

From Egypt to Eternity

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Bible Verse: Psalm 113-118
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Tonight we have a special opportunity to consider a group of Psalms together. It's a section of six Psalms that are known as the Egyptian Hallel or the Egyptian Praise, and it covers Psalms 113 through Psalm 118, and we're going to cover them in an overview fashion today for reasons that will become obvious, and in the following weeks on Tuesdays we'll studied them one by one. So this is kind of a satellite view of a well-defined section of the Psalter.

Now why would we treat six Psalms in one message? That's kind of an unusual approach to take. Well, with this particular section, it's what the Jews have historically done. Their practice in dealing with these Psalms even gives us insight into the final hours of our Lord Jesus Christ before he was taken away for his trial. I quote from the commentator Derek Kidner to get us oriented tonight as he speaks about these six Psalms. He says, "By custom, the first two Psalms are sung before the Jewish Passover meal, and the remaining four after it. So," he says, "these were probably the last Psalms our Lord sang before his Passion." It's a very endearing portion of Scripture that way, to realize that these were the final words that the Lord was peacefully going through with his disciples and sharing with his disciples before he left and was betrayed by Judas into the hands of the Roman authorities.

The gospel of Matthew and I invite you to turn there, the gospel of Matthew records the highlight of the meal for us in Matthew 26 and gives us a tantalizing glimpse of what we have been referring to. Matthew 26 in verse 26 as the Lord instituted the Lord's Supper at the Passover meal, in verse 26 it says,

26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."
27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

We're used to stopping there, of course, but you go on to verse 30 and you see this tantalizing glimpse.

30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And that hymn, according to the customary practice, would have ended on Psalm 118 and included Psalms 115 through 117 as well. So assuming the Jewish custom, Psalms 113 and 114 preceded the meal, and then the final four would have been the song that is mentioned for us there in Matthew's gospel. I find that fascinating. I find it something that gives me just a little bit more intimacy with the Lord, you might say, to know. You know, until I started studying this, I always wondered what the hymn was, you know, it couldn't have been "Great is thy faithfulness," because that wasn't written for 1,900 years, none of the hymns that we know and sing in our services would apply that have been written in modern time, and here we find the answer and why these hymns and why at the Passover which celebrates the way that God passed over the Jews when he slayed the firstborn of the Egyptians and he passed over all of those that had the blood applied to their doorframe, so to speak, why this Psalm, why this coming together with Egypt. Well, it opens us up into just a wonderful aspect of the perfections of our Lord and a specific aspect of his character, his compassion and his mercy on unworthy and small and humbled people.

Collectively these Psalms call all people to praise God and to give thanks for him. That's very clear. This is a section that is universal in its scope. It goes beyond Israel to all nations, to all peoples of all times. There is one God and all people of all time are under his sovereignty, all of them are under obligation to worship him, all of them are under obligation to respond in these days to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Now with that said, each Psalm gives a different color to the rainbow of worship that is being given here. We see these Psalms as a unit, as they were treated this way, you know, they've been treated that way for thousands of years by the Jewish people, and so there's a different color to the one rainbow that each Psalm contributes and what I want to do tonight is simply walk you through in a very overview fashion the significance of that and what it means for our worship of our Lord. So understanding the abbreviated nature of the treatment tonight, we're going to look at six different Psalms and give six different points to our message tonight and I invite you to turn back now to Psalm 113, Psalm 113 which introduces the ground of praise, the ground of praise for this section of the Psalter.

You know, there are different attributes of God, I suppose, that you could select for meditation and worship. You could worship him for his Triune nature. You could worship him for his self-existence, for his omnipotence and his omnipresence as Psalm 139 does. All of his attributes rightly understood humble us and bring us to a place of worship and adoration when they are rightly understood and received, but here in this section of the Psalter, there is a specific ground of praise that is given and we see it in Psalm 113. Psalm 113 praises God and it praises God because he shows compassion to the helpless. He shows compassion to the helpless and everything, as I understand this section of the Psalter, there's a lot of variety and a lot of detail that is given but ultimately it is giving rise to support and undergird the call to worship God because of the compassion that he has on the helpless, and we'll see that as we go through. That's the ground of praise, God's compassion to the helpless.

So why do we say that and where do we see it in these Psalms? Psalm 113:1 says,

1 Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, Praise the name of the LORD. 2 Blessed be the name of the LORD From this time forth and forever.

