

## Psalm 111:1-10

The 111<sup>th</sup> Psalm is what we might refer to as a “Hallelujah” psalm in that it’s a psalm that’s all about praising God. As a matter of fact the 1<sup>st</sup> Hebrew word of the Psalm that we have translated before us as “Praise the LORD!” is the single word “Hallelujah” the exhortation to Praise the Lord!

It’s a common exhortation throughout the psalms and one that evidently we need readily reminded of because it’s all too common to find ourselves in a mood that doesn’t really lend itself to praising the Lord we feel like we have no reason to praise the Lord when in reality we have no reason *not* to praise the Lord. No matter how hard life gets, no matter how low I’m taken the fact of the matter is that whether I feel like it or not the Lord is still worthy of my praise. It seems that as humanity we’re so circumstantial with regard to our outlook on life and our willingness to give God praise. If I’ve won the lottery, I’ve got the girl of my dreams, all my debts are paid off and I’m a picture of perfect health, “Oh praise the Lord, God is so good!” But if I’m behind on my bills, no prospects for marriage, and my physical health is somehow failing me, “Why should I praise the Lord?” Well, since when does God’s worthiness of my praise in any way, shape or form correlate to my personal circumstances? You see whether or not my situation favors my personal desire or not God is still Holy, He’s still righteous, He’s still exalted high above the heavens, He’s still given His only begotten Son to die for *me* and that I might live through *Him* and He’s still worthy of all the praise of the deepest recess of my heart and so much more...

So the Psalmist reminds us once again, “Praise the Lord!” As you survey the psalms you find that there are various and sundry reasons why we’re exhorted to give God our praise. Sometimes we’re exhorted to praise the Lord because of His word; Ps 147:19-20 “*He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the Lord!*” Of course the 119<sup>th</sup> psalm revolves entirely around God’s word, and how the psalmist worships and praises the Lord because of the goodness of the word of God to the people of God. We spoke Sunday morning about the appropriate attitude toward the word of God. That God has given it to us as a gift, that His word He exalts above His name, that there’s life in God’s word, the power to deliver from the power of Darkness and cause us to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

His word is eternal, heaven and earth will pass away but His word will never by no means pass away; surely God is *worthy* of our praise and we should give God our praise for His word. Other times we're exhorted to give God our praise for His works.

Be it for His word, be it for His works God is worthy of our praise, Psalm 111 is an exhortation to praise God for the greatness of His works.

Vs1

So Vs 1 begins with an exhortation that speaks to all believers *universally*, "Praise the Lord!" Then he narrows the scope to a vow or a commitment that he makes *personally* that has nothing to do with his situation circumstantially. He's going to focus on things outside of himself, that have nothing to do with himself when it comes to his rational toward the giving of his praise to the Lord.

By the way (on a side note) when it comes to praising the Lord corporately, in the congregation collectively, what's the deal with holding back? "What do you mean?" I've noticed over the years that whenever I'm at a conference (Men's conference, women's conference, pastor's conference...whatever) there's something about the "conference environment" that causes people to sing out fully, enter in enthusiastically. But when they get back to their Sunday routine it's like the decibel level of the overflow of praise reduces by about 60%. What's the deal with that? Can I just encourage you; when you're in the assembly of the upright, when you're in the midst of the congregation, "Praise the Lord!" Believe me when I tell you that it's contagious, it will embolden those around you to give their praise to the Lord along *with* you. Conversely silence is contagious as well; if you're sitting there in silence, with an expression like, "I'm just waiting on this part to be done so we can move on into the study;" people are going to feel all wierded out if they're wanting to sing out. So just a simple encouragement, let the Lord hear your voice; lift up your voice in adoration to the Lord.

Notice also that his praise is a matter of his free will. He says, "I *will*" there's an element of deliberate intention in that. There are times that I feel like, "I *won't*" there's deliberate intention in that as well; praising the Lord is a matter of your will, you don't have to, but it should be your privilege to.

