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Scripture

Psalm 147:1-11

¹ Praise the Lord!

How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

² The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

³ He heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.

⁴ He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.

⁵ Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.

⁶ The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;
he casts the wicked to the ground.

⁷ Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre.

⁸ He covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.

⁹ He gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they cry.

¹⁰ His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;

¹¹ but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Devotional

Reverence for the Lord. Expectant trust in God's love. These qualities, not self-sufficient strength, are what make a person pleasing to God, says the Psalmist (vv. 10-11). They are qualities that take God seriously. They exhibit true humility. They demonstrate dependence on the Lord and recognition of God's unwavering character. And yet . . .

In Mark's parable of the sower (4:1-20), Jesus himself makes it clear that a response of obedience to God's love is a necessary component of authentic discipleship. Insufficient is the mere hearing of the gospel—even the hearing of it joyfully. Only by soaking it in, growing deep roots, weeding out distractions, and growing up in the gospel can we become abundant fruit-bearers of it.

And who produces this growth, this fruit—the “strength of the horse” or the “legs of a man” (Ps. 147:10)? No! “Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor. 3:7).

Reverence for the Lord. Expectant trust in God's love. These are the qualities that make a person pleasing to God—and productive for God's work in the world.

Prayer

O Lord God in heaven and here present with us, please grant that in the midst of each moment we would humble ourselves to kneel before your supremacy, lean on your loving kindness, and respond with joyful obedience to your faithfulness toward those who love you—for the sake of your matchless Name. Amen.