

Title:           **GOD'S ICE, GOD'S COLD  
AND GOD'S THAWING**

Text:            Psalm 147:1-20

Subject:        *Incitements to Praise Our God*

Introduction:

In God's creation everything is designed by infinite wisdom to portray something about the new creation of grace. We see this frequently displayed in the Psalms. We have met here today at an unusual hour, at a special time, forced upon us by the special circumstances of Divine providence. We've had six days of ice and six days without electricity. For many in our church family, and for thousands in our community and across the State of Kentucky, this has been six days without light, or heat, or running water in their homes. Trees are broken down everywhere. It was eight degrees when we woke up yesterday morning. To say the least, we've been cold; and it is cold in here this afternoon. But let's keep things in perspective.

- Before thinking, I've caught myself saying to concerned friends, "It looks like a war zone around here." — But really, it only looks like a war zone to a man who has never seen a war zone.
- Some of you may have gotten a little testy and edgy, thinking about all the trouble you've experienced this past week: spoiled food, broken water pipes, bent fenders, cold hands and feet, and ears and noses. — But some of you have seen trouble. This is not what trouble looks like or feels like. — All this has just been a minor inconvenience.
- The Lord may very well be preparing us for real trouble; but this isn't it.

Having said all that, let's turn to Psalm 147 and find reasons to praise our God in the things we've seen this week, asking God the Holy Spirit to teach us from his Word. The title of my message is **GOD'S ICE, GOD'S COLD AND GOD'S THAWING**. In this psalm we are called upon three times (vv. 1, 7, 12) to give praise to our God, the triune Jehovah.

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<sup>1</sup> Date:            Danville - Sunday Afternoon — February 1, 2009  
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Tape #         Z-63a

Reading:       *Psalm 104:1-35*

## **GOD'S ICE, GOD'S COLD AND GOD'S THAWING**

- (vv. 1-6) For His Grace and His Greatness in Salvation.
- (vv. 7-11) For His Unfailing Pleasure in Us.
- (vv. 12-20) For His Special Care.

### **HIS GRACE AND GREATNESS**

First, the psalmist calls us to praise, to give praise to our God for his grace in saving us and for the displays of his greatness in our salvation (vv. 1-6).

May God the Holy Spirit give us spiritual eyes to read the psalm spiritually.

(Psalms 147:1-6) “Praise ye the LORD: for *it is* good to sing praises unto our God; for *it is* pleasant; *and* praise is comely. (2) The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. (3) He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. (4) He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names. (5) Great *is* our Lord, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite. (6) The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.”

**“Praise ye the Three-in-One Jehovah: for it is good to sing praises unto our God.”** — This great God is our God. He is worthy of praise; and it is good to praise him. Praise to our God is the best of exercises.

- **“It is pleasant!”** — Praise to God is the foretaste of Heavenly Glory (Rev. 4, 5, 7, 14, 19)
- **“And praise is comely!”** — No sight of humanity is more comely, more proper than the sight of God’s altar covered with the calves of our lips, giving thanks to his name (Heb. 13:15), acknowledging our nothingness and our utter dependence upon our ever-blessed Christ.

**“The Lord doth build up Jerusalem”** (v. 2). — He designed the building of his holy city, Jerusalem, the church, in predestination. — He laid the foundation in redemption. — He builds his church in regeneration. — He will finish the work of grace in resurrection glory.

**“He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel!”** — He gathers his banished ones and brings them home by his outstretched arm of omnipotent mercy!

In verse 3 we read — **“He healeth the broken in heart,”** pouring the oil of his grace into broken vessels, vessels he has broken.

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**“And bindeth up their wounds!”** — As a good shepherd (Zec. 11:4) and the good Samaritan (Luke 10:34), our Lord Jesus, the great Physician, binds the wounds he has made. But let none imagine that he will heal before he wounds. That is not his way.

He alone, who is Jehovah our God, tells the number of his elect (the stars of heaven). He calls each one by his name (v. 4). Give him praise because he is gracious; and give him praise because **he is great** (vv. 5-6).

- *“Great is our Lord!”* — Our Adonai, the cause and support of all things, is great!
- He is *“of great power!”*
- *“His understanding is infinite!”* — *“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”* (Pro. 15:3). But *“the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous”* (1Pe. 3:12).

## **HIS UNFAILING PLEASURE**

Second, David teaches us to give praise to the Lord our God because of his immutable, unfailing pleasure in us, because of his immutable acceptance of our souls in Christ (vv. 7-11).

(Psalms 147:7) “Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.”

O Spirit of God, teach me to answer God’s goodness with thankfulness and praise! **Give praise to the Lord for his dark providences.** When he covers the heavens with thick clouds, it is because he is gathering rains of mercy, love and grace to pour upon your soul, that you might be fruitful.

(Psalms 147:8) “Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.”

The rain comes by God’s decree (Job 28:26); and every drop falls where he sends it (Amos 4:7).

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break

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In blessings on your head.”

**Give praise to the Lord because of his pleasure in you.** The Lord does not exercise his providence as he does for beasts, or ravens, or even for other men. He does what he does for you who fear him and hope in his mercy.

