

Psalms 96

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 96 - and as we make our way to the 96th Psalm...

...I should take a moment to point out that this Psalm is the fourth of eight Psalms that have been called by some - the theocratic Psalms.

The reason for this title is due to the fact that this series of Psalms was written...

...to explicitly exalt the King of kings - Who is enthroned over His creation.

It's for this reason that some scholars refer to this series of Psalms as the Enthronement Psalms.

And just to be clear - the Enthronement Psalms include lyrics that affirm the kingly reign of our Creator.

And while it's true that the 96th Psalm is another anonymous Psalm that fails to identify it's author...

...the Septuagint - and the Latin Vulgate both attribute the lyrics of this Psalm to King David.

It's also interesting to note that the lyrical content of this Psalm is similar to the song that King David sang...

...on the day when he brought the Ark of the covenant into the tabernacle that he created to house it - until the Temple could be constructed.

And it's for this reason that several commentators attribute this song to King David.

Here's how Spurgeon explained it in his commentary of this Psalm - where he writes...

This Psalm is evidently taken from that sacred song which was composed by David at the time when "the ark of God was set in the midst of the tent which David had prepared for it, and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God."

Well - regardless of the author's identity - what we can say for certain is that...

...the Psalmist was encouraging every person to proclaim the praises of the true and living Lord.

And as we take the time to consider the lyrics found here in this song of enthronement...

...it's my prayer that we will grasp the glorious privilege - of being believers - who bless the name of the Lord.

With this as our goal - let's turn our attention to the lyrics that we find here in the 96th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where the Psalmist declared...

Psa 96:1 Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Psa 96:2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
Psa 96:3 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

Here in the beginning of this Psalm - we find the Psalmist - encouraging his audience - to sing a new song to the LORD!

And seeing how a portion of this Psalm was found in the song that David sang on the day when the Ark was moved to Mount Moriah...

...the author of this Psalm decided to write a new song - while incorporating lyrics from a song that was already sung.

I like the way that Albert Barnes explained it - in his commentary of this Psalm - where he writes...

Of the original psalm... David was undoubtedly the author. Psalms 96 is merely an abridgment of that one, or more properly an extract from it, since it is essentially similar to one portion of it, and is taken from it with very slight variations. But by whom the extract and the slight alterations were made, and on what occasion this was done, we have no certain means of ascertaining.

From this - we can see that the author of this new song clearly borrowed from a song that was written by King David.

And while it's possible that this new song was also written by David...

...there should be no doubt that the author of this new song...

...was determined to bless the name of the Lord.

Notice with me again - beginning there at verse 1 - where the Psalmist declared...

Psa 96:1 Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Psa 96:2a Sing to the LORD, bless His name...

That word - bless - was translated from a Hebrew word - which - in this context...

...was used of those who kneel before God - in an act of adoration.

Christian - listen - when it comes to the songs we sing to the Lord...

...our hearts should be filled with humility - as we express our adoration.

With this as the goal - we should take a moment to examine our own hearts by asking...

...am I blessing the name of the Lord - when I sing songs of praise?

Or - am I spending my time - thinking about a million things...

...as I mouth the words of the lyrics on the screen?

Rather than blessing the name of the Lord - some of us are spending our time...

...wondering why others aren't engaging in the way we think they should.

I've even had people ask me - why aren't people singing - or - why aren't they clapping?

Christian - listen - those who are truly praising the Lord - with expressions of adoration...

...aren't really paying attention to the people around us.

Imagine for a moment - that you're literally kneeling down before the Lord - with your face before the feet of our Savior.

Would you be able to see what the people around you are doing?

Would it be to God that we would become those believers - who bless the name of the Lord in this way.

And I pray that we would all learn to sing the praises of the Lord - everywhere we go.

With this as the goal - let's consider how the Psalmist put it - here in the 96th Psalm - look with me again there at verse 2 - where he declared...

Psa 96:2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
Psa 96:3 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

As we take another look at these verses - we must not fail to notice that...

...the people of God should not only sing the praises of the Lord in the congregation of believers....

...but - we should also proclaim the good news of His salvation...

