

Friday, February 1, 2019

The LORD is

Psalms 145-146

The LORD is: gracious and compassionate... good to all... faithful to all his promises... righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made... near to all who call on him. Great is the LORD. Psalm 145:3,8,9,13,17,18

David starts this incredibly beautiful psalm of praise by declaring that his God is the King and that he will exalt and extol God as he praises him every day. The rest of the psalm expresses some of the reasons why.

I love this psalm because a lot of the reasons that David praises God are the same reasons I praise God. I also praise Him every day—every single day. I praise Him because He is great. He is kind and loving. He is my King. He is righteous and He loves for me to be righteous. He is near to me when I call. He knows my name—but more than that, He knows me. He is so gracious and so compassionate to me. Even though I fail and do not deserve His compassion, He still showers me with His grace. The LORD is the strength of my life and my shield. He is my fortress and my refuge. He is my great provider and He alone is worthy of all my adoration and praise. No matter what, I will seek to serve and love the King who loves me. I will praise His name forever and I will extol Him.

My great LORD, my God and my King, I praise You for all that You are. I exalt You because You alone are worthy of my praise. I declare that You are God. Amen.

Saturday, February 2, 2019

Pleasure

Psalms 147-148

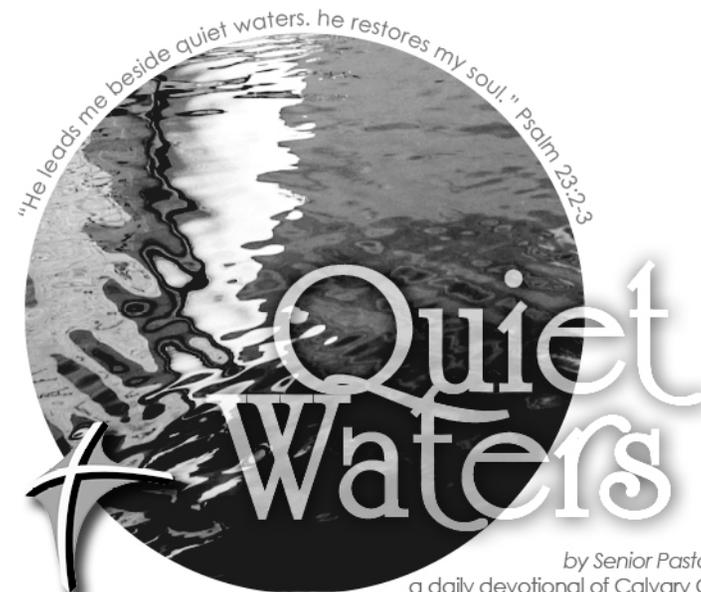
His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man; the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. Psalm 147:10-11

How much pleasure is the LORD deriving from my life? How often do I contemplate that question? I have heard many people who say they are unable to believe in God because He is not who they have designed Him to be. They define what God should look like and how He should behave. In so doing, they have fashioned a god in their own image. The god they have designed is basically an idol that will bring them pleasure and that will accept the sin they have determined is pleasure. I wonder in what ways I have done that myself.

Instead of expecting God to be there for me, I need to carefully and prayerfully contemplate how I can be there for God. I delight in the LORD. I praise the LORD. I praise him for His goodness and His faithfulness. I praise Him for His unfailing love. But do I consider whether or not He delights in me? He does not delight in all my self-effort and striving to be good enough for Him. He delights when I put my hope in His unfailing love. He delights in me as His child, resting in His arms, content in His presence. He delights in me as I fear Him. I fear Him because He makes forgiveness possible (Psalm 130:4). He makes it possible for me to be blameless in His sight. He loves it when I dance in the spotlight of that freedom. It is the freedom that comes only from Him. It is truly the gift of God. It is life in Jesus.

Dear sweet Father, may You always be able to delight in me. I am Your child by Your will and grace. I dance in the sweet light of forgiveness. May You see it as an offering of praise. Amen.

January 28 - February 2, 2019



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, January 28, 2019

How?

