



Servants of Christ
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Devotional for Week of June 29th ----A Psalm for Christmas Eve --- Psalm 145

1All my life I will extol You; bless Your name, my God and King.

2Blessing daily bring before You, and Your praise forever sing.

3Can a mortal search Your greatness? The Lord's great and highly praised!

4Day to day, each generation has Your acts and works upraised!

5Ever glor'ous is Your splendor; on Your works I'll meditate;

6For they'll tell of works most awesome, and I'll tell them You are great.

7Grand the mem'ry of Your goodness—righteousness shown from above.

8How the Lord gives grace and mercy—slow to anger, rich in love.

9I'll declare the Lord's great mercies over all His works displayed;

For the Lord is good and gracious, good to all that He has made.

10Just ones shall rejoice and bless You; all Your works shall give You praise.

11Kingdom's glory they will speak of, and Your mighty pow'r upraise.

12Let the glory of Your acts be made known to the sons of men.

Majesty and glory of Your kingdom's reign will never end.

13Never will Your reign diminish; through each age it will remain.

Over all Your kingdom stretches; everlasting Your domain.

14Praise the Lord—His loving care upholds and lifts up all who fall.

Quickly He will come to rescue all bowed down who on Him call.

15Raising up those who are bowed down; giving food in proper time;

So the eyes of all look to You, and Your providence they find.

16The desire of every creature You provide from Your own hand;

Unto all You give so freely; fill their need on sea or land.

17Very righteous is the Lord, and loving, too, in all His ways.

18We know that He's near to all who call on Him in truth and praise.

19He fulfills the needs of all who fear Him, and He hears their cry.

20Extol the Lord's name—He watches o'er them from His throne on high.

You who love Him, He'll keep ever; but the wicked He'll destroy.

21Zealous for His praise, I'll speak—let all flesh praise His name with joy!

This is the Psalm for Christmas Eve, 2020. Since last week marked 6 months until Christmas, I thought it might be a good idea to see what the future 6 months will have in store for us.

A few thoughts: Notice how the beginning of each line corresponds to each letter of the English alphabet. It is the same in Hebrew. This was an important Psalm for David. It is a Psalm of praise. With the lines beginning with each letter of the alphabet, it made it easier to remember. It is said that, for the Hebrews, if they say this Psalm 3 times a day, they will be happy. Of course, David and other Hebrews would have sung these words and the melody would have made it easier to remember as well.

I take the cloth off of this Psalm intended for Christmastime for a reason. It is important for us to remember that circumstances will get better. As a Pastor I can see how many people's spiritual lives and mental health lives are in dismay right now. That doesn't sell news advertisements when you click on the usual

scandalous headline, so you won't hear this in the news. This pandemic is traumatizing. Name it. In the first 3 months of 2019, 11% of people in the US experienced severe depression; Today, it is one third of all Americans. 47.7% of people in their 20's report increasing depression as the weeks go by.

I take the cloth off of this Christmas Psalm for another reason. Please say a prayer for a friend of mine from high school. This friend has threatened to kill themselves many times. This time, they are giving away their pets. Is it a chemical disease? Yes. Is it circumstantial? Yes. Is suicide preventable? Sometimes, yes. In addition to reaching out for help through these local hotlines-- (713) HOTLINE (713) 468-5463; Teenline (713) 529-TEEN (713) 529-8336, there is also counseling and therapy, oftentimes covered by insurance, an employee assistance plan, or on a sliding scale so people pay what they can.

While it is hard for advice to be of much help when someone cannot see a way out, there is one suggestion that many find helpful: Give yourself Time. Give yourself time to seek help. There is no hurry.

And Psalm 145 is a glimpse of a better future. I hope this Christmas will be full of praise. I hope we can sing this Psalm then even if it isn't. But I hope. You see, many Psalms use this alphabetical arrangement. But sometimes the author will leave out just one letter of the alphabet to show that we live in an imperfect Earth. There is a place of Heaven and sometimes it breaks into the present in sightings of grace. But this is a Psalm that has the whole alphabet, meaning that it is a Triumphant Psalm pointing to a Time and Space in which everything and everyone will be made whole.

So, on Earth or in Heaven, we will sing this Triumphant Psalm and praise the God who heals, transforms, forgives, offers grace, and who loves you with His whole heart.

Prayer:

Sovereign Lord,

who is there like You in heaven or on the earth?

There is no one that even comes close.

You alone are worthy of our praise.

*Through the power of Your Holy Spirit
and the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ,
open our eyes to Your presence among us.
Open our hearts and minds to hear Your voice,
to recognize Your call,
and to faithfully follow where You lead.*

*To You alone, Sovereign Lord,
belongs all glory and honour and praise,
now and to the end of time. Amen.*