

Psalm 47 • Sing praises to our King

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Psalm 47 is another fairly short Psalm, but this one is full of praise. Check this out. Now, some of you are going to hear an old tent song. *“Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!”*

I can't even read this without the song coming in. It overwhelms my reading. Do you guys, some of you guys remember this song? Yeah. Clap your hands, all you people, shout unto God with a voice of triumph, right? Yeah, oh, I tell you those are the old revival songs. Yeah, those were the good old days. When men were men and women were women. Yeah, we'll just forget that then. Alright. We better start over.

*“Clap your hands, all peoples!
Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
² For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.
³ He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
⁴ He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.
⁵ God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
⁷ For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!
⁸ God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.
⁹ The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!” (ESV)*

By the way, that last verse, and this is a short Psalm, but that last verse is a challenging one both to translate and understand. I like it out of the New Living Translation (NLT). Let me put this up on the screen for you. Verse 9 goes like this.

Psalm 47:9 (NLT)

The rulers of the world have gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham. For all the kings of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere.

The rulers of the world have gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham. For all the kings of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere.

Well, as you can see, this Psalm is all about praise. And we've got all kinds of things going on in this Psalm. There's clapping, there's shouting, there's songs of joy, there's trumpets going off, declaring the praise of God, there's songs of praise, and all this is happening. Praise.

Webster's dictionary defines praise, as to say good things about someone or something. To say good things. The NIV Bible defines Christian praise as, a joyful thanking and adoring of God, the celebration of His goodness and grace.

And that definition implies that praise is something that we give God because that we He's due that praise, right? Not because we're rewarding Him for His good behavior. Like we praise our children when they, don't throw their food on the floor or something like that. You were a good boy today. You didn't make a big mess for dad, thank you, and that sort of thing.

Some of us treat God that way. When God's good to us, we praise Him. When we don't, when we don't feel like He's, deserving of praise because He hasn't been that great to us, we're not going to reward Him with praise. But the fact of the matter is, God deserves our praise at all times, at all times. No matter what life has brought you, no matter what you happen to be going through.

Not just because He makes you happy. I mean, we should praise Him when He makes us happy, I suppose, and nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with giving thanks when the Lord has brought joy into your heart. But to think that's only when God deserves praise is to misunderstand the whole concept of God's majesty and glory, right? And how He is due that.

Verses 7 and 8, take a look again in your Bible. These are particularly important as a reminder when the world seems to be acting all crazy and we're hearing things in the news that are making us a little bit fearful.

Verse 7 begins here and says, *“For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm! ⁸ God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.”* I love that. I love that. I love that.

I especially love it after we've had like a presidential or vote or some kind of a vote when we feel like, goodness gracious, how are we going to survive another week in this country, with these particular people in charge or whatever.

And we got to come back to the fact that God has not budged off His throne and He is still ruling sovereignly over the nations. As it says, *“God reigns over the nations.”*

And as Christians, we can either choose to believe that or I suppose we can just be filled with fear. And watch the news apprehensively and just think, it's going to just fall apart any day now. Or we can go to the Word and let that Word bathe our hearts in the reality of the fact that God is sovereignly moving in our lives, and He's still good. And He has not been edged off that ruling throne.

Have you ever? Have you noticed how incredible the sunrises and sunsets have been lately around here? They have just been amazing. I'm going to work this into this idea of praise in just a moment. But my daughter in law, I took this picture, let me put this on the screen for you.

Laura took this picture, I think it was yesterday. Looks especially awesome with a statue of an angel in the foreground, silhouetting, the awesomeness of that sunrise.



And it was also incredible to read all of the comments when she posted it on social media. People are like, whoa!!!!. I mean, there aren't enough O's on the keyboard, to describe my response or my reaction to that kind of beauty, but have you ever?

Have you ever noticed that sometimes it's easier to praise the sunrise than it is the One who created the sunrise? Our sufferings in this life too often keep us from praising God, and why is that?

Well, I believe personally, maybe I'll speak for myself, okay? Maybe this doesn't apply to anybody else except me. But I have found in my own life that what squelches praise in my walk with the Lord is a self-focus. It's too much self-focus. I'm just focused on myself.

And when I'm focused on my hurts, which, by the way, is natural when you're hurting, I'll just say that. When you're hurting, it's natural to focus on your hurts. But I do that to an exclusive sort of a way and I pretty much ignore everything else.