From the beginning you see that there is an eternal aspect to this praise that is being set forth. This is utterly transcendent. This is not a small matter. This is not a daily prayer. This is something that extends throughout all of eternity, and as you read the Psalm, it gives you the ground for praise. It's as if he said, "I have called you to praise the Lord and now here is why." Verse 5,

5 Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high, 6 Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in heaven and in the earth? 7 He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the needy from the ash heap, 8 To make them sit with princes, With the princes of His people. 9 He makes the barren woman abide in the house As a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!

Now week, we'll expound this in greater detail but just see the helpless nature, the humble nature of how this God on high who is worthy of eternal praise, how he humbles himself and condescends to be merciful to those in great need. The poor, the needy, the barren woman, we've all known women who were childless who longed to have children and had that sense of empty arms that was not fulfilled for them, this Psalm tells us that God takes note of one like that and shows compassion and kindness to them and so this becomes the ground of praise.

Now there's something very significant about this that all of us need to take to heart and to process in our minds and to examine our hearts about. Scripture tells us in no uncertain terms that God is opposed to the proud but he gives grace to the humble. This attribute of God is displayed toward men of low rank, men who humble themselves before God and cry out to him without any sense of merit or self-deserving or anything of that. It sets aside the arrogant man from the blessing of God that is promised here and opens up the doors of mercy to those who have nowhere else to turn. And so in keeping with that, you see that spirit expressed in our Lord's words as he describes his own ministry in the gospels. We're not going to turn there but in Luke 5:32, Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Those who vigorously defend their self-righteousness, those who assert that they have merit before God in order to go to heaven, "I'm good enough. The good outweighs the bad in me," all of that, you must understand, my friends, excludes a man from the exercise of this attribute and mercy of God to them in a personal way. God is opposed to the proud but he gives grace to the humble. In Luke 19:10, Jesus said, "I have come to seek and to save the lost." Those who say, "I am separated from God, I don't know where to turn. God, have mercy on me the sinner," Luke 18, the tax gatherer said while the Pharisee boasted about his own righteousness before and in the presence of men and asserted his righteousness before men. "God, I

thank You that I'm not like other men or like this tax gatherer here." The tax gatherer said, went off by himself, was beating his chest, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." And Jesus said, "That man went away justified, not the other," Luke 18. And so right from the beginning we have to ask ourselves each individually, you know, what is the posture that you adopt in the presence of a holy God? Do you assert your righteousness? Do you claim that he owes you things? Or do you come before him as a humble sinner simply asking for whatever mercy he deems fit to show to you? He shows mercy to the humble, he gives grace to the humble but he is opposed to the proud, and right away our whole worldview is challenged by the Egyptian Hallel.

Now let's go on, then. Having established that general principle that God shows grace to the humble, he shows compassion to the helpless, he gives grace to the needy and those who openly, freely confess it before him, with that principle established, let's move on to Psalm 114 and we'll see this second point, we see his compassion upon the nation, and by the nation we mean specifically Israel here. He has compassion on Israel. God in real time and space history as recorded for us perfectly and without error in the book of Exodus, God gloriously displayed compassion to an entire nation of people while they were in slavery in Egypt.

Look at Psalm 114:1 and 2.

1 When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language, 2 Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion.

And it goes on and talks about, in metaphorical language, how God divided the Red Sea in order to allow them to escape and moved heaven and earth in a literal fashion in order to save his people. In verse 7 it says,

7 Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, Before the God of Jacob,

Jacob being another word for the nation of Israel. And in this very brief form, my friends, this psalmist is stating the most profound of history. It is giving us a tightly compressed interpretation of the entire exodus. Remember, Israel had been in slavery under the Egyptian power for 400 years. We talked about this, I believe, on Sunday, talked about that at some length. They had been under slavery, their taskmasters were brutal to them, Pharaoh, his heart was set like flint against them, and they were suffering cruelly and miserably in slavery at that time, an entire, you know, millions of people under the oppression of another nation with no ability to deliver themselves. They were utterly helpless in that condition. And what did God do? He led them out. He brought 10 plagues upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and ultimately Pharaoh told them to go, and so God led them out as is recorded for us in the early chapters of the book of Exodus.

