

“The Excellence of Praise”  
Psalm 147  
(Preached at Trinity, January 12, 2014)

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. With **Psalm 147** we are continuing in the great chorus of praise that will continue to the end of the Psalter. Like the other psalms in these final five psalms **Psalm 147** begins and ends with hallelujah – “Praise ye the LORD.”
  2. The subject of this psalm is clear. The word Yahweh (“LORD”) is used 8 times. The name אֱלֹהִים translated “God” is used three times. And the pronoun “He” referring to God is used 19 times. God is clearly the subject of this psalm. He is the focus. All praise is directed to Him. “Praise ye the LORD.”
  3. **Psalm 147** was probably written to celebrate the completion of the wall around Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. It was an occasion of great joy and the people are being called to fervent praise.
  4. As we proceed through **Psalm 147** we find three reasons why Israel was moved to praise and why we must praise God.
    - I. God is to be praised for His restoration – **Verses 1-6**
    - II. God is to be praised for His resources – **Verses 7-11**
    - III. God is to be praised for His rule – **Verses 12-20**
- I. God is to be praised for His restoration – **Verses 1-6**
- A. He begins by declaring the great intrinsic value of praise. It is good to praise God. It is filled with excellence.
- Psalm 147:1 KJV** - "Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."
1. By intrinsic we mean that praise is of great value. Praise of its very essence is good. The Hebrew word is the same word used seven times of His creation in **Genesis 1** - "And God saw that it was good."
  2. It is good because it is good and acceptable to God. He demands praise. He is honored by praise.
  3. It is good because it is beneficial for us to praise God. It puts us fulfilling the reason for our existence. It puts our tongue speaking words that exalt our Creator.
  4. It is also good to praise God because *He* is intrinsically good.  
**Psalm 106:1 KJV** - "Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever."  
**Psalm 135:3 KJV** - "**Psalm 135:3** Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is good*: sing praises unto his name; for *it is pleasant*."  
**Jeremiah 33:11 KJV** - " Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD *is good*; for his mercy *endureth* for ever:"
  5. With this introduction the Psalmist describes three expressions of God’s goodness that moved them to praise.

- B. They praised God for His glorious deliverance and restoration of His people
1. When the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem it was totally destroyed  
The temple was destroyed and the great stones of the wall had been completely torn down  
As the decades passed grass and trees had grown up covering over what was left. Everywhere was desolation
  2. The work of rebuilding was tremendously difficult. Their enemies continually sought to undermine their work
  3. When the foundation of the Temple was laid there was a great shout of praise.  
**Ezra 3:10-13 KJV** - "And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is good*, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid."
- C. All praise was given to God  
**Psalms 147:2 KJV** - "The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."
1. God was exalted as their Redeemer—their great Deliverer
  2. He healed their broken hearts turning their tears to joy
  3. He remembered them as His covenant people  
**Psalms 147:4 KJV** - "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names."
  4. **Verse 5** – Their hearts were lifted up with the greatest of praise  
Great is the Lord – great in power, infinite in wisdom
- D. What a wonderful reminder of God's redemptive grace in our own lives
1. We were horribly corrupted – thorns had overgrown our hearts.
  2. He knows us. He has called us by name. He has healed us, cleansed us
  3. He has gathered us together to enter heavenly Jerusalem
  4. He has given us a new heart, a heart of meekness. Praise Jehovah, infinite in power and wisdom

## II. God is to be praised for His resources – **Verses 7-11**

The focus of this section is primarily praise to God for his provision to the lowly

- A. **Verse 7** rekindles fresh praise  
**Psalms 147:7 KJV** - "Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:"
- B. The Psalmist turns his focus on God's provision on the earth
1. Atheists deny the existence of God and rob Him of His praise. The deists saw God as a Creator removed from His creation. The truth is far different. God governs all things.
  2. God cares for His creation. His goodness is reflected on everything. He brings the rain and causes the grass to grow. He provides for His creatures. He sustains the whole universe.

