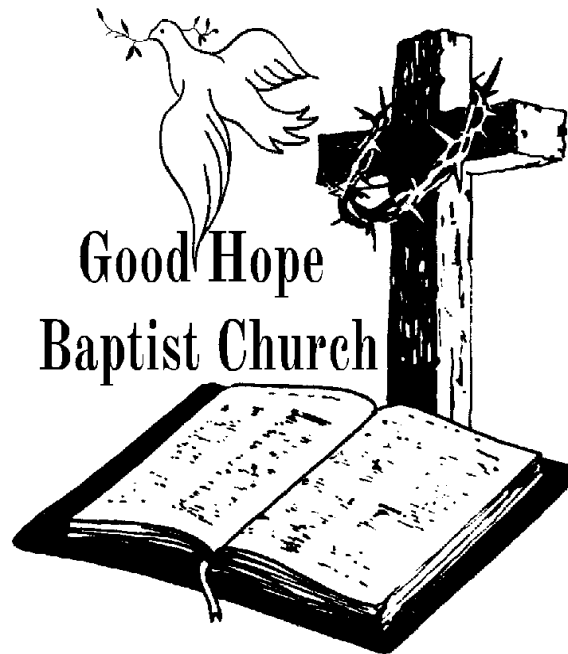


The Power of Praising God

Psalm 117:1-2



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively Psalms 117:1-2 O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. {2} For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth forever. Praise ye the LORD.

Introduction Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gifts they were able to give their elderly mother. The first said, "I built a big house for our mother." The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. Remember how mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can't see very well. I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took elders in the church 12 years to teach him. He's one of a kind. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot recites it."

After receiving their presents, the mother wrote her children. She wrote the first son. "Darling, I don't want to hurt your feelings, but this house you gave me is so huge. I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house." She wrote the second son. "Honey, I'm just too old to travel much, and the store delivers my groceries every week. I really don't have much use for a Mercedes. Besides all that, I can't understand a word the driver says!" She wrote her youngest son. "You have the good sense to know what your mother likes,, and your brothers could learn a thing or two from you. The chicken was delicious."

We live in a day where it seems as if everyone thinks

they will find happiness through the things they possess. Happiness never comes from possessions. The things that make us happy today become mundane tomorrow. Couples fall madly in love today, and sadly in hate just a few years later. One man asked his wife, **“Honey, will you love me when I’m old, gray, and ugly”?** She replied, **“I do”**. That’s one of the few, though.

Compare the American to the citizens of other nations. We have much more things, more possessions, more *stuff*. In other nations there are people who don’t have two sticks to rub together. We, on the other hand, have computers, television, mp3 players, cars, clothes, stores, and an estimated 160,000 fast food restaurants in America as of May 6, 2010 – and the number grows yearly. Yet the average American is not happy. Why is that? The Bible tells us:

Proverbs 16:20 whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.

The only enduring happiness we can have is by putting our trust in the Lord. We are to focus on God, not on what we possess but on Who possesses us. We need to redirect our gaze. As the Psalmist said:

Psalms 146:5 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:

We will never be happy until the God of the Bible is the center of our attention. That’s what our focal Psalm is about today. We need to take our eyes off of ourselves and *look to the Lord, praising Him*. He made us. He gave us life. He loves us. He reaches out to us, unworthy as we are.

1. We Are All Called To Praise The Lord

**“The whole life of a Christian should be nothing but praises and thanks to God; we should neither eat nor sleep, but eat to God and sleep to God and work to God and talk to God, do all to His glory and praise.”
(Richard Sibbes)**

FOCAL Psalms 117:1 **O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.**

God invites everyone to praise Him. Please notice that verse one has two parts:

**O praise the LORD, all ye nations;
Praise Him, all ye people**

Word Study The word **“nations”** is the Hebrew (גוֹיִם, **GOYIM** pronounced *go'-ee*), which literally means **“you Gentile Nations”**. The word **“people”** (אֲמָתִי, **UMAW** pronounced *oom-maw'*) or **“the nation”** is called to praise the Lord.

God commands both the Gentile nations as well as the Jewish Nation to praise Him in this Psalm. Now Psalms is the Hebrew hymnal. If you were a Jew singing this Psalm back in the old days you would probably ask yourself, **“Why is God telling the Gentiles to praise Him?”** You see, in order to **praise God** you **must first believe that He is**. You do not praise an imaginary God. You must believe in the God of the Bible before you will praise Him. We are told:

Psalms 106:12 {When they} believed they his words; they sang

his praise.

And again:

Psalms 138:4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

People must hear God and believe in Him before they will ever praise Him. In the days when Psalm 117 was written Israel was God's people, but most of the Gentile nations worshiped false gods, not the God of the Scripture. Yet the Psalmist wrote **“Whether Gentile or Jew, praise the Lord”!** Why?

Because the Psalm was prophetic, straight from the heart of God. Though Israel was God's Old Testament people, it was God's intent from the very beginning to *offer salvation to the Gentiles as well.*

Salvation would come from and through Israel. This is seen in the truth at the Psalms were written by the Jews, but the *Gentiles* are told to praise God within this Psalm. Jesus Christ came out of Israel to save all!

