October 18. 2026

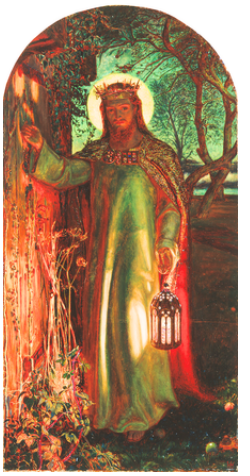
Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! [2] For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!

Scriptures for further study:
Romans 12:1

Revelation 7:9

Revelation 14:6



The Shortest Psalm with the Widest Reach
Psalm 117

BIG IDEA: Since God's steadfast love and faithfulness are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, let the Church sing, celebrate, and witness to the gospel for the sake of global praise.

OUTLINE

- The Call to Praise (vss. 1a, 2b)
- The Scope of Praise (vss. 1ab)
- The Basis for Praise (vs. 2a)

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What are some of the reasons you find yourself singing (or not singing)?

2. Psalm 117 begins and ends with "Praise the LORD." The call to praise is a call to offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), meaning, as Pastor Bill said, that all of life is to be lived before God, for God, and unto God. What does a life offered as a living sacrifice look like, and where do you see that taking shape in your own week?

3. The psalmist writes, "Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!" Pastor Bill said, "…the call to worship and the call to be an ambassador go together. If we want all peoples to praise the Lord, then we must be willing to plead with all peoples: be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ." How does this challenge the way you think about praise and evangelism, and who in your life needs gospel hope and help?

4. In verse 2, the psalmist writes, "For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!" Pastor Bill asked, "How can sinners like us be so sure that God's love will not run out and His faithfulness will not come to an end?" How does Jesus' life, death, and resurrection answer that question, and what would it look like for you to spend time this week simply praising the LORD for it?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This hymn of praise reflects on the faithfulness and goodness of God, who delivered Israel from Egypt under Moses (vv. 6–7), and calls His people to praise Him for His continued mThough tiny, Psalm 117 has an enormous reach: it invites all nations to praise the LORD. His steadfast love and faithfulness (Ex. 34:6) were pledged to Israel but intended for the whole world, so the Gentiles being addressed are included in the word "us." Israel's calling was always for the sake of the nations (Gen. 12:2–3; Ex. 19:5–6), and the Old Testament nurtures the hope that the Gentiles would one day gladly join in worshiping the one true God. When Israel sang this psalm in faith, they recalled both their privileged position and their reason for existence. The wording itself stresses the diversity of God's subjects, down to the smallest tribes, a variety that reappears in the multitude of Revelation 7:9.

-Adapted from the ESV Study Bible and Derek Kidner, Psalms 73–150

Praise to Jesus – Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! Lord, your steadfast love is great toward us. It is vast, immense, immeasurable. The enormity of your love, Lord, makes the largest planet appear as a marble and the oceans a drop of rain. All the affection, loyalty, and kindness this world has ever known would fill a thimble compared to the ocean of your steadfast love. Lord, your faithfulness endures forever. It is more enduring than the mountains, which will crumble, and the sun and the stars, whose light will fade when your glory lights the new heavens and the new earth. For all of this we praise you, Lord! Imagery adapted from Pastor Bill's sermon.

Repent through Jesus –Let us spend some time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to lead in a moment of confession and repentance.
Lord, we confess that we forget who you are and what you have done, which is demonstrated through your steadfast love. We have not offered our lives to you as a living sacrifice. We have failed to see the connection between our vocations and worship. Lord, we have missed how praise leads us to share the reason we praise you and the hope and help of the gospel with others who do not know you. Lord, your faithfulness endures forever. Lord, we confess the times when we have given in to fear and doubted your faithfulness to us. Father, please hear our prayers and forgive us our sins. Amen.

Consecration for Jesus –Pastor Bill said, "The love of God is great because Christ has died. The faithfulness of God endures because Christ has risen. And because Jesus lives forever, the praise of God will one day fill the nations forever." Let us praise the LORD!