But as I make the decision to turn away, turn my attention away from my hurt and put it instead on the character of my God, I suddenly find myself filled with the sweetest and most inexpressible peace that you can imagine. And it's happened repeatedly, and I don't know why I don't learn my lesson. Instead of falling into self-focus every time something bad happens, but I do.

Hopefully those times of falling are getting a little shorter with us before we turn our attention away, but, again, I will tell you, it is a natural thing in our lives to turn and look at our pain, and to gaze upon it, and to focus on it. But I'm here to tell you, as long as you're doing that, a word of praise will not come past your lips. It can't because it's eclipsed by the attention that you are giving.

I mean, oh, sure, you can repeat some perfunctory sort of a... Have ever had that happen? You come to church and you're just so hurting and so full of sorrow and the songs, you don't even want to be here during. I mean, I'll just come late. You know you're going to miss the music. I don't want to praise. I don't want to sing. And you see the words up there on the screen, you just stand there. I see people. You stand there and they might be moving their mouth a little bit, like a ventriloquist dummy.

But there's nothing in the heart, that's engaged with any of the words because I just don't feel it. Just not feeling it. Why am I not feeling it? Because I'm so full of myself, you guys. That's why I'm not feeling it. That's why I'm not focusing on praise. Because you know what, when I focus on His character, I mean really focus, I mean think about His character, think about who He is, I can't help but praise Him. It just bubbles up.

When you are focused on the goodness of God, when you are focused on the grace of God, the mercy of God, the kindness of God, the love of God. The infinitude of God, and on, and on, and on. You can't help but praise Him. And that's all there is to it. Focusing on the nature of God is what fills us with a heart that just wants to praise.

I think another important thing that we need to understand about praise is that it's simple obedience as well. When we come to church or get together, well, you don't have to be getting together. You could be all by yourself as well. You need to understand something, as a Christian, you are told to praise the Lord. It's very simple.

You're told in the Word of God to praise the Lord. You know what? The very last verse of the very last Psalm goes like this. It's from Psalm 150.

Psalm 150:6 (ESV)

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

Now that's a command from God's Word to you and I. How often do we heed it? Praise the Lord. I don't feel like it. Well, that's a choice that I have, you see. Am I going to be governed by my feelings? In other words, am I going to be obedient to my, am I going to obey my feelings, or am I going to obey the Word of God?

It's a choice that every single one of us in this room has, right? And I can say no to God and yes to me. I can do that. It's not going to work out very well for me, but I can do it and He'll let me do it. I'm free. I am free to make those choices. I'm not free from the consequences of making those choices, but I can make them all day long. I'm not going to praise God.

Let me show you something from the writer of Hebrews. Hebrews, chapter 13. Look at this.

Hebrews 13:15 (ESV)

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Through him then (he writes) let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

“...acknowledge his name.” All that He said about Himself, all that He is, let us, what's the word He uses? Continually, “...continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.”

That's a command in God's Word. How are we doing? If you had to give yourself a letter grade, how would it be? Oh, about a D, maybe a D-. Yeah, we are people who are pretty tightly connected to our flesh, aren't we? And my flesh has been ruling me for the majority of my life.

And only since I came to know Jesus Christ as my Savior, was I freed from the dominion of my flesh. Not that I don't often go back and let it rule me but I was at least set free at that point. Given the freedom to be able to say yes to God, and that's something you and I need to, do.

I've discovered But another issue with praise and a barrier in my own life, frankly, when it comes to praise, and that is unconfessed sin. When the Lord has been convicting me of something and I just have been ignoring Him, just brushing it off that can be an absolutely huge roadblock to just our hearts being free to praise the Lord. And I think we need to be aware of that.

And if I'm sitting together with other believers, and there's praise music going on, and we got wonderful lyrics up on the screen that are talking about how good He is and so forth. And I'm just not doing it, I'm not in it, maybe I need to say, Lord, is there anything you've been talking to me about that I've just been brushing you off for. And maybe I need to come to you and say, Lord, just...

And just take up 1 John 1:9. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just... (and will) forgive us...cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

It's really amazing how confessing our sin and then receiving that forgiveness, can open the doors once again to a heart of praise and thanksgiving.

Don't ever forget what the Word says in 1 Chronicles 16:25,

<u>1 Chronicles 16:25 (ESV)</u>
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<i>For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised...</i>
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For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised...

He's not just to be praised, He *“is greatly to be praised.”* He deserves our lives to say nothing of our praise.