We also note that when he commits to praise the Lord, he goes “all in.” He doesn’t say, “I’ll see if I can’t muster up a little something for the Lord, after all I’m kinda having a bad day.” It’s not a ½ hearted effort, God’s worthy of more than ½ hearted praise. He says, “with my *whole heart* I will praise the Lord.” “I’m not going to draw near to the Lord with my mouth, and honor Him with my lips while my heart is far from Him, but rather I will praise Him with my whole heart.” The idea being that his praise would issue forth from all that was with in Him, he would reach way down in there to the core of his being and from that place draw out and bring forth praise. Whole hearted praise is passionate, enthusiastic praise, not lethargic “I’ll go through the motions” praise.

Now again I realize that we don’t always *feel* like doing that, but that’s when we need to remind ourselves that God is worthy of our very best even when we feel things are at their very worst. There are times when you and I will need to “encourage ourselves” “strengthen ourselves” in the Lord, when we’ll need to root down and anchor ourselves in that resolve to worship and praise the Lord, to serve the Lord and give ourselves over to the *will* of the Lord.

Think about David, “The sweet psalmist of Israel” there were times that the bible records that David “strengthened himself” in the Lord, there was no one there *for* him, no one would be an encouragement *to* him, so he determined with in himself to strengthen himself. The sons of Korah in much the same way would exhort their soul, “Why are you cast down O my soul?” Ps 42:11 “*Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.*” You see there’s a personal determination there to give God the praise He’s worthy of.

Here, the psalmist shares the same resolve in a personal and private sense, then also in the public arena, in the midst of the congregation; in the assembly of the upright.

Vs 2

As we move through this Psalm we’ll discover that the psalmist continues to give us building blocks of praise. “Praise the Lord, take pleasure in the works of the Lord, He’s our Provider, He keeps His promises, He moves in power, He performs His word, He’s paid for His people, praise Him forevermore.”

“The works of the Lord are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them.” That is, all who *delight* in them, we spoke about the Word Sunday morning, is it a drag or is it a delight? Those who *delight in* it will find themselves as students *of* it. The question that we have here is, “What works of the Lord is the psalmist referring to; His creative works, or His redemptive works?” To which I would respond, “Yes.” It’s probably a reference to the works of *creation*, but if you ponder on, think about, or study up on the works of *salvation*, that’s a wonderful thing as well.

Or the works of *restoration*, the works of the Lord are wonderful regardless of what category you’re thinking through, be it creation, salvation, restoration or sanctification, the works of God in all of those things are a delight to think upon and study, the work of the Lord edifies the soul. But I think that this is another reason that as believers we need to be careful to safeguard the work of creation as being just that. You start subscribing to some evolutionary process, even if you think God created the bang and then sorta let things evolve from there, you’re robbing God of His glory. God is glorified in His creation, “He *said*...and so it was.” Thinking *about* and learning *of* the *works* of God should stir our heart to give it’s *praise* to God.

Think about the beauty, the vastness, the variety, the complexity of creation; God holds it all in the span of His hand; think of the fragrances that we’re blessed by this time of year as the flowers are coming into bloom, the trees are beginning to bud, God didn’t have to place those qualities in those flowers or whatever, but He did, not because He needed to, but because it would be a blessing to you; do you ever praise Him for that?

Think about the work of God in the relationships He’s blessed you with, be it your family, your children, your close friends; it’s the work of God to bring godly people into your life; do you praise Him for that?

Maybe at one time you made a real mess of things and yet God has restored your life, He’s lifted you out of the miry clay and has restored you to Himself; do you praise Him for the work of restoration in your life.

Of course how can we consider God's works with out placing at the forefront the work of the cross, the work of salvation? Then the subsequent sanctification, the growth that he's so faithful to bring to us, drawing us nearer to Him that we might be used more *by* Him.

We could think of the work of God's grace toward us, His mercy, the work of His compassion and patience with us. There's just no reason not to praise the Lord, we could study of those things for the rest of our lives and not get much more than beyond the surface of the vast reservoir of God's goodness toward us in His works on behalf *of* us.

