

Sunday 9AM & 11:15AM Notes 7/21/19 – Jeff Lyle

“Unrestricted Praise” Psalm 145 | 9AM

Many places in Scripture call for us to stop everything, get still and intentionally consider and rejoice in the **BIGNESS** of God. Psalm 145 serves as a call to ensure that God's people remain engaged in a lifestyle of verbally praising God as we live out our days. Worship of God can be done in silence, but praise cannot. Praise the outward and upward expression of our inward worship. For His own reasons, God delights to hear our voices praise Him - individually and collectively. As the psalmist releases his own boast in the Lord, we are impacted freshly of the goodness, bigness and faithfulness of our Father. This Psalm reminds us how good the Father is to us, and it empowers us to personally exercise and renew our praise-muscle.

I. Our Holy Boast (1-7)

A. God is worthy of personal praise (1-3) - “I will extol You, my God and King, and bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.”

We can worship silently, but praise is always verbal:

1. To *extol* - lift up on high, to exalt, to recognize as lofty
2. To *bless* - literally, to kneel; describes man kneeling before God in dependence.
3. To *praise* - to be clear in sound, to shine forth, to boast; to celebrate

Psalm 145 starts out in a scriptural sprint! Right out of the gate the psalmist declares his intentions. He uses various words to convince us that God is worthy to be verbally praised by His children. The psalmist lifts God up on high in adoration as he bows himself in utter trust and dependence. His praises are like streams of verbal glory proceeding from his mouth, bragging on God and celebrating His infinite worth.

B. God is worthy of generational praise (4-5) - “One generation shall commend Your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works, I will meditate.”

Nearly everything in the human & natural realms changes from one generation to the next. In our church, we have older Baby Boomers,

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Generation X'ers, Millennials and Generation Y'ers. That is four distinct generations coming together around the person of Jesus Christ who has made us one in the Spirit and is making us one in relationship. The psalmist reminds us that the Kingdom pattern among the different generations is to respect the former and impart to the younger. There is to be no competition between us, only love, honor and appreciation. As spokes on a bicycle wheel draw closer to the central hub to which they are all attached, they also draw closer to one another. The further they are from the hub, the more separated they are from one another. As each generation presses in close to our center, Jesus, we will experience closeness with each other. His glorious majesty and generational works are worthy of our deep contemplation as we learn from one another. His mighty acts in one generation must be told to the next generation. This is the power of generational witness.

C. God is worthy of corporate praise (6-7) - “They shall speak of the might of Your awesome deeds, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of Your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.”

The psalmist discerns that his praise will not be a solo. Others have reason to magnify the Lord together with him. Praise is often contagious as one person begins to boast in the Lord, it triggers others to release their own testimony of God's goodness and supreme worth. What has God done for you? Even if you cannot sense the awe of what He has done for you personally, can you not testify to others of what you have read of Him in the bible? His awesome deeds are everywhere, and His greatness is waiting to be proclaimed by you. God is not merely good - He is abundantly good as we read above. God is so great that the psalmist declares that loud singing should be an expression that we release concerning our gratitude, worship and praise of Him.

II. Our Anchored Assurance (8-13)

A. We are eased by His tenderness to us (8) - “The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”

The harsh, angry and cutthroat caricature of God is not backed up by Scripture. While it is true that His wrath burns against sin that has not been atoned for, God does not operate in a posture of wrath with His children. Far from it! He is immeasurably gracious to us, giving us what we could not earn and do not deserve. We are often tempted to think that our sins,

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failures and struggles produce a quick-tempered response from Him. Yet the psalmist declares that God is merciful and slow to anger. He is never surprised by your struggles. His love for you is not conditioned upon how faithful you are. His love is steadfast, meaning that it is never interrupted by the measure of our worth or response. He loved us when we were still sinners, and He loves us now as sons and daughters. The God of the bible is gentle, patient, gracious and kind to His children.

B. We anticipate His grace & mercy over us (9) - “The Lord is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made.”

Very simply, this verse summarizes all that the psalmist has written up to this point. He looks around at all people and recognizes the mercy of God and the steadfast love is abiding over each of them.

C. God’s greatness is described (10-13)

1. He is glorified through His activities (10a) - “All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord...”

2. He is glorified by His witnesses (10b-12) - “...all Your saints shall bless You! They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and tell of Your power, to make known to the children of man Your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.”

