

THE GLORY OF OUR GLORIOUS GOD

Psalm 115

Intro: You can tell from the fact that two Sundays ago I spoke for the second time on Psalm 37, and last Sunday I spoke on Psalm 33, and today am speaking on Psalm 115, that it is not my purpose in this series on the Psalm to take them in the order in which they appear in our Bibles. Rather, after speaking on the Psalms, parts, or all, of which we memorized this year in our Bible Memory assignments, that even there we did not follow Psalm after Psalm as they appear in the Bible. Some Psalms we memorized in their entirety, others, only parts of the Psalms.

So my plan in continuing with the Psalms is to follow what I trust will be the leading of the Lord from week to week regardless of any particular order. Of course, I don't think any teacher of the Word can be absolutely certain that from week to week that he, or she, positively knows the mind of the Lord. We do what we believe is the will of God, and fortunately it seems to work out that we have had the leading of the Lord. Earlier this week we had Psalm 115 in our daily Bible reading schedule, and I was particularly impressed with this Psalm and, after reading it over several times, I decided that, with the Lord's help, I would speak on it this morning. And the more I have read it this week, the more satisfied that it was my choice for this morning. I trust that I have discerned the will of God in doing it.

The Psalms made up a major part of the singing and so of the worship of the children of Israel. We know that they were also used in the early Church because we have proof of this from the Apostle Paul's letters to the churches of Ephesus and Colossians. In fact, in Ephesians Paul linked the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" as evidence of the filling of the Spirit. Listen to what he wrote to the church in Ephesus, a letter which he probably intended to be circulated among other churches in the vicinity of Ephesus. Reading from Ephesians 5:18 and 19 this is what the Apostle Paul told them:

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

In his letter to the church at Colosse, the Apostle Paul said this:

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and

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spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

I would love to spend the time this morning just talking about these verses in Ephesians and Colossians. But I just want to make the point that the Spirit of God intended the Psalms to be used, and blessed for the spiritual blessing of the Lord's people in NT as well as in OT times. In Psalm 115 we find that the Psalmist, whoever he was, and whenever he wrote (because we do not know either of these facts), spoke of Israel and the house of Aaron. We are neither of these. But what the Psalmist said to them has a message for us today, as it did for believers fifty years ago, and as it will however this world shall last. You and I need to read it, gleaning from it the truth which is needed by us today, and even like it was written with us in mind.

The Message

I have already said that we don't know who wrote this Psalm, and so we don't know when it was written, nor do we know why it was written, that is, what conditions prompted the writing of it. But what we do know is that it was written by someone who was moved to write just exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted him to write down to the very words that were used.

Another thing that we know is that the Lord's people were in trouble, big trouble, And it seems that the Psalmist was particularly troubled because the prayers of the people were not being answered. Couldn't that fact fit into some time, or times, in your life – maybe even what you are experiencing right now? You have been praying for some one, or about some need, and heaven seems to be strangely silent to you.

Added to all of this, the enemies of Israel seem to have been taunting the people of God by saying what we read in verse 2, "Where is now their God?"

Going back to verse 1 the writer of this Psalm, speaking on behalf of the people, gave expression *to the Lord* (not to their enemies), *but to the Lord*, that it was not them, nor their names, that they were primarily concerned about, but it was for God's name and God's glory. It was in defense of God's mercy and God's truth (probably speaking of God's faithfulness to His Word) that was their greatest concern. And then actually speaking to themselves in verse 3 they reminded themselves of

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the sovereignty of God and His providential dealing with them in their lives, even in their present circumstances. The words in verse 3 were for their own encouragement as they faced the trouble that they were facing.

In verse 3 we read, “But our God is . . .” And then in verse 4, by way of contrast they began a series of statements which they preceded with, “But their idols . . .” It sounds a little like what we have recently read in our daily Bible reading about the contrast that Elijah had with the prophets of Baal. If you haven’t read that recently you will find it in 1 Kings 18. Read it because it will strengthen your faith to do so.

Now follow in your Bible here in Psalm 115 as I read verses 4 through 8. **(Read.)**

Now read those same verses, but apply them to “our God.” Our God is invisible and eternal, without a beginning, and without an end.

He has a mouth, and He speaks. He has eyes, and He sees. He has ears, and He hears. He has a nose, and He smells. He has hands, and he holds us. He has feet, and He comes to us, and is always with us. He speaks, and His words come to us. He has made us, and we are like Him, in His image and destined to be like Him. And so how important it is that we be identified as those who trust Him.

Do you remember how Elijah ridiculed what the prophets of Baal did when they cried all morning trying to get Baal to answer them with fire from heaven? They shouted at Baal. They did this all morning long. And when Baal did not hear they cut themselves until their blood gushed out. And still there was no answer. They continue on until the time of the evening sacrifice. And then Elijah prepared his altar, soaked all of it with water, and then prayed this prayer:

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water

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that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God (1 Kings 18:36-39).