...as we present His glory among the nations - and His wondrous deeds...

...to all the people on the planet.

I like the way that King Nebuchadnezzar summed it up - in Daniel chapter 4 - it's beginning at verse 1 - where he declared...

Dan 4:1 To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

Dan 4:2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

Dan 4:3 How great are His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion is from generation to generation.

Here in the beginning of this official decree - King Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed the praises of the Lord...

...in this letter that he sent to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth.

And in light of his example - it's my prayer that we would all become believers...

...who are proclaiming the good news of His
salvation from day to day...

...as we declare His glory among the nations,
And His wonders among all peoples.

With this as the goal - I encourage you to realize that - we currently live in
a day - and an age...

...when the people of God are able to proclaim the good news of the
Lord's salvation - unlike ever before.

We have access to social media - which enables us to proclaim
the praises of the Lord...

...to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all
the earth - - and so we should.

Now - listen - if you have a conviction that social media is off-limits for
you - - then - I completely understand.

Just to be clear - Social media addiction is the obsessive use and
focus on social media websites and apps.

And it's sad to say that there are many Christians - who are
allowing an addiction to social media...

...to keep them from connecting with Christ Jesus.

And listen - if you can't sit through a church service
without checking your favorite app...

...then - this is probably true of you.

If you know you have a social media addiction - and you've decided to
detox - digitally speaking...

...then - I encourage you to stay true to that conviction.

As for the rest of us - - we have the ability to use social media -
for the glory of the Lord - and so we should.

And listen - those of us who are too embarrassed - - or worried about
loosing our followers...

...I encourage you to remember that - we've been called to Proclaim
the good news of God's salvation from day to day.

And we've been called to declare His glory among the nations,
and His wonders among all peoples.

And so - let's take advantage of the social media
platforms that we are using.

One way to do this - is by reposting the daily verse that we publish on the
church's social media accounts.

I not only encourage you to read the daily verse we post - - but you
should also share it with others on your accounts.

In this way - you can easily present others - with the
praises of the Lord.

And listen - if you're worried about offending others who
follow another religion...

...then - I encourage you to consider the way that the
psalmist addressed this concern.

With this as our focus - let's consider how the Psalmist put it - here in the 96th
Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 4 - where the Psalmist declared...

Psa 96:4 For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods.

Psa 96:5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.

Psa 96:6 Honor and majesty are before Him;
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Here in these verses - we find the Psalmist - helping his audience to realize that the LORD - and the LORD alone should be praised.

And knowing that the peoples of other nations were worshipping other gods...

...the Psalmist assured his audience - that their gods are nothing more than idols.

That word - idols - found there in verse 5 - was translated from a Hebrew word - which means - worthless.

It's for this reason that the scholars who created the Christian Standard Bible rendered verse 5 in this way...

Psa 96:5 For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Christian - listen - the people who sing the praises of any other god...

...are actually worshipping a worthless idol - that doesn't actually exist.

Let's consider how Paul put it - in the letter he sent to the Christians in Corinth.

Hold your place - here in the book of Psalms - and let's turn in our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 8.

And as we make our way to the 8th chapter of 1st Corinthians - I wanna take a moment to remind you that...

...the city of Corinth was the location of several pagan temples.

This included the temple - built in honor of Aphrodite - who was the false god of beauty and fertility.

Not only that - but - Corinth was also the home of a temple built for the false god - Poseidon - who was believed to rule the sea.

There were also temples in Corinth - built for Apollo - Hermes - Isis and Venus-Fortuna.

And then there was the Corinthian Pantheon - which was dedicated to a Pantheon of false gods.

Without debate - the city of Corinth was filled with pagan temples - dedicated to their idols.

With all of this in mind - let's turn our attention to the point that Paul was making - here in 1st Corinthians 8

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where he declared...

1Co 8:1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

1Co 8:2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

1Co 8:3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

1Co 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

Now - it should be clear that - Paul wasn't suggesting that there were no such things as idols.

No - instead - he was helping the Christians in Corinth to understand that...

...the false gods of the pagan religions - were nothing.

In other words - those idols had no real power - and the reason why was due to the fact that...