3. He is glorified in His transcendence (13) - “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.”

Here is where the modern Church may find room for growth, wisdom and improvement. The psalmist had no shortage of memories concerning the powerful works of God. He was confident that all the saints would have plenty of ability to speak of God’s great glory. They were all able to tell of His power and to recount to upcoming generations the mighty deeds and glorious splendor of the Kingdom. They had experienced God for themselves in powerful, transformative ways that birthed holy confidence in them! They knew they were part of a spiritual kingdom that would never come to an end. They were able to recognize the dominion of God would endure forever. These believers were convinced by what they had personally experienced with God himself. We need a robust resurgence of this very thing in the Church today. We are living off of the fumes of other people’s encounters from way-back-when. Where is the God of the Bible? He has not left us. We have distanced ourselves from Him and,

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consequently, are not experiencing His works, His glory, His power and His dominion. He is inviting us to press in closer.

III. Our Dependence Upon God (14-21)

A. His strength in our weakness (14) - **“The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.”**

See this great and glorious God of power move toward us as a tender, restoring caregiver! Note His tenderness. Note His compassion. Behold His uplifting activity among those who are prone to stumbling and those who have fallen down. He does not walk away from the weak! Never doubt His compassion for you. Never assume that your rescue cannot come from Him. Sometimes God prevents you from falling, catching you before the collapse. Other times He will allow you to hit your rock bottom and meet you there to help you learn to rest in arms until your weakness is remedied by His strength.

B. His provision in our need (15-16) - **“The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing.”**

God not only can be trusted to care for us in life’s instabilities and collapses, He desires us to look for Him in all of the mundane aspects of this life. The psalmist testifies that all believers look to Him. We depend upon Him. Sometimes we are made to wait on Him. As we live this life, we do not take our spiritual eyes off of him because everything we need is sourced in Him. He feeds us, shelters us and clothes us. For most believers in the West, we not only have what we need, we have so much of what we want. These two verses remind all of us that our ongoing satisfaction remains in God alone.

C. His reliability in our fear (17-18) - **“The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.”**

How can we have the confidence that God will do what is right on our behalf? We are reminded here that His nature is righteous. He is good. He is wise. He is faithful to His word. In all God’s ways, He never exercises anything less than perfection. If we will become those who learn to call on him according to the truth of His nature and word, we will find that His ways are both glorious and good. God never does anything that is not consistent with His holy, righteous character.

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D. His generosity in our dependence (19-21) - “He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him **{satisfies us}**...He also hears their cry and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love Him **{secures us}**...My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever **{showers us}**.”

The human heart was created for intake. We crave inwardly. Our spirits are restless and hungry until they find their rest and feast in Christ. The psalmist's confidence was so high that he could write that God fulfills the full desire of those who fear Him. Equally confident was his assurance that God hears our prayers and cries. He secures us, bringing us out of danger and into His fulness of love. The Psalm ends with the writer declaring his continual determination that he would use his mouth to speak forth the praises of God. Then he calls on all of us to do the exact same thing. Christians, don't hide in a crowd of praising people. Be the most zealous among them. God has been good to you.

11:15AM Notes Below

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"Releasing A Hard, Urgent Word" Jeremiah 26:1-15 | 11:15 AM

Only in the modern Western Hemisphere has there existed the longstanding assumption that the life of faith is planted in flowery beds of ease. Christians have been historically despised by their cultures. Christians have been persecuted from the very beginning. The Scriptures promise this reality to all of us who live godly lives as believers. Each of us would be wise to consider the answer to the question, "How will I respond when my devotion to Jesus results in the threatening of my life, the loss of my freedom or the forfeiture of my property?" Jeremiah, that ancient Jewish prophet, leaves us all an example worthy of our emulation. God is calling some of us to release hard, urgent messages about what lies ahead as we approach the end of the age.

I. Jeremiah Discerned the Hour (1)

"In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD:"

Josiah's reign was one characterized by reformation and revival in Israel. This godly king began at a young age to turn the nation back to their God. Amazing strides occurred under his leadership as God appointed Josiah to rid the land of idolatry, immorality and child sacrifice. His death ushered in the reign of his son, Jehoiakim,

who was nothing like his father. Jehoiakim went to great efforts to undo in eleven years all that his father had accomplished. More than once, Jeremiah would be prophesying against him and all the evil that he unleashed back into Israel. Past revivals do not guarantee ongoing breakthrough. Jeremiah was a lonely voice, speaking hard truth at a time when everyone was enjoying their sin to the fullest.

