

“Praise Ye the Lord”  
Psalm 135  
(Preached at Trinity, October 13, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Psalm 135** is a remarkable psalm. It has no title. Its author is unknown. The occasion is unknown. But there is no doubt as to its subject. It begins and ends the same, “Praise ye the LORD.” - in the Hebrew it is Hallelujah - הַלְלִי ה' It is a glorious anthem of praise. It praises the God of creation who rules all things.
2. It is also remarkable because every verse is quoted somewhere else in Scripture. In fact, the first two verses are taken from our previous psalm.
3. Dividing the psalm is basic:
  - I. Praise God for His goodness – **Verses 1-3**
  - II. Praise God for greatness – **Verses 4-7**
  - III. Praise God for His righteous judgment upon wicked men – **Verses 8-12**
  - IV. Praise God above all gods – **Verses 15-18**
  - V. Praise ye the LORD – **Verses 19-21**
4. May God bless us and glorify Himself as we go on a journey of praise.
  - I. Praise God for His goodness – **Verses 1-3**
    - A. This is one of God’s glorious attributes
      1. Goodness can be expressed in three ways, all of which apply to God.
        - a. Intrinsic goodness
          - (1) By this we are talking about value or worth
          - (2) For example when we say a battery is good or bad or an apple is good or bad we are talking about value or worth
          - (3) After each day of creation we read, “And God saw that it was good.”
          - (4) God is infinitely good. He has infinite value, infinite excellence. The Anglo-Saxon word for God originally meant “The Good.” God is the greatest of all beings.
        - b. Second, it points to moral goodness
          - (1) God is infinitely good – perfect in all His judgments **Genesis 18:25** – “. . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”
          - (2) Joseph speaking to his brothers regarding their wicked deeds **Genesis 50:20 KJV** - "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good"
          - (3) This aspect of the word is equivalent to His holiness – He is excellent in all His ways.

- c. Third, it points to kindness or benevolence towards others and in this it is closely related to love. This is the meaning of **Psalm 33:5**  
**Psalm 33:5** – “. . . the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.” רַחֲמִים - lovingkindness
2. God’s display of His goodness is a display of His Divine excellence. When Moses asked to see God’s glory God declared that His goodness was a display of His glory.  
**Exodus 33:18-19 KJV** - " I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. <sup>19</sup> And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."
3. The Psalms declare the richness of God’s glory over and over.  
**Psalm 135:3 KJV** - "Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant."  
**Psalm 106:1 KJV** - "Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever."  
Also **Psalm 107:1**; **Psalm 118:1**; **Psalm 118:29**; **Psalm 136:1**
- B. It is God’s desire that every human being observe His goodness and praise Him with thanksgiving.
1. Every person must recognize how undeserving we are of God’s goodness. It is all by His rich mercy. While we deserve suffering and death God showers us with His goodness & kindness.
2. God’s goodness is designed to bring men to love and embrace Him.  
**Romans 2:4 KJV** - "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
3. Their failure to bow before God’s goodness brings them under His wrath.  
**Romans 2:5-6 NAS** - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who will render to every man according to his deeds"
- C. Consider God’s goodness in your own life
1. Consider how He has preserved your life
2. Consider how He has provided for you abundantly
3. Consider God’s goodness in sending forth His Son

## II. Praise God for His greatness – **Verses 4-7**

**Psalm 135:5 KJV** - "For I know that the LORD *is* great" (גָּדוֹל)

- A. Nothing surpasses the greatness of God  
**Psalm 47:2 KJV** - "For the LORD most high *is* terrible; *he is* a great King over all the earth."
1. In **Psalm 8** David gazes at the wonder of God’s creation and God’s blessing upon man and exalts God’s infinite greatness  
**Psalm 8:1 KJV** - "O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens."  
The word for “excellent” points to God’s greatness.

2. God rules over every part of the universe. There is not a stray molecule or or floating particle of dust that God doesn't impose His sovereign reign. He has numbered the beats of your heart. He has determine how many times you will blink your eyes and how many glasses of water you will drink.
  3. God sustains the burning sun at almost 10,000 degrees and maintains the perfect balance for life on the earth.
  4. God rules over things seen and unseen  
**Colossians 1:16 KJV** - "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"
    - a. Satan and all his demons are under God's sovereign control. They are all condemned and reserved unto judgment
    - b. The holy angels have been preserved to shine forth the splendor of God.
  5. Consider how God restrains the evil intents of men, not allowing depraved men from sinking into corruption that would make life upon this earth unbearable.
- B. Consider the greatness of God in our salvation
1. If left to ourselves we would have been powerless to lift ourselves out of the corruption of our own heart. We are driven more and more into sin heaping up to our selves ever increasing measure of wrath.
  2. God sent forth His Son to fulfill the demands of the Law and satisfy our debt due to our sin and satisfying God's holiness, turning away His wrath.
  3. Consider the miracle of our change of heart and the wonder of His indwelling Spirit.
  4. Consider how He preserves us, protecting us from every sin that might ensnare us unto perdition; protecting us from Satan who continually seeks to devour us as a roaring lion.