And what was he doing? What does that historical action reveal to us about the character of God? That's the question that's placed before us here. It revealed that God was having compassion on his people when he delivered them from slavery in Egypt, and so the nation collectively had grounds to praise him for his compassion. There was a collective

duty, there was a collective responsibility, there was a collective prerogative for Israel to praise God for the way that he had delivered them from their slavery in Egypt. So the Passover was implemented to remember that year by year so that they would never forget; the repetition ingrained it deeply that God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt and they should praise him for that.

Now in Deuteronomy 7:7 it says this just to reemphasize the point, you don't need to turn there. My fingers are fumbling to find it but here it is, just keeping in mind this theme of God's compassion to the helpless. Deuteronomy 7:7 and 8 say this. This is Moses speaking to Israel as they're about to enter into the land and Moses will not accompany them. Moses is giving them his final sermon in Deuteronomy to set the stage for them to enter into the land and what does he say to them in Deuteronomy 7:7 and 8? Listen to this.

7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

He says, "You're the smallest of people. It's not because you deserve this. It's not because you were so great and mighty that the Lord made you His own. It was precisely because of your weakness that He did that, and in your weakness God displayed and manifested His faithfulness and goodness to you." He was keeping the promises that he made to Abraham hundreds of years earlier. God had showed compassion upon Israel and that is embedded here in this Egyptian Hallel. It's the only place where the Passover or where Egypt is mentioned but it is sufficient for us to see as we see how this unfolds and we see how the themes develop upon one another from Psalm 113 to 118 to understand that this is an example of the mercy of God upon his helpless people. It's wonderful. It is wonderful. God revealed his compassion in the exodus.

Now, thirdly, what that calls for, then, that calls for something from the nation and it calls for a response of corporate praise, a response of national praise, you could say. If we're going to say it was compassion upon the nation, well, then let's call it a response of national praise. His compassion in Egypt calls for corporate, national praise and trust. Look at Psalm 115 and notice the plural pronouns as it opens.

1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us [very emphatic], But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth. 2 Why should the nations say, "Where, now, is their God?" 3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

Now jump ahead to verses 9 through 13. I just want you to see the plural, corporate, national aspect of this praise in Psalm 115. Verse 9,

9 O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield... 12 The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.

Do you see how this section of Scripture is emphasizing God's compassion to the small, to the needy, to the helpless? Now look, this is a wonderful grounds upon which to praise God. He is God most high and yet he condescends to look upon the most unworthy, the most lonely, the most sinful. Scripture says in Romans 4 God justifies the ungodly. It is the nature of grace that God justifies the ungodly who believe in Christ, not those who consider themselves righteous and therefore see no need for him.

This is remarkable and, you know, I think of many of your testimonies that I know and think about my own testimony, my own moment of my own conversion, having utterly violated everything about the holiness of God in my life and with fear and trembling knowing that I deserved utter damnation in that moment, under the influence and the new life given by the Holy Spirit, I cried out for mercy and God had mercy on this poor sinner, that started then carrying out what he had planned in eternity and it hasn't stopped since then. I did not deserve it, neither did any of you, and yet for those truly broken over sin, who come confessing that the doors of heaven are opened wide. Why? Because God has compassion on the helpless, God is merciful to the undeserving, to the small and the lowly, and this is a great great cause and a great great reason to give praise to God that he's like that.

Why would the Creator of heaven and earth look down on a guilty sinner calling out to him? There's nothing in us. There wasn't anything in Israel to cause him to show mercy to them. There's nothing in us as individual sinners crying out for salvation that deserves it. The whole premise of salvation and calling out to Christ in faith, the whole premise of it is, "I don't deserve it. I am guilty and I need a Savior." That's the whole premise of genuine salvation. It is not, "I've kept the rules." It is not, "I've done the religion." It's not that, "I've gone to confession." Or it's not that, "I've, you know, prayed the right prayers or kept all of my quiet times." It's none of that. The ground for receiving the mercy of God is not found in you or me or in our righteousness, it is found in the character of God, in his attribute of mercy and goodness to the undeserving, and because that is true, that is why we praise him.

