

Great is the Glory of the Lord

Psalm 138

All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD. (Psalm 138:4-5)

As the king of Israel, David predicted that all the kings of the earth will praise the Lord someday. They will sing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. Today, we would like to invite you to catch the vision for that day. Like the other psalms, Psalm 138 was written to magnify the Lord with music. With the eyes of faith, we can see the reality of what God will do. But in Psalm 138, we already have many reasons to praise the Lord today. We don't have to wait for that coming day with all its singing kings. Today, we can tune our hearts to sing His praise using Psalm 138.

In Psalm 138:5, we learn the chief reason that we ought to tune our hearts today: *for great is the glory of the LORD*. Throughout this series, we have been learning about God's glory: His unique excellence; He alone is God and there is no other. To glorify God is to express His excellence. Today we have the opportunity to do this by singing His praises together. Throughout the Scriptures, we have seen how our greatest needs are met by God's glorious deeds. And Psalm 138 is another wonderful example of this intersection: the crossroads where God's glory meets our story.

Your Great Needs

Weakness

In verse 3, David recalled one of the many occasions when He felt weak. **"In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul."** Have you experienced weakness? All of us here could tell our stories about bodily weakness or pain. But what about weakness of the soul? Perhaps you know the feebleness of being double-minded, feeling as if you are a hypocrite. Haven't there been times when you have experienced Paul's words in Romans 7:18-19? **"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."** Paul willed to do what was right, but he was too weak to do so. Have you not felt the sharp sting of the disabling darts of the wicked one? Or have you not known the piercing stab of Satan's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)? We shall find how to worship Him in our weakness.

Thomas Boston (1676-1732) was a minister of the Word of God who endured a great deal of suffering. His sermons on suffering, published under the title, "The Crook in the Lot" is based on Ecclesiastes 7:13-14. This passage tells you that God has designed those connections that we are calling "crossroads." **"¹³ Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? ¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him."** Those crooked places in our lot in life were designed by God so that we could meet Him there. At the intersection of "God's glory" with "my story," we will find that there is no substitute for Him. He is unique; He deserves all of our glory.

✚ Trouble

In verse 7, David spoke of walking in the midst of trouble. Have you “been there and done that?” Or are you even now trudging through the valley of trouble – yes, even the valley of the shadow of death?

✚ Satisfaction or Personal Fulfillment

Perhaps you would sum up your needs, not with the word “feebleness,” but with the word “frustration.” You have made up your mind to accomplish some purpose, but have failed to do so. You have had big goals, and they fizzled like fickle New Year’s resolutions. Or maybe you have begun to wonder if there is any real purpose in life.

All of us know about weakness and trouble and frustration. What should we do?

God’s Glorious Deeds

This psalm begins with David’s determination to praise the Lord. He illustrates that this is rational praise. That is, he tells us the reasons that we ought to praise the Lord. David wrote this psalm so that his people could join him in praising God. Let’s find out why.

“I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name” (vs. 1-2)

David had found that worshiping God had helped him win his war with double-mindedness. **“I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee.”** Before those pagan societies with all their empty idol gods, David magnified the one true God. And he did so with his whole heart. How? In Psalm 86:11, David had prayed, **“Unite my heart to fear Thy name!”**

Why did David praise the name of the Lord and worship toward God’s dwelling place? He praised and worshiped God’s glorious character. David praised God’s lovingkindness and God’s Truth. He rejoiced in God’s loyal love and His perfect faithfulness. In 1757, Robert Robinson wrote, “Prone to wander, Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.”ⁱⁱ When you and I find ourselves weakened by wandering hearts we must worship the Lord with our whole being. Make the decision today to praise Him with your whole heart.

What did David mean by the statement that God had magnified His word above His name? David referred to the promises that God had given him. In 2 Samuel 7:11-12, God promised to give David’s line an eternal kingship. And the Messiah was born as David’s descendant! God’s name is full of glorious meaning. But His promises us amplify the unique excellence of our God to help us praise Him.

- **Strength:** In verse 3, **“In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul.”** What glorious deed did God do when David needed strength? When David

cried out, God strengthened David with strength in his soul. Will the Lord do the same for you today? Yes! Consider how Paul prayed for believers in Ephesians 3:16-17, “. . . according to the riches of his glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . .” This is Gospel power! Christ went to the cross for sinners weakened by wickedness. By His great strength, He bore our sins in His own body on that cruel tree. He died the sinner’s death that each of us should have died. But He was “**declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:**” (Romans 1:4). And His great power has strengthened us with strength in our souls. As Annie J. Flint wrote, “He giveth more grace as the burdens grow greater, He sendeth more strength when the labors increase . . .”ⁱⁱⁱ

- **Trouble:** In verse 7, David wrote, “**Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.**” Are you walking in the middle of trouble today? How quickly life can change when a doctor frowns, or the phone rings in the night. One conversation can trouble you so deeply that you find it difficult to sleep. When your story leads through the valley of trouble, there is a door of hope. He will revive you; His right hand will save you.
- **Purpose:** Consider the words of verse 8 carefully: “**The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.**” When you feel frustrated, here is hope. How can you accomplish your goals and fulfill your purpose? And who is to say what your purpose should be? Verse 8 gives you the answer you are looking for. “**The Lord will perfect that which concerns me.**” The Lord will fulfill His purpose for you. And His mercies extend far beyond this life. Oh yes, His mercy endures forever. And armed with this great knowledge, David was an eager participant in God’s work in him. He prayed, “**forsake not the work of your hand.**” He wanted God’s continual presence and He wanted God’s power to continue to mold him.

What is our testimony today? It is this: **Great is the glory of the Lord!** Let us praise Him.

According to verse 6, “**Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.**” God’s glorious deeds are on display in this verse. God condescends to lowly men. He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. We can humble our hearts in this service, and He will draw near. So today, let us join together in adoring Him. David has instructed us with good reasons why we ought to praise the Lord.

Reasons to praise the Lord

He magnifies the Word of His promise
He answers my prayer, in the very day that I cry out to Him
He strengthens me with strength in my soul
Though He is high, yet He pays close attention to the humble
He deals with His enemies in righteous wrath
He delivers us by His hand
He will perfect that which concerns me
So let us join together with David to say:

¹ I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. ² I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. ³ In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, *and* strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul. ⁴ All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth. ⁵ Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great *is* the glory of the LORD.

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ⁱ http://grace-ebooks.com/library/Thomas%20Boston/TB_Crook%20in%20the%20Lot%20The.pdf

ⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come_Thou_Fount_of_Every_Blessing

ⁱⁱⁱ https://library.timelesstruths.org/music/He_Giveth_More_Grace/