...the deity they were designed to represent - didn't really exist.

Paul doubled down on this - by assuring his audience that - there is no other God - but one.

There's only One God Who alone has infinite power - - the King of kings Who dwells in unapproachable light.

And while there were many in Corinth who had embraced polytheism - which is the belief in more than one God...

...Paul helped the Christians in Corinth to realize that polytheism fails to correspond to reality...

...and the reason why is because - there is only One God Who is worthy to be praised.

With this in mind - let's consider how the Psalmist explained it - back in the 96th Psalm.

I like the way that the scholars who created the Legacy Standard Bible rendered verses 4 thru 6 - they put it like this...

Psa 96:4 For great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised;
He is more fearsome than all gods.

Psa 96:5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But Yahweh made the heavens.

Psa 96:6 Splendor and majesty are before Him,
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Yahweh and Yahweh alone is God - therefore - He alone is worthy to be praised.

And there's coming a day when we will see the splendor of His sanctuary.

And it's at that point in time when every knee will bow -
and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...

...to the glory of God the Father.

Until that day comes - we should sing His praises by faith - knowing that King of kings is enthroned upon the throne of grace.

And while it's true that we can't yet see the Splendor and majesty of His sanctuary...

...it's also true that the King of kings is the One to Whom all praises belong.

And so - we should gather together and corporately sing His praises with songs of adoration...

...and the reason why is because - this is the glory that is due to His name.

Let's consider how the Psalmist explained it - here in the 96th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 7 - where he declared...

Psa 96:7 Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
Psa 96:8 Give to the LORD the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.

Here in these verses - we find the Psalmist - helping his audience to understand that...

...the people of God should always ascribe to the LORD - the glory due his name.

And with this as the goal - we should take a moment to ask - - how much glory - is due to the name of the LORD?

With this question in mind - I should remind you of something the apostle Peter wrote in his first epistle.

It's 1st Peter 4 - beginning at verse 10 - where the apostle Peter declared...

1Pe 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1Pe 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

According to the apostle Peter - we should live our lives in such a way that God may be glorified in all things.

Then - just to be clear - Peter informs us that this glory belongs to the Lord - forever and ever.

And so - when the Psalmist directs us to Give to the LORD the glory due His name...

...the glory that is due His name - is never ending.

And it's for this reason that we will sing His praises - forevermore.

We should also consider how we glorify God with the offerings that we bring.

Look with me again - there at verse 8 - where the Psalmist declared...

Psa 96:8 Give to the LORD the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.

Here in this verse - we can see that those who want to glorify the LORD - should not only sing His praises...

...but - we should also bring an offering - as we gather together in corporate worship.

And just to be clear - that word - offering - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which - in this context - refers to a voluntary gift of gratitude.

Now - there are many pastors who preach the law of the tithe - in order to secure the funds necessary for the church budget.

I disagree with this approach - and the reason why is because - Christians are no longer under the law.

Remember - Jesus has made the former covenant obsolete - for those who trust in Him.

This was precisely the point that Paul was making in Hebrews chapter 8 - it's verse 13 - where we learn that...

...the new covenant has made the former covenant - obsolete.

That's right - the former covenant that God made with Moses is now obsolete - in Christ.

At the same time - the Bible is filled with stories of those who presented offerings to the Lord...

...before the law of the tithe was introduced.

Remember - it was Able who - by faith - offered an excellent sacrifice to the Lord.

And Job also presented offerings to the Lord - on behalf of his children.

And let's not forget that Abraham presented his offering to a preincarnate manifestation of our Messiah.

And all of these offerings were given - before the law of the tithe.

In similar fashion - Paul encouraged Christians to bring their offerings to church - in support of the great commission.

For example - it's in 2nd Corinthians chapter 9 - beginning at verse 5 where he declared...

2Co 9:5 I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

2Co 9:6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

2Co 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

2Co 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

From this - we can see that Christians have been called to bring their offerings to the church...

...so that we can financially support the work of the ministry.

And while I would never place you under the law of the tithe...

...I would also point out that - the Lord loves a cheerful giver.