(Psalms 147:9-11) “He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry. (10) He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. (11) The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.”

Imagine that, the Three-in-One Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, takes pleasure in you! He does so because you are in Christ!

- Eternal Pleasure!
- Immutable Pleasure!

**John Trapp** wrote, The Lord takes pleasure in them that “put themselves into the hands of justice, in hope of mercy. These are his Hephzibahs, his darlings in whom he taketh singular delight and complacence.”

“If JESUS doth thus order, arrange, direct, and bless his church, and take delight in those that hope in his mercy; what can be more sweet and proper than to see the souls of his redeemed going out after him, in writings, adorations, love, and praise? Oh! the blessedness of communion! JESUS gives of his fulness; and his people come with their emptiness to be supplied. JESUS is not only glorified when they actively praise him; but also when they passively receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. So, LORD, let my soul live upon thee and to thee! Micah 5:8. Deuteronomy 32:2. Isaiah 55:10, 11.” — **Robert Hawker**

**HIS SPECIAL CARE**

Third, in verses 12-20, we are instructed to give praise to our God because of his special care, because of his distinguishing mercy, love and grace, constantly exercised upon us.

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**“Praise the LORD** (Jehovah), **O Jerusalem; praise thy God** (Elohiym), **O Zion**” (v. 12). — Let others live and die in base ingratitude; but the children of Zion must give praise to Jehovah our God!

**“For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates”** (v. 13). — The gates of hell shall never prevail against the church that Christ builds. God our Savior has promised to break in pieces those gates of brass, and cut in sunder those bars of iron (as Samson did the gates of Gaza), (Isa. 45:2), to perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle his saints (1Pe. 5:10), and to be a wall of fire round about them.

**“He hath blessed thy children within thee”** (v. 13). — They are many (Isa. 54:1). — They are all taught of God (John 6:45). — And they are all children that will not lie (Isa. 63:8).

**“He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat”** (v. 14).

- Peace in Believing
- Peace with God
- Peace of Conscience
- Peace with One Another
- And the Finest Bread — God’s saints still feed upon the bread of angels, a feast “of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined”(Isa. 25:6).

**“He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly”** (v. 15). — He speaks the word and it is done immediately. Therefore we read in the Scripture of the immediate effects of the Savior’s word. He said to the leprous man, “*Be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed*” (Mat. 8:3). To the blind man, he said, “*Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight*” (Mark 10:52). As soon as the Son of God says to the soul, Be enlightened, be quickened, be comforted, the work is done. — How swiftly his Word runs, when it is he who speaks!

**“He giveth snow like wool”** (v. 16). — Though the snow is cold, freezing cold, it forms a blanket like wool to protect the unseen vegetation beneath the earth. In fact, the freezing snow is necessary for the life and health of the

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the vegetation. — Apply that to yourself spiritually. — Why such coldness? — Why such times of lukewarmness? God our Father gives the snow like wool!

“**He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes**” (v. 16). There is a black frost that brings death; but the hoarfrost, though it burns, it makes everything sparkling white.

“**He casteth forth his ice like morsels**” (v. 17). — God casts ice out of the windows of heaven as morsels of bread for our souls. — Apply this to your soul’s experience.

- The Light Snow that Blankets the Earth like Wool
- The Driving Sleet so Painful that You must Seek Refuge
- The Hard Frozen Ice that Breaks the Limbs of Mighty Oaks
- The Beating Hail that Destroys Every Crop of Human Planting

“**Who can stand before his cold?**” (v. 17) — When God withdraws his light, nothing is left but darkness; and when the Lord God withdraws the heat of the Sun of Righteousness, nothing is left but a coldness that cannot be thawed by any activity, a coldness that we cannot resist! — But blessed be his name forever, that is not the last word about the matter!

“**He sendeth out his word, and melteth them.**” — “**He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow**” (v. 18).

**John Gill** wrote, “Thus the hearts of men in a state of nature are like frozen earth or waters; they are cold, and without the heat of love, and affection to God and Christ, and spiritual things; they are as hard as a stone, and without any motion or desire after things divine and heavenly: but when the Lord sends his word, attended with a divine power and efficacy, it breaks and melts them; when the south wind of the blessed Spirit blows upon them, or his grace becomes effectual in convincing them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and when the sun of righteousness arises on them with healing in his wings; with which being warmed, they are loosened, and flow to the Lord and his goodness for all spiritual blessings.”

**Robert Hawker** observed, “How doth the LORD send forth his word to melt the soul; and cause the north wind, and the south wind to blow upon his garden! Luke 24:32. Song Of Solomon

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4:16. Titus 3:5, 6. Surely every child of GOD can bear testimony to these things; and every child of GOD in the contemplation of discriminating grace will say, He hath not dealt so with any nation. LORD, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me and not unto the world? John 14:22. And, under a deep sense of these things, shall we not say, Hallelujah?"

**"He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel"** (v. 19). — This is special grace! This is distinguishing mercy! This is particular love! — **"He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them"** (v. 20).

**"Praise ye the LORD"** (v. 20).

Amen.