Vs3-4

The psalmist here begins to elaborate on the attributes that describe the works of the Lord; and what we learn real quick is that His works exhibit the same qualities as does His person. "Honorable, and glorious, everlasting righteousness, He (as well as His works) are wonderful, He is gracious and full of compassion." Of course it's hard to read that with out being reminded of that passage in Ex 34 whereby the Lord shared of Himself with Moses, Who He was, and what He was about. He said, "*And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...'*" Exodus 34:6-7

I'm not sure where some people get the idea that the God of the OT is some angry vindictive God but the God of the NT is a mellow, forgiving and gracious fella as if there are 2 different Gods. The fact of the matter is that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He's always been, holy and righteous, unwilling to justify sin; and He's always been merciful and gracious, full of forgiveness, lovingkindness and compassion. His works carry the same attributes, honorable, righteous, wonderful and glorious.

Now there in Vs 4 where it says, "He has made His works to be remembered"

Literally it speaks of a memorial, He makes His works a memorial, a remembrance. He leaves something behind (as it were) so that we won't forget. Of course we could site multiple examples whereby the children of Israel were instructed to set up a memorial after a certain work of the Lord. But I want to point out only one, and it wasn't to the children of Israel so much specifically as it was to the family of faith generally.

It was laid out on the night that our Lord was betrayed; Paul tells us of the Lord there in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 11, “...and when He had given thanks, He broke it [the bread] and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’” 1 Cor11:24-25

As a memorial to the work of the cross, we *remember* the shed blood, the broken body of our Lord; He’s made His wonderful works to be remembered.

Vs5-6

He’s our Provider, He keeps His promises, and He moves in power. Of course in light of the works of God here the Psalmist points out a few of them for Israel. How He provided for them in the wilderness, how He has kept His covenant with them and was faithful to move them into the Promised Land.

The Lord is our provider, “He gives food to those who fear Him.” Jesus said it like this, “*Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*” Matthew 6:26-33

But not only in a practical way has God promised to meet our needs, but even more so in the things of the Spirit. God fed the children of Israel manna, it was a foreshadowing of the provision, the bread of life that God would provide for all of mankind in the Person of His Son. In John Ch 6 Jesus said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’*” John 6:32-35

We're to receive our nourishment, our daily bread in Christ, through the word of God. Remember the model prayer? "Give us this day, our *daily* bread" the manna would spoil after even 1 day. We're to feed on the word with regularity, taking it in consistently, daily.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceed from the mouth of God.

"He will be ever mindful of His covenant." That means that God keeps His promises, He's not a man that He should lie, He will be true to His word.

Notice also that the psalmist recalls God's faithfulness in the past to underscore his confidence for the future, "He *has* given" (faithfully), "He *will* be ever mindful of His covenant" (as it pertains to the future). You see God never *has* failed us, therefore we have no reason to suspect that He ever *will* fail us.

Vs7-8

"His precepts are sure, they stand fast forever and ever." Translation = He performs all His word, heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of God will never, by no means pass away (Mk 13:31).

Vs9

"He has sent redemption to His people" He's paid for His people in full, of course the psalmist most likely in reference to the exodus, the lamb slain, the blood shed for the salvation of His people. We of course realize that not only does it point back to the foreshadowing, it also pointed forward to the fulfillment of the redemption God has sent to His people in the person of His Son. The Lamb of God who would shed His blood, pay in full the penalty for our sin and take away the sins of the world. "He has sent redemption to His people, holy and awesome is His name.

Vs10

May God help us to walk in wisdom, to have good understanding being doers of the word, not hearers only. Notice the blessing isn't found in simply knowing, but in doing, not in learning but in living. God's works are great as it pertains to His *creation*, even greater as they pertain to His *salvation*; His praise endures forever...

Prayer Points:

God may we exhibit what it means to be a people of praise! May we reflect on Your works, meditate on Your word and find our hearts welling up unable to cease from overflowing in praise to You. Help us to praise You with our whole heart, personally/privately/devotionally, and in the midst of the assembly, publicly. We thank You for Your goodness, Your faithfulness, Your kindness and Your compassion, have Your way in us...