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II. Jeremiah Was Unashamed & Thorough (2-3)

A. An assignment to fulfil (2) - "Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word."

The Lord wanted Jeremiah to be positioned front and center as he released the word of the Lord. This was not to be done in a shadowed corner somewhere. The message was going to be bold so the prophet would need to be bold. God ordered Jeremiah to stand where everyone could both see and hear him as they came in to the temple to engage in their religious duties. Jeremiah was then commanded to speak every single word that the Lord gave him to speak. He was sternly warned not to hold back a thing. Modern readers should take note that God's call is not about us. It is not about our name, our fame, our followers or our results. A prophetic call to preach is a call meant to be obeyed to the smallest detail. Those who stand and speak for the Lord are not allowed to amend the message He assigns. They are to go where He appoints and speak what He declares.

B. A hope to offer (3) - "It may be that they will listen, and everyone turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds."

Though God's message through Jeremiah would be intense, notice the motivation. God was looking forward to unleashing discipline upon Israel. He did not want to see them in pain. God's motivation was to send the word and then invite them to repent upon hearing it. He was committed to bringing down the hammer of righteousness against the sin of the nation, but it was not His foremost desire. He would much rather that they repent so that He might relent. The message belonged to Jeremiah. The decision belonged to his audience.

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III. Jeremiah Spoke Boldly & Succinctly (4-7)

A. Confrontation (4) - "You shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to Me, to walk in my law that I have set before you...'"

God puts Himself at the very front of Jeremiah's message. Jeremiah was merely the mail-man, God was the one sending the notice. He establishes His lordship, His authority that they must listen to and obey and reminds them of His written word that was the foundation of their covenant with Him. Right out of the gate, all those in the temple court would have known that they were in trouble with God. That is not an easy message for a prophet to release. Jeremiah had to be obedient to his calling.

B. Accountability (5) - "...and to listen to the words of My servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened..."

God reminds the people of their pattern of blowing off the prophets whom God had sent. How easy it is for all of us to regard the preached word as being merely the word of man. Typically, we view what we already agree with as being a message from the Lord. What we might not like or agree with might be more easily dismissed as just human opinion. We need to be careful not forsake a listening ear and humble heart to hear.

C. Warning (6) - "...then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth."

Many may be unfamiliar with this place called Shiloh. The very first place where the tabernacle found a lasting home was in Shiloh. God's presence dwelled among the people there and worship was facilitated. When Eli became the priest in Israel, he oversaw the worship and sacrifices in the tabernacle. Eli had two wicked sons named Hophni and Phineas; they also served in the tabernacle but did not know the Lord (1 Samuel 1:12). These two sons violated the Law by keeping for themselves and eating meat from the sacrifices that

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people brought to worship God. They also had sexual relations with the women who served at the doorway to the tent of meeting (1 Samuel 2:22). Hophni and Phineas were not even hiding what they were doing from others (1 Samuel 2:24) and, when the news arrived at Eli, he merely rebuked his sons but failed to make them stop, allowing them to continue to profane the tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:25). Eventually, God allowed the Philistines to come and defeat Israel and steal the ark of the covenant. Hophni and Phineas were killed, and Eli fell dead of a heart attack after hearing the news of his sons' death. Though not recorded in scripture, Shiloh was destroyed. Clearly, God was telling Jeremiah to preach a message of forthcoming judgment upon the land and the house of worship, just as it had occurred centuries before in Shiloh. This is about as hard as a word as can be offered by one of God's people. Jeremiah was telling the people that God would bring judgment upon them if they did not repent.

D. Courage (7) - "The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD."

What courage he must have had as he released the word in the presence of religious leaders and other so-called prophets. Why did God not go to these priests and prophets to have one of them preach the message? Because they were unfaithful, unholy and untrustworthy. Jehoiakim had allowed sin and idolatry back in the land and these religious leaders were ready to use their position for their own gain. They were actually part of the reason why God was soon to judge the nation. Faithful proclaimers of truth must never be intimidated by other people. Sometimes those people will be religious leaders with clout. The word of God must be released in power and truth no matter who might be listening. Courage is a non-negotiable for those who are commissioned to speak on behalf of God.

