

Lent Devotional March 16, 2020

Scripture

Psalm 145

- 1 I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.*
- 2 Every day I will bless you,
and praise your name forever and ever.*
- 3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.*
- 4 One generation shall laud your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.*
- 5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*
- 6 The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,
and I will declare your greatness.*
- 7 They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.*
- 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*
- 9 The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.*
- 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your faithful shall bless you.*
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
and tell of your power,*
- 12 to make known to all people your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
The Lord is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.*
- 14 The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.*
- 15 The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.*
- 16 You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.*
- 17 The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.*
- 18 The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.*
- 19 He fulfills the desire of all who fear him;
he also hears their cry, and saves them.*
- 20 The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.*
- 21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.*

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. David R. Hosick '76, Pastoral Ministry (2016)

Psalm 145 is a meditative hymn in praise of God. It is the only psalm with “praise” in its title. God’s works and character are enumerated and declared to be worthy of our praise. It insists, “all flesh will bless God’s holy name.” None other than John Calvin said of this psalm that it “contains an accurate summary of God’s perfections. Nothing seems to be omitted.” It notes God’s greatness, majesty, goodness, righteousness, grace, and mercy. It assures God abounds in love and is compassionate, faithful, just, kind, and near to us. All these things lead the psalmist, David, king of Israel, to praise God’s name forever and ever.

In verse 5, David declares, “On the glorious splendor of God’s majesty, and on God’s wondrous works, I will meditate.” As you ponder this psalm, upon which of God’s perfections would you choose to meditate? Scholars say God’s “grace and mercy” serve as a definition of God. They are divine perfections appropriate for meditation in any season of the church year.

For Lent, though, consider God’s “righteousness.” To our contemporary ears, “righteousness” is a fussy word. It connotes adherence to a strict moral code or set of requirements. It makes God less than attractive to many. The meaning of “righteousness” in Hebrew, however, is not an abstract quality that God holds over and above us; it is God’s capacity to make right what has been wrong. Our relationship with God and the world has gone off track under the power of sin. God’s righteousness is his desire and ability to restore and renew these relationships.

During Lent we journey over 40 days to the cross of Christ. There, on Calvary, God, the Son in agreement with the Father in the power of the Spirit, puts right all that is wrong. God rectifies life’s personal and corporate sin by accepting the worst that sin and death can do and defeats them with an empty tomb.

The good news of God’s righteousness is that it puts us right with God and the world. God is molding us into the shape of Christ, beginning now and completing in eternity—certainly reason for joining David in letting our mouths “speak in praise of the Lord” and joining in calling “all flesh” to “bless [God’s] holy name forever and ever.”

Prayer

Righteous God, fill our souls to overflowing with the fullness of your grace. In this season of Lent, remind us of your triumph over the tragedy of the cross, and your victory over sin and death, so that we may reflect your glory as disciples of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, and bless your name forever. Amen.

(Adapted from *Book of Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, The Season of Lent, p. 173, WJK)