So in Psalm 115 with the memory of Egypt's power and gods having fallen before the God of Israel, the national response in verse 18, Psalm 115:18 is this,

18 But as for us, we will bless the LORD From this time forth and forever.
Praise the LORD!

That great act of deliverance by God in Egypt undergirds the praise of an entire nation as we read it in its Old Testament context. It's remarkable but it gets even better. It gets even better as we go to our point number 4 here today. We see a response of individual praise. Of individual praise. God shows particular compassion to individual men, not just the compassion that he showed to the nation of Israel, and as you go to Psalm 116, you shift from these plural pronouns to singular pronouns. It's fascinating. Grammar is wonderful. Grammar is what opens up the word of God to us and we see these wonderful dimensions of a kaleidoscope of compassion, we see these wonderful different colors coming to bear as different focus is brought by the inspired writers of Scripture.

Psalm 116. You see the exact same theme. This is unmistakable when you know to look for it. Verse 1,

1 I love the LORD, because He hears My voice and my supplications. 2
Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call upon Him as
long as I live. 3 The cords of death encompassed me And the terrors of
Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow. 4 Then I called upon
the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I beseech You, save my life!"

In utter helplessness and desperation, he called upon the Lord and what did he find?
Verse 5,

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate. 6
The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.

This compassion on the lowly. Now listen, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, this has a great impact on the way that you think about yourself and the way that you respond to situations. You should not find yourself, if you understand this perfection of God and you understand that he has mercy on unworthy people, you should understand, then, that the posture that you want to go through life with is not asserting yourself, not asserting your righteousness, not defending yourself but rather relying on the mercy of God alone and committing your cause entirely to him. You're guilty whether you realize it or not and so you might as well start there.

Individual, lowly, undeserving. You know what this text reminds me of just as I'm standing here, it's dangerous for me these days to do this, but this reminds me entirely of the prayer of Jonah in Jonah 2. Jonah had been cast into the sea and he's sinking down down down, and he cried out to the Lord as seaweed swirled around his head, as he was drowning, he cried out to the Lord for mercy. In utter guilt and utter rebellion, having rejected the call of God to go to the people of Nineveh, he's cast overboard, nothing of deserving at all, and he says in Jonah 2:7, in that condition he says, "While I was fainting away," he was on the doorstep of death, "While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple." And it was at that moment that the Lord sent the great fish to swallow him and keep him from drowning. God had mercy on this miserably unworthy prophet in the lowest of conditions; he called out for mercy and the Lord showed compassion to him in his utter helplessness.

Verse 12 of Psalm 116,

12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?

Do you see it? First person singular. Individual. It's not just national. This is appropriated personally, individually by faith.

13 I shall lift up the cup of salvation And call upon the name of the LORD. 14 I shall pay my vows to the LORD, Oh may it be in the presence of all His people.

He wants others to be there so that others will join in the worship. He wants to influence them for godliness and to influence them toward worship and praise of this wonderful God. Verse 15,

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones. 16 O LORD, surely I am Your servant, I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid, You have loosed my bonds.

So what's the conclusion? Verse 19,

19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

Praise the Lord. Why? I was helpless. He showed compassion on me. So these themes are just being emphasized in different settings throughout this whole section. And you see, beloved, here's the thing for you and me today. This is a personal song of thanksgiving. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, there should be something in your mind and in your experience that says, "Yes, I know this by my own personal experience. I called out to the Lord in my sin and He saved me. He's shown mercy to me ever since. He's opened His word to me so that I understand. He's given me fellowship with other believers. He's provided for me in my weakness. He's comforted me in my sorrow. He's been the object of my praise and my joys and in my triumphs." There's got to be something personal.

I think that's one of the things that people struggle to understand that have been in religion but have this intuitive sense that, "Christianity is not real to me. I'm viewing it as an outsider. I know it by what's said but it's not personal to me." And if that's you here tonight and you say, you know, I could understand someone saying, "This gets frustrating to me. I don't get it. I get that there's something there but I don't understand what I'm missing and I'm so frustrated and alone in this." Do you know what I'd do if I were you? I would remember that the Lord is compassionate to the lowly and call upon him and ask him to help you and trust him to hear your humble cry, to be merciful to you. "Lord, make this mercy real to me personally," and enter into a personal appeal to God, not trying to mediate it through some priest. Go directly to Christ, tell him the sorrow and the woe of your soul, tell him of your complete inability to understand the things that you've

heard about and ask him to have mercy on you, and he will because that's who he is and that's why we praise his great name.