Yes, Israel the nation is special to God. Israel was the Garden where God would plant His Son. Israel is the people that God would use to come to this earth through. Israel is the Nation that God promised to Abraham, saying:

Genesis 18:18 Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

We are to praise God! Do you realize that **God loved you before you ever knew He existed?** God loved you

from eternity, and moved Heaven and earth to try and bring you to a relationship with Him. He loves you!

We do not know what the future holds, but we do know Who holds our future (Mac Brunson)

The Bible says:

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

God loved us before we ever knew Him. He promised in Hosea:

Hosea 2:23 ... I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

God calls us to a relationship by faith in Christ Jesus. When God looks at you, He does not see you as strong, or beautiful, or as a certain color. He looks at you as someone He wants to know. He looks at each person as someone He wants to save. The Bible says:

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

God did not just come to save the Jews, but came to save all who would believe. Jesus Christ died to be the *covering for our sins* or as the Scripture calls it **the**

propitiation:

1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: {2} And HE IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS: AND NOT FOR OURS ONLY, BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

There is enough covering for sin in the Blood of Christ to cover the sins of the **whole world**, if the whole world would but believe in Him.

We are to praise the Lord both Jew and Gentile because He has extended merciful forgiveness to each and every one of us.

2. My Life Is To Be Filled With Praise For My LORD

"Doth not all nature around me praise God? If I were silent, I should be an exception to the universe. Doth not the thunder praise Him as it rolls like drums in the march of the God of armies? Do not the mountains praise Him when the woods upon their summits wave in adoration? Doth not the lightning write His name in letters of fire? Hath not the whole earth a voice? And shall I, can I, silent be?" (Charles Spurgeon)

FOCAL Psalms 117:2 For his merciful kindness is

great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth forever. Praise ye the LORD.

Did you know that **God has no favorite children?**

God loves each person fervently, without change. He is the LORD, the Great I AM, the Eternal God.

God loves us in spite of our differences. He loves the Jew and the Gentile, though each are culturally different. He loves those of European descent as well as those of African, Italian, Asian or Spanish descent.

We are all made distinctly different, and all have an equal opportunity to bask in the love of God. As children we sang in Bible School:

**Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white,
All are precious in His sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.
Jesus died for all the children,
All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white,
All are precious in His sight,
Jesus died for all the children of the world.**

The LORD loves me. The LORD gave Himself for me. The LORD extends merciful kindness to me. The LORD's truth endures forever!

Word Study When you see the fully capitalized **LORD** in the King James text this is always the Hebrew name of God (יהוה, pronounced: *yeh-ho-vaw'*), the most Holy and Eternal Name of God.

ILLUSTRATION Lisa Lester is in the Guinness Book of World Records for smiling **10 hours and five minutes**. She broke the old record of 7 hours and thirty two minutes. You can force yourself to smile, but after a while you have to stop. You can paint a smile on your face, but you cannot have any sustained happiness or deep down joy unless your focus is on the LORD. Praise the Lord!

If you are the Redeemed of the Lord, Praise Him! Praise Him for the **great price He paid for you**.

1 Peter 1:18-20 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; {19} But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: {20} Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Jesus Christ died for you and me. He died for you not because you were worthy, but because you were *unworthy*. Are you saved? The know that

2 Timothy 2:19 ... **THE LORD KNOWETH THEM**

THAT ARE HIS. AND, LET EVERY ONE THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

He knows them that are His. God knows you, dear believer,, if you are saved. He **commands that you depart from iniquity**. But He also knows that you are imperfect – though headed toward perfection.

This is why the Scripture says:

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous

Our God is *all powerful*. There is nothing He cannot do. If you have been born again by faith in Jesus Christ, then the Bible says that “**we are begotten again unto a lively hope – to an inheritance incorruptible, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us (1 Peter 1:3-4)**”. If you are a Christian then you should be in the Praising God business. You are:

1 Peter 1:5 ... **Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

We who are born again are ***kept by the power of God***.

Jesus Christ our Lord said when He walked this earth:

John 10:27-30 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: {28} And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. {29} My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. {30} I and my Father are one.

The Christian is held in the hand of Almighty God. If you have been born again by faith in Christ then you are God made and God kept.

Your salvation cannot be lost. As God is ALL KNOWING and ALL POWERFUL, He knew all of you when He saved you and has the power to *keep you* until the day of your glorification in Heaven.

ILLUSTRATE There was a nineteenth century lawyer named Horatio Spafford. Horatio was wealthy, but better than his wealth Horatio was a Christian. Saved by Grace, by the Blood of Jesus Christ, he loved the Lord. Horatio owned several many real estate holdings. When the Great Chicago fire of 1871 happened Horatio lost most of his real estate holdings, and a great deal of his riches. Yet he continued to love the Lord and praise His Name. In 1873 Horatio decided that he and his family needed to go on a vacation. He knew that his friend Dwight L. Moody would be preaching in England. Horatio made plans to travel by steamer to England with his family, but at the last minute he was delayed because of business. He sent his family ahead: his wife Anna, and his four daughters: eleven year old Annie, nine year old Margaret Lee, five

year old Bessie, and two year old Tanetta. On November 22, 1873 while crossing the Atlantic their steamship the Ville Du Havre was struck by another ship. That day 226 people died, along with all four of Horatio's daughters. When she arrived in England his wife Anna sent a telegram to Horatio that began with the words "Saved Alone". Horatio sailed to England to meet with his wife, and as he travelled he wrote the words to the song "It Is Well With My Soul".

