because He got victory over sin and death, Christians can choose to have victory over sin and they have victory over eternal death.

2.) He is the mainspring of all holy fruit bearing. Jesus said, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples." (John 5:8) He also said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Just as our Lord brought joy and glory to His Father, so it is for Jesus' disciples to respond to the grace of God by Christian fruit bearing. This is a powerful way of expressing praise to God and for the Lord to those who observe the lives of Christians. The more a branch abides in the vine, that is, the closer the branch abides to the heart of the vine, the more nourishment a branch draws from the vine and the more fruit it bears. Christians are to depend upon Christ as much as they depend on their need for air to breath, water to drink and food to eat.

Christians who enriche their lives in Christ and set their minds and hearts to bear fruit for the Lord, will glorify God and Christ and will turn men's thoughts to the God who has made them Christ-like.

The greatest glory of the Christian life and conduct is a life of praise that shows all who see them that Christ is worthy of all they do.

This is not to obtain favor with God, but because Christians have a Lord who loves to hear from them, who has an ever lasting loving-kindness toward them, who is always present in their trials and service unto Him and because of the Supremacy of Christ.

Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of a “perfume compound of the remembered benefits of God.” Such a fragrance is easily obtained by spending a season in praise for the things God has already done. Not just by saying thank you, but by expressing a life of gratitude. Every born-again Christian should be giving off a pleasing odor. The fragrant of remembering is quite different from a false praise to get from God. (The Best of Tozer, Book One)

Ten lepers received their health; that was the benefit. Only one came back to give thanks to the Lord Jesus. (Luke 17:17) That was the perfume. Unremembered blessings are like dead flies that lie in the anointing oils, they can become a fragrance of dead worship and bring a bad smell to a holy God. Remembered blessings, thankfulness for the Lord’s present favors and a rejoicing in His promised graces become like a blend of myrrh, and aloes and cassia thus making forth an ingredient for a pleasant aroma of praise. (The Best of Tozer, Book One)

Join the grateful. Bless the Lord this season with praise.

Let us pray!