

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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We Need to Pray! (Part 3)

I Timothy 2:1-2, 8

Last month we considered the truth that the process of prayer involves the praise of God's Person. As we introduced the thought, we also made mention that true prayer will involve the praise of *God's Performances*. There are many places that we could look, but we will consider Psalm 99, 145, and Matthew 6 again.

Psalm 99:1 says, "*The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.*" Verse 6 says, "*Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.*" In both of these verses, we can find activities of the Lord that deserve our praise. Let us ponder them for a moment.

Psalm 99 is the third psalm that begins with "*the LORD reigneth.*" The first one, Psalm 93, gives further descriptions about the Lord in the remainder of the verse. The next two, Psalms 97 and 99, announce the opening clause and then gives man's suggested response. We will focus on Psalm 99.

The psalmist says, "*The LORD reigneth.*" This one thought should alleviate all fears that ever enter our heart. God is on the throne. No matter who may be in the governor's mansion, the White House, or any other symbol of human authority, God is still in control. The message is mentioned throughout the Bible—God puts up and takes down the leaders of nations and those leaders serve under God's control (Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 2:20-21). There is no reason for any child of God to ever fear what man can do, even if that man is the leader of the country. God has put that person there to accomplish His will. I may not understand it, but that is fine. I can

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rest on the Word of God that He reigns; therefore, everything is all right. I can rest in His control because God always does everything right.

The truth of God reigning is mentioned in other places in the Bible. One of those is I Chronicles 16:31. In this psalm that David gave to Asaph he mentions many things that are reasons to praise God. One of those is the truth that "*The LORD reigneth.*" God is still in control! Everything is all right! There is no cause to worry! If David could encourage Israel to praise God because He reigns, then we can do the same.

Another passage where you find the truth of God reigning is Revelation 19:6. In this scene in Heaven, before the return of Christ to the earth, the fourth Alleluia is proclaimed. Why? Because "*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*" David had proclaimed the truth during his life in I Chronicles, the psalmist (perhaps David, but not identified) repeats the truth, and the throng of Heaven declares it anew—the LORD reigns. He is in control. May we submit ourselves to Him and trust in Him to do all things right. When we do, we will join David, the psalmist, and the heavenly host in praising God because He reigns.

Before we move on to some other thoughts about God's performances, let me say something about the response that is mentioned in Psalm 99:1. The statement is made that the LORD reigneth. Because the LORD reigns, "*let the people tremble.*" The word tremble means many things, but I will just mention one—to stand in awe. To give us a better understanding of this, the word awe means to strike with reverence. When we realize that God is reigning, we will not worry about anything. We will reverence God and trust in Him because He is in control and everything will work out the way He wants it to. Why should we worry? The LORD reigns; therefore I will praise Him—He is in control.

The psalmist mentions a second performance of God that deserves

praise—“*he answered them.*” Think about what we have just finished talking about and what we are now considering. We will combine them in this thought—The LORD who reigns answered them. When we pray and ask God to meet our needs, we can have the assurance that He will hear and answer us. The psalmist is praising God for previous answers. There is not one of us who has prayed with a clean heart and with the right motives who has not had God answer their prayer. We could all take many hours and recount God’s answers to our prayers.

The psalmist in this passage uses three of God’s servants as examples. I am not sure which episode he has in mind, but I will mention one for each. Moses prayed many prayers, but the one I think of often is in Exodus 33:18—“*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*” Moses had seen God earlier in Exodus 24:9-10, but he was not satisfied with past experiences. He wanted a renewed vision of God. God answered that prayer in Exodus 34:5-7. It was so real that when Moses came down from the mount, his face shone with God’s glory. Moses desired something from God, and God answered his prayer.

Aaron’s answers to prayer can be seen in connection with his priestly activities. Each year on the day of atonement he would offer the sacrifice to cover the people’s sins for the year. When the sacrifice was done as God ordered it, the sins were taken care of. Aaron made the request for the people in the form of the sacrifice, and God heard Aaron’s request. Praise God Who hears our prayer and forgives sin.

Lastly, Samuel is mentioned. In I Samuel 8, the people come to Samuel desiring a king. Samuel prayed to the Lord for direction. God answered and said the people could have a king. Samuel was not sure what to do, so he prayed to the Lord. May we learn from Samuel’s action. Many times we may not know what to do. When that happens, we should pray. We have the promise that God will hear us just as he did Samuel. When His will is revealed, may we

praise the God Who answers prayer.

Now we turn to Psalm 145:4-10 to see several other performances of God that deserve our praise. In these verses David uses some general terms to describe God’s activity. Four times, in verses 4, 5, 9, and 10, he uses the word works. David talks about passing on what God has done from one generation to another. This had been commanded by God in Deuteronomy, but that generation failed to do it. When you think about all that God has done for you, do you tell others, especially your children? Do they know what “works” God has done for you? We may tell them many things, but nothing will be as great as recounting what God has done for us.

Not only does David tell his family, but David says in verse 5 that he will let others know. Can we say what David has just said? I know the flesh does not like this kind of talk, but do we tell others about God’s “work” for us. We will talk about everything else, but what is really important. If God has done something for us (and I am sure that He has), we should tell others.

David talks about God’s works two other times. In verse 9, the works are a product of God’s tender mercies. It is not because we deserve them that we receive God’s work. If we received what we deserved, it would be judgment, certainly not good things. But God is merciful and withholds judgment and dispenses blessings. May we praise Him for His works sent through mercy.

David’s final use of works says “All thy works shall praise thee.” This gets us around to praising God for His performances. When God is merciful to us in answering our prayers, may we begin our next prayer in true praise for what He has done. There is no reason to ever forget what God has done for us. May David be our example to praise God for what He has done.

David uses the general term acts mostly in the same sense as works, so I want to move on to discuss the specific performances in

this psalm. We receive these blessings of God every day; therefore, we should praise God for them daily. Verse 8 says, “*The LORD is gracious.*” We often think of grace in relation to salvation, but God’s grace is bestowed upon us even after salvation. Our service for Christ is only possible because of the grace that God gives to us to do it. Everything that we have and accomplish is because of God’s grace. He deserves our praise because of that.

David also mentions that God is “*full of compassion.*” Notice the description—not empty or partial, but full. There is no reaching of the limits of what God feels for His people. When we have done wrong, God is ready to forgive us when we ask Him to. When we try to do our best, but fail, God understands because of the limits of this wicked flesh. God is so good to us—all the time. We should praise Him for His compassion.

Finally, in this psalm, the Lord is slow to anger. How true that is! I often deserve God’s judgment and discipline, but instead find God’s mercy and grace. Why? Because He is slow to anger. When there should be wrath, there is grace. God is so good to us. May we see the absolute necessity of praising God when we pray. We will continue this message on prayer next month.