3. If God cares for even the animals how much more does He care for us?  
**Matthew 10:29-31 NAU** - "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup> "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."
- C. While God cares for even the brute beasts He is not impressed by their power  
**Psalm 147:10 KJV** - "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man."
1. The point is all power rests in God alone.
  2. We also saw this in **Psalm 33**  
**Psalm 33:16-17 KJV** - "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. <sup>17</sup> An horse *is* a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength."
  3. God is not moved by the mighty. He is moved by the weak.  
**Psalm 147:11 KJV** - "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."
  4. This has always been the case. God looks to the humble. He commands humility. He blesses the meek.  
**Psalm 147:6 KJV** - "The LORD lifteth up the meek: "  
**Micah 6:8 NAS** - "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"
  5. Those who become weak have become strong. The least in our Lord's Kingdom are the greatest. The last are the first. The meek have become heirs to all things.

### III. God is to be praised for His rule – **Verses 12-20**

- A. God sends His command upon the earth
1. He orders all things for the good of His people
  2. The psalmist declares God's protection of His people
    - a. They put up gates but God makes them secure  
**Psalm 147:13 KJV** - " For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates"
    - b. They have children but only God can bless them – **Verse 13**
    - c. God makes war and brings peace
    - d. God brings famine and harvest – He blesses us with bounty
  3. This is all by the sovereign command of God  
**Psalm 147:15 KJV** - "He sendeth forth his commandment *upon* earth: his word runneth very swiftly."
  4. This rule of God is absolute
    - a. He orders the snow and frost and then sends forth his Word and melts it.  
**Psalm 147:17 KJV** - " He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?"
    - b. The snow forms by moisture and cold, yet God is the first cause of all things.

- c. Every molecule of the universe moves at God's command. Each snowflake is comprised of hundreds of ice crystals, each forming at God's command
  - d. Who can resist His mighty power?  
Oh how our hearts must be lifted in amazement, praise, and submission.
- B. The psalmist moves from the general to the particular. God Word goes forth upon the earth by way of His command, but God gave His Word to Israel particularly **Psalm 147:19 KJV** - "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel."
- 1. Israel was blessed as the nation which God entrusted with His statutes. No other nation was ever so blessed. All of the other nations sat in darkness.  
**Psalm 147:20 KJV** - " He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them."
  - 2. Every nation is under the dominion of God. The Law is a declaration of God's rule over all. But to Israel was given the oracles of God.  
**Romans 3:1-2 KJV** - "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."
  - 3. They forsook the privilege and it was taken from them.  
**Matthew 21:43 KJV** - " Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."
- C. This brings us to the glorious privilege of God's electing grace
- 1. God has chosen us!  
**Ephesians 1:4-6 KJV** - "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: <sup>5</sup> Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."
  - 2. The only reason for this is the wondrous love and mercy of God.  
Thomas Manton – "That some should have more means of knowing the Creator, others less, it is all from the mercy and will of God. His church hath a privilege and an advantage above other nations in the world; the Jews had this favour above the heathens, and Christians above the Jews; and no other reason can be assigned but his eternal love."

Conclusion:

1. There is but one response to these things – Hallelujah! "Praise ye the LORD."  
**Ephesians 1:5-6 NAU** - "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."
2. God is worthy of all praise. It is good for us to praise Him. It is necessary for us to praise Him. There is glorious excellence in the praise of God.  
 We saw this back in **Psalm 92**  
**Psalm 92:1-2 KJV** - "*It is a good thing* to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: <sup>2</sup> To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,"
  - A. Then in **Verse 4** the psalmist declares why God is worthy of praise  
**Psalm 92:4 KJV** - "For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands."  
**Psalm 92:4 NAU** - "For You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands."
    - B. Then in **Verse 6** he makes a startling declaration.  
**Psalm 92:6 KJV** - "A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this."  
**Psalm 92:6 NAU** - "A senseless man has no knowledge, Nor does a stupid man understand this:"
      - C. The lost man is senseless and ignorant regarding the mighty works of God. He knows nothing of God's mighty deliverance of His people. He doesn't regard God's care of His creation and His regard for His little ones. He is blind to God's electing grace and the glorious privilege of the people of God.
3. Do you regard these things? Is your heart filled with overflowing praise?