The Lord loves a believer who gives cheerfully - and the reason why is because...

...the cheerful giver is a believer who is happy to glorify God with their faithful offerings.

And it's for this reason that the Lord blesses those - who bless His name - with their offerings.

We should also consider how the Lord should be glorified - because He is the Holy One - Who alone reigns on high.

Let's consider how the Psalmist put it here in the 96th Psalm - look with me beginning there at verse 9 - where he declared...

Psa 96:9 Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.
Psa 96:10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns;
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved;
He shall judge the peoples righteously."

Those who want to give God the glory that is due His name - should worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!

This line was actually taken from the song that David sang - in 1st Chronicles chapter 16.

And in order to understand what it means - to worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness...

...we should consider the three-fold holiness of the Lord.

It's in Isaiah chapter 6 - where we find Isaiah - describing the way in which the seraphim sing about the holiness of the Lord.

It's beginning at verse 1 - where the prophet Isaiah declared...

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.
Isa 6:2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
Isa 6:3 And one cried to another and said:
"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Here in this song of praise - we find the seraphim singing about the three-fold holiness of God.

And as we consider the Triunity of the Godhead - it seems to me that...

...the seraphim were singing about the holiness of the Father - the Son - and the Holy Spirit.

We find a similar scene in Revelation chapter 4 - - it's verse 8 - where the apostle John tells us about...

Rev 4:8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:
"Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"

From this - we can see that the Lord God Almighty is not just holy - -
He's Holy - Holy - Holy.

And as we consider the way that the living creatures described the Lord as the One Who was and is and is to come...

...there should be no doubt that the LORD was Holy in
eternity past...

...not only that - but - He is Holy today - and He will
be Holy in eternity future.

With all of this in mind - those who sing the praises of the Lord - should
worship the Him in the beauty of holiness.

At the same time - the Psalmist also encouraged his audience to say
among the nations...

Psa 96:10 "The LORD reigns. The world also is firmly
established, It shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples
righteously."

Here in this verse - we find the Psalmist - helping his
audience to remember that...

...the Lord Who is clothed in the beauty of holiness...

...is also the King Who reigns on High.

I like the way that Paul put it - in 1st Timothy chapter 6 - it's beginning in
the middle of verse 15 - where he declared..

1Ti 6:15b He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
1Ti 6:16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

The Lord is the infinite King Who alone has immortality - dwelling in unapproachable light.

And knowing that He is the holy One - Who will judge the world in righteousness...

...we will do well to warn the world about the day of judgment.

Let's consider how the Psalmist explained it - here in the 96th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 11 - where he declared...

Psa 96:11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;

Psa 96:12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD.

Psa 96:13 For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

Christian - listen - the Lord is coming to judge the earth - according to His righteousness - and truth.

And it's for this reason that we should warn those who are still in their sins.

The reason why is due to the fact that - those who reject the grace of God - which is received by faith in Jesus Christ...

...will be punished for every single sin they ever committed.

Ohhh - don't take my word for it - this was the promise that the apostle John presented in Revelation chapter 20.

It's beginning at verse 11 - where he presented his prophetic vision of the day of judgment - by declaring...

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Rev 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

According to the apostle John - there's coming a day - when the Lord will judge the works of those who rejected Jesus.

And it's for this reason that we should say among the nations...

"The LORD reigns;
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved;
He shall judge the peoples righteously."

When the Lord Jesus judges the unrepentant unbeliever - from His great white throne...

...He's going to pass a perfect sentence according to righteousness and truth.

And I can assure you that this will not work out well - for those who reject the grace of God.

With that being the case - I encourage every Christian to follow the instructions that the Psalmist presented - here in the 96th Psalm.

Let's proclaim the good news of the Lord's salvation - from day to day.

And let's declare His glory among the nations - and His wonders among all peoples...

...so that they might repent - and receive by faith - the free gift of forgiveness...

...that our Savior secured - by His substitutionary sacrifice.

And as we consider the way that the Lord Jesus saves those who trust in Him...

...let's become those believers who sing a new song to the Lord...

...as we worship the LORD in the beauty of His holiness!