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IV. Jeremiah Encountered Religious Fury (8-11)

A. Ready yourself (8) - "And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, "You shall die!"

Okay, here it is. Jeremiah did everything that God commanded him to do. He was faithful, bold, courageous, obedient and vocal. What was the result? His life was now being threatened. Notice that it was the religious crowd that was most offended and the first to try and silence him by calling for his death. In our day, so many preachers are adored, fawned over and made to be celebrities. They have an amazing following full of people who will do anything for them. Perhaps some of both those preachers and their followers are sincere. I certainly hope so. But where are those men and women of God who will not pretend that everything is fine, and that God is happy with us all? Where are the warnings in our generation? Who is telling people to flee the wrath to come? Modern sermons all seem to have rounded edges? Where are the jagged-edged prophets who refuse to compromise the Word of the Lord? Maybe, unlike Jeremiah, they are not willing to lay their reputations, salaries, ministries or lives on the line. Jeremiah was made of sterner stuff.

B. Anticipate the offended spirit (9) - "Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant'?" And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD."

Jeremiah's trouble soon became more widespread. All he had done was to be faithful to preach what God told him to preach. The religious leaders wanted to silence and kill him. Now the greater population surrounded him, and a dramatic uproar occurred. Few things feel as lonely as being targeted for faithfully speaking God's truth. Jeremiah was trying to help the very people who were now turning on him. They hated his message. They were all deeply offended. The reality is that God's word offends the carnally minded. Truth is offensive for those living lies. The message can be offensive, but the

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messenger need not be. As we will see, Jeremiah remained calm, cool and collected as he was being attacked.

C. Dangerous politics & patriotism (10-11) - "When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. 11 Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears."

Soon, the civic leaders became aware of the tumult. They left Jehoiakim's palace and came into the temple area. Jehoiakim was no friend to Jeremiah, so there may have been unease in the prophet as the king's servants arrived on the scene. Once again, the religious leaders sought to set the narrative, calling for Jeremiah to be executed for what they perceived as his treasonous words. Their patriotism for Israel and its temple outweighed their commitment to hear the Lord through Jeremiah. This is a snapshot of what happens to so many believers when politics and/or patriotism are juxtaposed against the Gospel. Which will we choose? If our political party or personal views don't align with the bible, they are wrong. There is no debate. If our love for country causes us to act in unbiblical lovelessness towards others, then our patriotism is a sin. The civic leaders would be forced to make the decision about whether to execute Jeremiah or to allow him to live.

IV. Jeremiah Remained Steadfast & Surrendered (12-15)

A. Unwavering messaging (12-13) - "Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people, saying, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. 13 Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you."

The prophet did not budge. He did not apologize. He did not soften his stance on God's message. Again, Jeremiah reminds the people that their problem was not with him because he was merely the human messenger. Their real issue

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was with the Lord himself. Rather than backing down, Jeremiah redoubled his commitment and told the people once again that, if they would repent, God would not send judgment against them. I am reminded by this portion of the chapter than many are able to deliver a hard, urgent word to a hostile audience. The truer test is whether or not we will continue to give it after encountering opposition. Jeremiah did not fade away. He shined brighter the more they threatened him. He was surrendered to the God who holds the keys to life and death.

B. A life laid-down (14) - "But as for me, behold, I am in your hands.

Do with me as seems good and right to you."

Amazingly, Jeremiah kept his assurance. He was entrusting himself to the Lord and took great comfort in knowing that he had obeyed the assignment from God. If he was to die, he could die knowing fully that he had finished his race in faithful obedience.

C. Clarified understanding (15) - "Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."

Lest anyone believed that Jeremiah somehow was working himself out of a sticky situation, he throws one more truth-bomb into the midst of the scene. Jeremiah offered a redirect of their focus off of himself and onto God who authored the warning spoken by Jeremiah. He wanted to ensure that they understood the consequences of his message. He viewed himself as being innocent before the Lord. He told them that killing him would be evidence of their refusal to repent and would welcome the wrath of God upon the city. When he tells them one more time that God sent him to speak to them, he leaves no doubt about what they were being called to decide.

Christians, we are not in control of how people respond to our obedient communication of God's truth. We will give an account for all that we say, and we will give an account for all we were afraid to say. Jeremiah was not the last believer to be called to release a hard, urgent word from the Lord. As the end of the age finds us, and as we approach the Second coming of Jesus Christ, many will be called to ministries of proclaiming the warnings from God. May we be as faithful as ancient Jeremiah, leaving the results with God.