

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 ▫ Read Psalm 104:1–15

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the Psalmist command his soul to do (v1a)? What does he call YHWH in v1b? For what does he first praise Him (v1b–c)? For which creatures does he praise God in v2? And what part of creation in v3? And whom in v4? For what action does he praise God in v5? And what part of it in v6–9? In what way does He leave water on land (v10)? For what purpose in v11? And what other in v12? And what other in v13? What does He provide for what creatures in v14? What three things has He especially given man, for what three purposes, in v15?

For what does our soul bless the LORD? Psalm 104:1–15 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these fifteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **our souls are to bless the LORD for His Creator-goodness to all His creatures and especially to us among them.**

In the previous Psalm, our souls blessed the LORD among those blessed hosts who will bless Him forever. Now in this Psalm, our souls bless the LORD among those needy creatures who have a mighty Creator.

God is glorious in Himself, v1–4. YHWH, our God, is very great (v1b). And how has He given to us to begin to conceive of His greatness? With things like light itself (v2a), the heavens (v2b–3a), the clouds (v3b), and the wind (v3c). We see these, and we don’t see the greatness of God Himself; we see “clothes” that He has set out for us by which we can see an infinitely greater (but invisible) greatness. That’s His “clothing.” Then there are His servants, who are also invisible to us (v4a) and sometimes appear as flames of fire (v4b, cf. Isa 6:2). There is a similarity here to the display of Solomon’s greatness in 1Ki 10:4–5. The Lord has made all this display to take our breath away with His glory!

God acted generously in the creation, v5–14. These verses praise especially the work of the first three days of creation, preparing where the creatures would live. An established earth, gathered seas, and grown plants were all expertly and lovingly designed for the good of His creatures. Even the creature’s neediness—the thirst of the donkeys (v11), vulnerability of birds (v12), and hunger of cattle and men (v14) are all part of the plan for the creature to enjoy the goodness of God’s design.

God acts graciously in providence, v15. Before the Psalm turns back to the creation in the portion that we hope to have next week, v15 focuses on what God does for man as His special creature. God made us capable of gladness so that He would gladden us (v15a). God made us capable of a blessed countenance, that images His blessing by His countenance, so that He would make our face shine (v15b). God made us capable of resolve, diligence, and courage, so that He would strengthen our heart (v15c).

Later, He would make use of the common elements of bread and wine to communicate to us that Christ gives Himself immediately to us to be our strength and our gladness. So, He both makes creational provision for how these are affected by our bodies and spiritual provision directly to our souls. Thus, He has arranged His providence so that by responding to the provision of wine and oil and bread as means, we would glorify the God Who has made us in His image to enjoy Him.

Let us learn from this portion of the Psalm to reflect make us of God’s goodness to all His creatures to stir our hearts up to praise—and especially things like wine, oil, and bread... every good provision of His providence, throughout every day, as opportunities to enjoy Him Who gave us to know Him.

What examples of the goodness and beauty of creation has the Lord especially presented you with? What good use are you making of things like wine, oil, and bread for the purpose of turning your heart to the Lord in joy and strength?

Sample prayer: Oh YHWH, our God, You are very great! You are clothed with honor and majesty! You have made light itself, as if a garment to tell us Your greatness. You stretched out the heavens like a beautiful curtain to tell us the greatness of the One Who made this house and rules over it. Your perfect wisdom and love are on constant display in Your care for the creatures. But You have displayed that wisdom and love most of all to us. Just as You made wine to gladden the heart, be the gladness of our hearts in worship now. Just as You made oil to make our face shine, come now and be the brightness of Your people’s countenance. Just as You made bread to strengthen man’s heart, come now by Your Spirit, and grant that Your Son would be the true bread that strengthens our heart in this worship, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP104AB “Bless the LORD, My Soul” or TPH104B “My Soul, Bless the LORD”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 104 verses one through 15, these are goat’s words. Bless yahweh. Oh my soul. Oh, y’all play my god. You are very great. Your clothes with honor and majesty. Who cover yourself with light is with the garment. Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. He lays the beams of his upper chambers on the waters.

Who makes the clouds his chariot. Who walks on the wind wings of the wind. Who makes his angels spirits his ministers. A flame of fire. You who laid the foundations of the earth so that it should not be moved forever. You’ve covered it with the deep as with the garment.

The waters stood above the mountains. That’s your rebuke, they flat. That the voice of your thunder, they hastened away. They went up over the mountains. They went down into the valleys. To the place, which you founded for. You have set a boundary that they may not pass over. That they may not return to cover the earth.

He sends the springs into the valleys. They flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field. The wild donkey is glitched their first By them, the birds of the heavens, have their home. He walters the hills from his upper chambers. The earth is satisfied with the fruit of your works.

He calls us the grass to grow for the cattle. And vegetation for the service of, man. That he may bring food from the earth. And wine. That makes glad the heart of man. Oil to make his face shine. And bread. Which strengthens man's heart. Amanda sends us reading of god's inspired. And inerrant Word.

The previous psalms psalm 103. We Learn to instruct our souls, to bless the name of god, especially as those. Whom he was redeeming to join. The great hosts. Um, the angel armies. That which we would praise him for forever. Which we will praise him for forever. When we say for you have redeemed, us by your blood and have made us kings.

And priests unto god. With the whole host that we see already. Singing and that in. Revelation. Well, here in sum 104. We're still giving our souls instruction. You see that at the beginning verse one. Bless your way. Oh my soul. But now, we're focusing, especially on. The blessings that we enjoy as it's creatures.