**When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.**

**Though Satan should buffet, though trials should
come,**

**Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.**

**My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!**

**For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pain shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.**

**And Lord haste the day, when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;**

**The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.**

**(Refrain:) It is well (it is well),
with my soul (with my soul),
It is well, it is well with my soul.**

Is this all of the story? Horatio Spafford and his wife Anna had three more children. On February 11, 1880 their only son (Horatio Goertner Scafford) died of pneumonia at the age of 4 years old. Horatio himself died of malaria on October 16, 1888, and was buried in Jerusalem.

This world is a sad and sinful place because of Satan and Adam's sin. But the Bible tells us that:

**1 John 5:4 ..For whosoever is born of God
overcometh the world: and this is the victory that
overcometh the world, even our faith. {5} Who is he
that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that
Jesus is the Son of God?**

Praise God! Praise Him in the storm. Praise Him in the valley. Praise Him on the mountaintop. Praise Him whether in prosperity or in adversity. Praise Him – for no matter what may come – He walks by the side of those who love Him.

**3. My Power To Rise Above Persecution
Comes In Praising The God Who Saved Me**

"We would worry less if we praised more.

Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction." (Harry Ironside)

You can MAGNIFY God or you can MURMUR. If you magnify God you will focus on Him, and be sustained by His Presence as you go through your trials. If you murmur you will focus on your misery, and will succumb and eventually drown in your trials. Glorify God and gain the Promised Land!

Before a batter goes up to hit the baseball he first warms up. When we praise God in this life, we're just warming up for the next life!

If you are born again, a believer and a Son of God by faith in Christ, then it is your eternal destiny to praise God. Heaven is a place where we will praise Him for His merciful kindness.

Revelation 19:5-6 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. {6} And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Please note that Psalm 117 *begins* and *ends* with **praise the LORD**. If I am born again, I should praise the Lord. My day should both begin and end with praising God. If I begin a trial by praising God, I'll

end the trial by praising Him. Praise the Lord!

We should begin our day by praising the Lord and thanking Him for loving us. Instead of falling asleep in front of the television we should praise the Lord and thank Him for His mercy and salvation every night before we go to sleep. When trials come our way we should “**count it all joy**” (James 1:2) and praise the Lord in the midst of the trials.

ILLUSTRATE BIBLE When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were commanded by Nebuchadnezzar to worship his false gods they refused, praising their Lord.

Daniel 3:17 I... our God whom **WE SERVE** is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Cast into the furnace they came out:

Daniel 3:27 ... the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

ILLUSTRATE BIBLE Beaten for preaching the Gospel of Christ, laying many stripes upon them, Paul and Silas were cast into a jail in Philippi. As they sat in the jail, naked and bleeding, as midnight came upon them the Bible says:

Acts 16:25-26 And at midnight Paul and Silas

prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. {26} And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

Praising God turned their misery into happiness. Dear friends, we who are God's *must* praise Him.

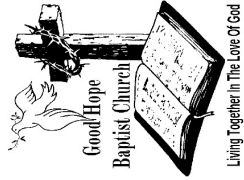
Avoid murmuring and complaining – for these things spring forth as a root of bitterness to destroy our joy – but we should pursue praise.

You who are children of the King, born again by the shed Blood of Jesus Christ, are strangers and pilgrims on this earth. Your destiny is beyond now, and into eternity. You cannot be lost, you will always be found. Your destiny is now tied to Christ's destiny. Your inheritance is not now, but in Heaven.

Hebrews 13:12-16 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. {13} Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. {14} For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. {15} By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. {16} But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

We owe God our praise. We owe Jesus our praise. Praise

Him!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Proverbs 16:20; Psalms 146:5

1. We Are All Called To Praise The Lord

Word Study The word “nations” is the Hebrew (גוֹיִם, GOYIM pronounced *go'-ee*), which literally means _____. The word “people” (אֲמָתִים, UMAW pronounced *oom-maw'*)

Psalms 117:1; Psalms 106:12; Psalms 138:4; Genesis 18:18; 1 John 4:19; Hosea 2:23; John 3:16-17; 1 John 2:1-2

2. My Life Is To Be Filled With Praise For My LORD

Word Study When you see the fully capitalized LORD in the King James text this is always _____

Psalms 117:2; 1 Peter 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:1; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10:27-30; 1 John 5:4

The Christian is held in the hand of Almighty God. If you have been born again by faith in Christ then you are _____

3. My Power To Rise Above Persecution Comes In Praising The God Who Saved Me

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Revelation 19:5-6; James 1:2; Daniel 3:17; Daniel 3:27; Acts 16:25-26; Hebrews 13:12-16
