

Psalm 117 • Because He's faithful

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Psalm chapter 117 is a very short Psalm. It's only 2 verses and we're just one other Psalm away from the longest Psalm. Which we're not going to get to tonight, by the way but this is a very short Psalm. A very simple Psalm with an equally simple message and the message is, basically: a call to all the peoples of the earth to praise the Lord!

And the psalmist simply says,

"1 Praise the LORD, all nations!" (ESV)

And you can see that this word goes beyond the Jewish people, or the Jewish culture in which this psalm was written. And it calls for peoples of all the world to *"Praise the LORD!"*

It goes on in verse 1 to say,

"Extol him, ..."

And the word, extol isn't necessarily in my daily vocabulary. I don't know about you. I don't use that word. But it means to, enthusiastically praise. When your football team is coming through the tunnel onto the field and they're announcing each of the players one by one. And people enthusiastically cheer and praise these guys for a job well done; and so on and so forth. And that's what the Lord is telling us to do in this Psalm, to enthusiastically praise the Lord!

And then in the second verse, the last verse, 2 reasons are given for this praise. First of all, it says,

"2 For great is his steadfast love toward us."

And of course the word, steadfast means, dependable or committed. He says, praise God for His dependable love. You ever thought about God's love as dependable? You can depend on it. That's what that simply means. My love, as a human being, isn't always, entirely, dependable. Because sometimes I get so full of myself, and so full of my own fears, and my own concerns, that I forget. I forget to show love for the people around me. Because I just...

Have you ever gotten like tired, like come home tired? And you bit somebody's head off and they didn't even really deserve it. But you were maybe mad at somebody at work, or somebody said something, or did something, or you're just tired. You need a vacation and you're just owly. And you forget.

Well, that happens with you and I because our love isn't 100% dependable but God's is 100 percent dependable. It's always there. Always, always, always, always, always, God's love is always there.

Do you guys know that even when God is exercising judgment, His love is present? Do you understand that God never suspends part of His attributes, or part of His being, in order to exercise another part?

See, you and I have to do that. If I'm angry at someone and I'm going to tell them how angry I am, I have to suspend certain parts of my personality in order to express that anger. If I'm going to be compassionate and kind to someone, I have to suspend other aspects of my attributes, my character, in order to express compassion or kindness.

God never does that. He never suspends any part of His being. He is always perfectly in balance. When there's judgment being expressed, there is love and kindness and compassion equally being expressed. When kindness, love, is being expressed, judgment is equally being expressed. It's an important thing to remember.

God's love is always there. Even when He's disciplining you. Even when He's taking you to the woodshed, given you a spanking, His love is there. Right? It's steadfast. That's the first reason the psalmist gives for praising the Lord.

And then, look at the second reason. It says,

"and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever." Which is to simply say that His faithfulness has no expiration date. And aren't you glad to hear that?

My faithfulness can have an expiration date. So can yours because we're human. We pray that God would make us continually faithful to the people that we love and to the ministry that we've been given. But we're still human beings and we fail. But God's faithfulness never fails and it cannot expire. What a beautiful, sort of a thing that is.

And I really believe that faithfulness is one of those attributes of God, that you and I could and probably should spend time meditating on. Because it'll change the way you think.

I love what Paul said to Timothy. Let me put this on the screen for you, from 2 Timothy 2:13. It says,

2 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)

...if we are faithless, he remains faithful - for he cannot deny himself.

...if we are faithless, (and that does happen from time to time) he (still) remains faithful - for he cannot deny himself.

And the reason I love that statement that Paul made to Timothy so much, is that it tells us that faithfulness is not simply something that God does, it is something that He is. Are you with me?

I can be faithful. I can do faithfulness. I can act faithfully. Okay? But only God is faithful. He is faithfulness. Right? Just like God is love. God is justice and so forth, and all those things. Those aren't simply expressions. They are part of His essential being. God is faithful. That means, He can't be otherwise. Do you get that?

When we say, God is faithful, when we say, God is love, it means He can't be otherwise. It's not possible. It's like you trying to be a different person than you are. You simply are who you are and God is who He is. He is faithful and His faithfulness cannot be denied.

And the Psalm ends with the very simple words,

"Praise the LORD!"