Now I'm mindful of the fact, I've heard skeptics say, "I tried that once. Nothing happened. So, you know, obviously then it's not true. My experience contradicts everything in Scripture that has stood for thousands of years." Please. The one who is truly humbled under the weight of sin, the one who truly desires to know Christ and yet finds himself or herself frustrated by the lack and the confusion of it all, if you realize that this is a pearl of great price, if you realize that this is something worthy of possession and that eternal consequences are at stake, and that the greatness of this God can be known, you mean to tell me that you're only going to ask once and if it doesn't happen in 10 minutes you're going to walk away and never ask again? What's that? What kind of superficial response is that to the majesties of which we speak? No. No. No, no, no, no, no, no. I don't know how many "no's" that was but it wasn't enough. No, you go and you plead again and again and you don't stop until the Lord makes it known, until the Lord makes it all plain to you, until the Lord bestows new life on you. You are helpless. You cannot achieve this on your own. Your only cry is, "God, have mercy on me the sinner! God, have mercy on me in my utter ignorance! God, have mercy on me! I've got so many degrees, I've achieved so much in life and I don't know the first basic thing about You. How utterly bankrupt am I, O God? And therefore I ask You to be merciful to me." You pray it in the morning. You pray it at lunch. You pray it at supper. You pray it before you go to bed. You do it again and again and again until God opens up the store vault of mercy and showers it upon you. God is willing to show mercy to the helpless far more than the helpless are willing to ask him for it because that's who he is. He's compassionate.

Now in light of these things that we've seen, the ground of praise, generally speaking, is God's compassion to the helpless. We saw that compassion in action when he delivered Israel from Egypt. We saw the response of corporate praise in Psalm 115, house of Israel, house of Aaron, those who fear the Lord. We see it on an individual basis in Psalm 116 so that having spoken to, before I move on here, having spoken to those outside of Christ looking in and drawn, seeing the value of these things and drawn to them and yet feeling their lack of power, that's what you do, you cry out to the Lord for mercy. Well, what about the rest of us? Well, corporately, individually, we contemplate these things and we affirm in our hearts before the audience of angels, "Do you know what? This God has been good to me. He's been good to me. He's been good to me in my life. He's been good to me in my soul. He's been good to me in circumstances. My past sorrows, I see how He blessed those for good. My joys came from His hand." What can I do except say this, "Praise the LORD!" and worship him, and remember him as he's revealed himself in his word, as he's made himself known in the providential details of your life, to recognize all of that and say, "O God, I praise Your name! You're so good and You've been good to me. It's not just that You're good, generally speaking, although You certainly are, You've been good to me when I didn't deserve it and, Lord, my heart is humbled before You and I thank You for that and I honor You and I worship You."

So you move on in this section of the Psalter, you come to number 5, Psalm 117, and you see a call for universal praise. A call for universal praise. Psalm 117 is the shortest Psalm in the Psalter. We will get to it in several weeks. I assure you that I'll manage to preach 50 or 60 minutes on it nonetheless. I will. I've already prepared my notes. Now as you're walking through the Egyptian Hallel as the people of God remember both national, corporate and individual blessings, there is an outward focus that comes from that for the glory of God and for the good of our fellow men, we call on all men throughout all the earth to join in the worship. This is too good to keep to ourselves.

Psalm 117. We've seen Israel. We've seen the individual. Now it goes international. Psalm 117:1, "Praise the LORD," do you see the same theme?

1 Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples! [Why?] 2 For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!

The one true God is a God of loyal love and truth and therefore in light of his greatness, there is a universal duty of all men and women, boys and girls, without exception to praise him, to honor him, to worship him. That is the duty of every man and the failure to do that is a matter of moral culpability. Romans 1 makes that very clear just within the context of God's revelation in nature, Scripture says, that all men have seen his power and eternal attribute on display, and yet they suppress the truth in unrighteousness and they make up other gods so that they don't acknowledge the one true God. There's a universal duty for all men throughout all place to honor the one true God of the Bible and the fact that someone worships a false god in a false religion only adds to their condemnation, it does not mitigate it. And Scripture says to add to it all the more, that those who come under the sound of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Christ died and rose again for your sins, he offers you eternal life, come to him and be saved by faith alone, those who hear that message and reject it have a greater condemnation waiting for them. Why? Because who God is and what the gospel is places a duty on everyone to believe. There is an invitation to believe, to enter into these blessings, there is a command to come, there is a command to repent, repent and believe in the gospel. It's a gospel and it is a message that is taken to all the nations, Luke 24:47.