III. Praise God for His righteous judgment upon wicked men – **Verses 8-12**

**Psalms 135:8 KJV** - "Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast."

**Psalms 135:10 KJV** - "Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings"

A. Did God arbitrarily smite the nations to give them to Israel?

**Psalms 135:12 KJV** - "And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people."

1. On one hand it is true that God made a covenant promise of the land to Abraham  
**Genesis 15:18 KJV** - "the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates"
2. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the land were filled with wickedness. By God's mercy He allowed them to dwell in this land flowing with milk and honey, yet they did not look to Him in gratitude.

**Romans 1:21 KJV** - "they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

3. God waited until their wickedness reached its fulness  
**Genesis 15:13-16 KJV** - "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; <sup>14</sup> And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. <sup>15</sup> And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. <sup>16</sup> But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full."
4. This is God's pattern. There is a season of mercy but God's mercy is not to be squandered. It is not to be taken lightly. This life is a season of mercy. Death ends this season of mercy.  
**Hebrews 9:27 KJV** - "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"

- B. God's judgments are full of power that cannot be resisted
1. God opened up the windows of heaven and destroyed all flesh in the flood because "GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually" (**Genesis 6:5**).
  2. Mighty Egypt could not withstand God's mighty power  
**Romans 9:17 KJV** - " For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."
  3. The inhabitants of Canaan were fearsome and powerful.  
**Numbers 13:32-33 KJV** - "The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature. <sup>33</sup> And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."  
But they could not withstand the mighty power of God.
  4. No one will be able to withstand the throne of Christ in judgment.
- C. God's righteous judgments are perfect  
**Genesis 18:25 KJV** - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
1. God's judgments are always perfect, always right
  2. Every person will receive precisely what they deserve
  3. The comfort of God's people is that we are His  
**2 Timothy 2:19 KJV** - "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
- D. In the midst of judgment God shows compassion upon His people  
**Psalms 135:14 NAS** - "For the LORD will judge His people, And will have compassion on His servants."
1. He has looked upon us with His favor

2. He is gentle towards us. He shows pity in the face of our weakness. All of His actions toward us are covered with love.
3. The greatest demonstration of compassion towards His people is Christ.

IV. God is to be praised above all gods – **Verses 15-18**

This is almost identical to **Psalm 115**

A. He is God over all. He is greater than all man-made idols – “the work of men's hands.”

1. They are vain inventions created in the imaginations of men – **Verse 15**
  - a. The craftsman purchases his gold and silver. He shapes it into an idol and then bows down and worships it.
  - b. It is a great demonstration of the foolishness of the human heart. It is the height of human ignorance when they sink to the point where they believe they can actually make a god.
2. They all lack life – they are but dead marionettes - **Verses 16-17**
3. The sad thing is the condition of the heart of the idolater is no different from his idol. Both are dead.

**Psalm 135:18 KJV** - "They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them."

B. Do men create idols today? Surely they do.

1. There are still the vain idols of many of the eastern religions. India is filled with images of multi-armed gods.
2. But there are other less obvious gods. Men make idols of their own plans, of their own ideas, of their own declarations of truth. Is evolution not an idol?
3. Any object of delight can become an idol. Your family can become an idol. Your spouse can become an idol.

Conclusion:

1. **Psalm 135** closes the same way it began: “Praise ye the LORD” – **Verses 19-21**  
Hallelujah!
2. **Verses 19-21** calls upon all of God’s people to worship God – “Bless the Lord”
  - A. Both the lay people and the priests were to praise the Lord. All of the tribes from Reuben to Benjamin. God is worthy to be praised.
  - B. All of God’s people today must lift up their voices in praise. We should enter into His house with hearts overflowing with praise. Our lives should be living instruments of praise—testimony that we hold God in the highest reverence.  
**Psalm 135:20 KJV** - "ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD."
3. In everything we are to praise Him. He is to be our chief desire, the object of our greatest delight, our highest love.  
Thomas Manton: “We bless him for what he is to us, we praise him for what he is in Himself. Now, whether we bless him, or praise him; it is still to increase our love to him, and delight in him.”