Psalms 137-138

How can we sing the songs of the LORD while we are in a foreign land? Psalm 137:4

For the Jews who were taken into captivity to Babylon, knowing their temple had been destroyed, there was much sadness. This psalm expresses that sadness. It is a communal lament. The community is lamenting the fact that they have been displaced. There is a longing for Zion. There is a longing to be in the city where God dwelled and where they worshiped Him in the temple Solomon had built for that purpose. But that was not possible. The temple had been destroyed and they were not allowed to return. Many of the exiles settled in and began to enjoy the good life that was possible. But for the godly, it was not that way. They longed for Jerusalem, and they longed to worship God there. Their captors taunted them by demanding that the songs reserved for the joy of the temple would be sung in a vile land. It was a sarcastic and sadistic request. I think about this verse. What is it that allows me to sing the songs of the LORD even though my heart longs to be where I can really sing? I long for Zion—the City of God. So, how can I sing the songs of that place? I can sing them from the hope in my heart that I will be with my Savior. I sing the songs of my future home looking forward to the time when I will sing them with a chorus of angels and people from every nation, tribe, and tongue, as we gather to sing praises to our God and to the Lamb. So I sing in a foreign land as I wait until He calls me home.

Father, how can I sing Your songs in a foreign land? I must sing. You are God. How can I stop from singing your praise? While I am not yet with You, I already have You with me. I will sing praise in this foreign land. May my song be heard and may all who hear sing to You! Amen.

Tuesday, January 29, 2019

Wonderful

Psalms 139-140

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb, I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:14

In this psalm, David remembers God. He remembers that God searches him every moment of the day. He remembers that God has the right, because God is the One who made him. This truth gives David the opportunity to praise God. Knowing that God not only made him but also watched over every moment of his life allowed David the joy that comes from praising the one true God. He also knew that he could trust God because God knew every moment of David's life and every word that he would say. These are the things that brought comfort to David and allowed him to be a man after God's own heart. One of the things that I love the most about this psalm is that David starts by acknowledging that the LORD knows everything about him—but then he finishes by asking God to show him what was found. If I am going to be a man after God's heart, I must do the same. I must ask God to reveal to me what He has found as He has searched me. What are the things in my life that are outside of His design for me? As I do this, I can put to death those things in me that are opposed to God—the things that I abhor.

I praise You LORD. I praise You because Your works are wonderful. I praise You because You know each word that I will say and each thought behind each word and yet You extend Your love to me—even when I am not being lovable. I am overwhelmed by You. I worship You. I am Yours. Show me what You have found as You have searched me. Lead me in the way everlasting—that is, help me live my life on earth more closely resembling the way I will live in heaven. Amen.

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Prayer

Psalms 141-142

O LORD, I call to you; come quickly to me. Hear my voice when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Psalm 141:1-2

There is great urgency in this prayer of David. He is calling on the LORD. It seems to be a continual request that he longs to have set before the LORD as incense—that is an aroma that stays before the LORD. He lifts His hands to the LORD. This is not a common posture for me in prayer. I bow my head, I close my eyes, I try to take a posture of reverence, but I seldom lift my hands in prayer. This psalm causes me to consider the difference in this posture as I pray. The Bible does not mention a specific pattern that must accompany each prayer. Rather, I see several postures. What is important as I come to prayer is my heart. That is the example of David in so many of the psalms. It may be that David offered this prayer in the evening, which is why he mentions the evening sacrifice. God said that the evening sacrifice would be “a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire” (Exodus 29:41). David is asking that his prayer would be considered an offering that was pleasing to the LORD. This is how I can pray according to God's will. I must see my prayers as an offering and a sacrifice to Him.

O LORD. I call to You! Please hear my cry. May my prayer be a sweet offering before You. May You remind me of the importance of my heart as I come before You. I pray that my sacrifice of prayer would be a sweet aroma to You. Please see it as an offering. I offer myself—all that I am—to You. Amen

Thursday, January 31, 2019

Relief

Psalms 143-144

O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. Psalm 143:1

As I read this psalm, I cannot help but think about my enemies. In the Psalms, I step into a world of war and chaos, into a time when kings went off to war, when great battles were fought and won. Either you annihilated your enemies or you were annihilated by them. Armor was worn because there was a great need for protection. Swords and spears would be common in the attack. There was great suffering and death. As I read the Psalms, it is important to identify my enemies today. They are much different than those of which the psalmist wrote. I need to know my enemies so I can know what I am asking God to protect me from.

My one real enemy—the pretender prince—that old serpent—distracts me from the things in my life that are my enemies—especially and particularly him. He is a deceiver who conceals himself as the enemy that I battle against. From what do I need relief? If I am not careful, I can get caught in a cycle of asking for relief from the symptoms rather than the cause. I need to be able to identify the true enemy in my life. I need to know what it is that keeps me in bondage and in darkness and then I need to cry out to the LORD to come and defeat that enemy in my life and trust that He will because of His faithfulness and righteousness.

Dear God, come to my relief. Show me my enemies so that I can stand against them with Your strength and Your might. Keep me from being deceived by the evil one. Amen.