I am certain that the Jews to whom the writer of Psalm 115 addressed the exhortations of Psalm 115:9, 10 and 11, knew the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, and were encouraged to do as the Psalmist exhorted them in these three verses. **(Read.)**

May I digress for just a moment to encourage all of us to be faithful in reading the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. As soon as you finish reading all of it, start in again and read it over and over. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 10:17 that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” If you want a strong faith, read the Bible. Now I am talking to those of you who claim Jesus Christ as your Savior. Read it daily, Read all of it. My heart really goes out to people when trials come (and they come to all of us) – but when they come, and the person who is involved in them is not supported by a knowledge of the Word of God. They have no resources to deal with the trials of life.

Now when you are reading your Bible and read something that is addressed to Israel, remember that Israel means Israel, not the Church or something else. And when you read about the “house of Aaron,” remember that Aaron means Aaron, not something else. So this was a call to the whole nation, and to the sons of Aaron who were the priestly tribe. **But now look at verse 11. It is addressed to those who “fear the Lord.”** That is a term that applies to a genuine child of God in the OT, and it describes a true child of God in the NT. So that includes you, and it includes me, if Jesus Christ is our Savior. So this is for us! What do we need to do when trouble comes, and prayers are not being answered? So that people are inclined to say, “Where is their God?” We just need to keep trusting in the LORD, in Jehovah, the ever-living, the unchanging God.

Three times the people were told to trust the Lord. And three times it is declared that “He is their help and their shield.” He helps us before the tests come, while they are going on, and after the test is over. And as our Shield He is our strong defense. This is why David was able to kill Goliath. The Lord was David’s shield. Let these truths be written deep down in our hearts. We have a never failing God.

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From verse 12 on down to the end of this Psalm, the Psalmist briefly reviews for us what we will find confirmed upon the pages of Scripture. All of these statements were for the encouragement of the people of God who were living when this Psalm was written, and they are for the encouragement of those of us who are reading Psalm 115 today.

What did the Psalmist say?

1) “The Lord hath been mindful of us.” We may forget Him, but He will never forget us. There are two verses in the prophecy of Isaiah that are filled with comfort for all of us who know the Lord. You will find them in Isaiah 49:15-16:

15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

(Explain.)

2) “He will bless us.” And to this is added the rest of verse 12 and all of verse 13. Nothing is clearer in the Word than that it delights the Lord to bless us. Romans 8:28 is one proof.

3) “The Lord will bless you more and more, you and your children.” Not only is Israel a proof of this, but so also is the church. Think of the children of Israel in Egypt as an illustration of the first, and the book of Acts as evidence of God’s blessing upon the Church – and this extends right down to the present day. And during the Tribulation and the Millennium it will again be seen in Israel. And verse 15 tells us Who this Lord is Who has promised to bless us. He is the Creator of the whole universe. The heavens are the Lord’s, and we will learn about God’s blessing there later, but for now the scene of His blessing upon His people is the earth. It is given to us to see the blessing of God in this evil, fallen world, that in this place it is amazing to see how great and numerous are the blessings of God upon us. And yet not only upon us, but His mercies and His compassion are evident in the lives even of people who do not know Him.

4) The last point that the Psalmist made is to realize that all of the blessings that we are promised and have experienced are designed that we may be faithful in recognizing that all blessings come to us from God, and He is looking to us for one thing: Praise.

God takes special glory for Himself through the blessings that He pours out upon us, and He takes special delight in the fact that we recognize His

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goodness to us, and turn to Him with our praises. Knowing the I will's of God, verse 15 of our Psalm indicates that we need to be committed just as committed to praising Him as He is to continue His blessing upon us.

In verse 15 “this time forth” speaks of the present time here on earth; “and for evermore” has to do with eternity. I don't know what all we are going to do in heaven, but one thing I am sure of. We are going to praise the Lord then forever. So let us learn to praise Him now. This is how we will bring glory to our glorious God.

The Psalm ends with a resounding, “Hallelujah,” which means “praise ye the Lord.” We should never pray without praising God from whom all blessings flow.

Concl: There was an incident in the earthly ministry of our Lord which only Luke has recorded for us. It has to do when Jesus was headed for Jerusalem, and he passed through some towns of Samaria and Galilee. Ten lepers confronted Him at a distance (as they were required to do because of their disease), and they asked Him to have mercy upon them. He simply told them to go show themselves to the priests. As they did so, they were healed. Perhaps you remember the end of the story. Let me read it to you from Luke 17:15-20:

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

A good verse for all of us to remember is Psalm 50:23, the last verse of that Psalm”

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.