And one of those, of course, is to have Set before us. Things that he made to show how great his glory is. So we say oh yeah my god, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty. You cover yourself with light as with a garment? You stretch it.

The heavens like a curtain. God, of course. Um, Does not have a body. He is spirit, he is being essential to himself. So that It is impossible for there to be such a thing as existence of anything apart from him. Um, Where anything exists it is because He exists.

And yet. He has created. Uh, light. In order to give us a hint about his greatness.

I think i remember. Recently. Uh, some of you or maybe it was someone at church. Thinking about how we have always been unable to measure. The one way speed of light. And then, of course, there's the great brilliance of light, and How it perplexes us even today because It's apparently both wave and particle.

And, Um, And even apart, from all of that technical knowledge how glorious the reality. Of light itself is, And yet, this is just a hint. At what he is like. Or. If you were brought into, Uh, someone's palace. And maybe just Yeah, rich guy's house. But in this case, it's probably a palace and there are the curtains and the entryway and you see Uh, the Extravagant expensiveness of the material and the beauty and skill.

Of the pattern. And That's just the the curtain and the entryway. How great must be the one who has built such a house for himself. And, Of course i heaven and the highest heavens cannot contain him. And yet they do speak hints to us about the greatness of god.

So he he's created all these things to remind us. Continually to declare to us continually. How glorious he is, and we should observe the work of his hands. And we should remember that. He is glorious and we should lift our hearts to him in praise. Saying go your way.

My god. You are very great.

Another thing that we see. In this psalm is how generous he is. In his power. You see this, especially with what he does. With the land and the water. And note that. Here we are. Moving into.

No, i think this is still the first day of creation. Because the second is the rocky and the third is the plants, right? Um, But, And here we were moving into the part of the creation where he gathers The seas and he makes the dry land appear. And it describes, it almost in slow motion.

He's laid the foundations of the earth verse 5. And then he describes the gathering of the waters, even down to but time you get diverse 10. The sending of the springs into the valleys to flow among the hills. And, Not only making the land. To. Be consolidated for the creature, but just enough water and all the right places.

For the good of the creature. And so, The great power of god to rule over. The oceans, haven't clouds. Expressed in generosity and wisdom and care. Even for a while donkeys, because they get thirsty. And birds, because They are vulnerable. I need to place this to nest and so Um, So he makes fertile places with trees.

In order that the birds can nest among branches And then he makes Uh, not it addresses, not just Thirst and safety but also food Causes grass to grow for the cattle. And vegetation for the service of, man. That he may bring forth food from the earth and so And goddess you displays.

He hints at his own glory. And the first four verses, He? It's Not expressive. He Exercises. Has almighty power. To provide for the creature generosity. Versus five through 14. And then there's a a special focus on man, man who has not only made among the creatures, and we are needy and we need food.

We're right there alongside the cattle in verse 14, needing, as far as needing food goes. But man. Has a heart. That is created to know god and That's needs to be. Gladdened man has a countenance of face. That needs to have that. Relational. Uh warmth and and pleasure in others, he's created us to be relational with himself and one another Man, who I'll needs to have.

Uh, courage. And, and diligence resolve. And so, god has created. The. To god. You know, created a variety of things that he causes us to come in his providence that address each of these need separately. It's not just wine that makes glad the heart of man, but wine is representative of all the good things that god has made.

Not just for sustenance, but of the body, but for gladness, Of the heart. Wine. That makes glad the heart of man. Oil. Uh, to make his face shine. And the use here for, Uh, for health and for beauty. So that we may Uh, we may Could be helped even.

Uh, physically to have that. That. Sunny disposition to Play on the word sign here. Uh, towards one another. Oh, we desire to be healthy for various reasons, but one is so that we may bless one another and enjoy one another's presence. When the lord says that he makes his face to shine upon us, it's talking about his blessing us and his expressing.

Enjoyment. At our nearness to him. And at our belonging to him, we also are to express that towards one another, and it's something that is very difficult. To feel or to express when. Uh, you are ill. And so, Or when? Uh, you're not keeping well And so the the oil in this case, especially the olive oil Does this for the man and then bread?

Which strengthens man's heart. And, Of course, it's not just bread. That's strengthens man's heart but all his food bread here again. Uh, being representative. And giving, man. Uh, what he needs, the energy and the nourishment, the nutrition that he needs. In order that he can. Live and act with resolve and diligence and courage.

But in all these things in verse 15, it's describing god having made us in his image as Um, As beings with eternal souls and yet, Creating us with physical. Um, needs and The physical aspect that is. Interconnected. With. With a spiritually, as a way of our depending upon him by grace.

Body and soul day by day. Just as we Um, Just as he teaches us to pray for our daily bread. Just as he communicates to us his own. Uh, personal strengthening of our souls in jesus christ. At the table where we eat the bread, And drink the wine. And, And there at the table, we have the echoes of Psalm 104 verse 15 with jesus

himself for our strength.

And Jesus himself for our gladness.

So, we'll probably continue two more weeks and Psalm 104. But teaching ourselves to Uh, not God's. Glory God's generosity and then God's grace. Uh, himself being strong for us in our weakness. Well, here in these verses. Let's pray.

Her father in heaven, we thank you for the way you created all things. And the way you sustain them. To display your glory to us. To show us how generous you are to all of your creatures. To show us very specifically, how the strength and health. I'm gladness of our life.

Is from you. And all the more in you. And the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you would make us always to be grateful. And to be full of praise unto you. For all these things we asked us in Jesus name,