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. What reasons do you have to praise God today?

2. Who does the psalmist want to praise God? (In verse 1, we read that the psalmist intends for "all nations" to praise God. God's intention has always been for His people to be blessed in order to bless all people groups.)

3. What does "steadfast love" mean? (It is helpful to look at some faithful English Bible translations that are easier to read for children such a NIRV, NIV, and NLT. This word is the word for God's covenant love.)

4. What does "faithfulness" mean? (This means that what God has promised, He will do. We can base our lives on it. It is important to point out to your children that this phrase mentions that God's faithfulness "endures forever". God will never stop being faithful.)

5. What are some ways that God's steadfast love is shown to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ? (Christ's sinless life and His sacrificial death are the ultimate showing of God's steadfast love. All the promises that God made about the coming Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus. Romans 8:32 builds on Christ's death to remind us that since God the Father did not spare Jesus, then we can be sure that God will sustain us until we are with Him in the new heavens and new earth.)

6. How have you experienced the "steadfast love" of God? Describe the situation.

7. How does our experience with God's steadfast love and His faithfulness lead to our praising and singing to God?

Scriptures for further study:
Psalm 67

Genesis 12:1-3

Romans 12:1-2; 2

Corinthians 1:20

Scriptures for further study:
Genesis 12:1-3

Exodus 34:6-7

Romans 15:11

Romans 12:1-2; 2

Corinthians 5:20

Revelation 7:9-10

FOR STUDENTS

1. Psalm 117 is two verses. It is the shortest chapter in the entire Bible. And its vision is the widest possible - all nations, all peoples praising the Lord. What does it tell you that the biggest vision in Scripture is compressed into the smallest space? Where in your own life do you underestimate how large God's purposes actually are?

2. The psalmist calls all nations and all peoples to praise the Lord - not just Israel, not just the church, but everyone. Israel's calling was always to be a blessing to the nations, not to keep the blessing to themselves. Think about your own life: are the blessings of God - his forgiveness, his steadfast love, his faithfulness - something you enjoy privately, or something that is moving outward toward people who don't yet know him?

3. The basis for all this praise is steadfast love and faithfulness - the same words used in Exodus 34:6 when God revealed his character to Moses. These were promises made to Israel but always intended for the whole world. Paul quotes this very psalm in Romans 15:11 to argue that Gentiles were always part of God's plan. How does knowing that God's love and faithfulness toward you were planned from before the foundation of the world change the way you trust him with your life right now?

4. Pastor Bill said, “the love of God is great because Christ has died, the faithfulness of God endures because Christ has risen, and because Jesus lives forever, the praise of God will one day fill the nations forever.” Which of those three - Christ's death, resurrection, or eternal reign - do you find yourself least moved by right now? What would it look like to sit with that one this week?

5. The call to praise and the call to witness go together in this psalm - you cannot genuinely want all nations to praise God without being willing to tell them why. Who in your life right now - a friend, a classmate, a family member - does not know the steadfast love and faithfulness of God? What is one concrete step you could take toward them before next Sunday?

6. Psalm 117 ends the same way it began: Praise the LORD. The whole psalm is framed by that command. If someone looked at the frame of your week - how it starts, how it ends, what holds it together - would they see a life oriented around the praise of God? What would need to shift for that to be more true?

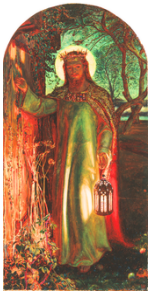
FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. One scholar has observed that if you counted up all the verses in the Bible, these verses right here in Psalm 117 would be in the exact center of the Bible.
Question: Whether or not this is exactly true, why would it be fitting if it were?!

2. How is this passage connected to Revelation 7:9?

3. "Nations" will only hear the invitation of God (to experience his love and faithfulness) when we, as believers, fulfill our obligations to make that invitation known. (See Romans 10:13-17)
Question: What steps can you take (literally and figuratively) to proclaim God's love to others, both locally and globally?

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-156) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul.

As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt.

The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios. hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.