So everybody in the world is affected by the things that we're seeing from God's word here tonight. No one is outside the scope of the call, the command, the invitation to come. And why do men not come? It's not because they're not elected, it's because they refuse to come. The refusal to obey these commands is morally culpable and it's morally culpable because it is born out of the heart response that that man or woman wants for themselves and that is the ground of their condemnation when they refuse these things. So these things are of momentous consequence. Momentous, eternal consequence. It's a weighty thing to hear, it's a weighty thing to speak but, my friends, in the overall context of the great lovingkindness and truth of God and his mercy on the helpless, we embrace it all and we praise the Lord and we call all men everywhere to join in the worship. This can be yours as well.

Well, with all of those things said, point 6, we come to a great climax of worship. A great climax of worship. A friend years ago in Texas, took me and my son to a ballgame. This has nothing to do with the Psalter, obviously, but it's setting the stage for Psalm 118. And Texans are funny people. I have a lot of friends in Texas, love them all, but everything about Texas has to be big. The bigger and the better it is, you know, that's just the way they do things. Big is the measure by which things are done and if it was done in the past, then we've got to do it bigger today. Fine, you know? Well, at the end of this ballgame that we watched, there was this incredible fireworks display unlike anything that I've ever seen. This thing went on and on and on and just multiple munitions going off every second, and this must have gone on for 20 minutes. It went on so long it almost got boring. I mean, just this spectacular fireworks display unlike anything I've ever seen after a meaningless regular season ballgame. I can't imagine what they would have done if they had beaten the Cardinals in the World Series in 2011, but they didn't. Anyway, there was this great climax to the evening as expressed in the fireworks. Psalm 118 gives us this magnificent climax of worship that gathers everyone in and draws them into it.

Psalm 118. Look at it with me and it's going to take me two messages to deal with Psalm 118 when we get around to it down the road. Psalm 118:1, in light of everything that we've seen in this ground of praise, his compassion upon Israel, the response of national praise, the response of individual praise, the call for universal praise, we come to this great climax of worship and Psalm 118 gathers everyone up into it. Verse 1,

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Now there's a verbal parallel with what we saw from Psalm 115. It's not just thematic, there are verbal connections between these Psalms that we'll consider as we go along in weeks to come. Verse 2,

2 Oh let Israel say, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." 3 Oh let the house of Aaron say, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." 4 Oh let those who fear the LORD say, "His lovingkindness is everlasting."

So there's that corporate dimension to it and then the individual is mixed together with it now. Verse 5,

5 From my distress I called upon the LORD; The LORD answered me and set me in a large place. 6 The LORD is for me; I will not fear; What can man do to me? 7 The LORD is for me among those who help me; Therefore I will look with satisfaction on those who hate me.

And so later on in the Psalm, for the sake of time we have to skip over portions that we'll look at later, later on in the Psalm the worshipers enter through the gates to offer their praise. Verse 19, "Open to me the gates of righteousness." You kind of get a picture of the temple gates being opened so that the worshipers can enter in an approach where the revealed presence of God was in those days.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it. 21 I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation.

And then at the close in verses 28, well, let's go to verse 27.

27 The LORD is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. 28 You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

It started on the theme in those opening verses, go back up there to verses 1 through 4, much repetition for emphasis' sake. "His lovingkindness," verse 1, "is everlasting." Verse 2, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." Verse 3, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." Verse 4, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." Verse 29, "His lovingkindness is everlasting." It goes on without end. Do you know what that means? This praise which started in Egypt goes on to eternity. This God's praise began, from our perspective at the starting point of the exodus from Egypt 1,400 years before the time of Christ, here we are 3,400 years giving him praise for the same attributes, the same things, and it's never going to stop because his eternal attributes cannot change. He is utterly immutable. The way that God is, his lovingkindness that he revealed in the past is the way that he is now and the way that he will be forevermore. So this just goes on endlessly.

So the Egyptian Hallel gives a comprehensive approach to praise, it brings all people under the sound of its call, it covers all of time and goes on into eternity, and we haven't even gotten to the best part yet because in the progress of revelation in Scripture, it goes even further. Psalm 118 is repeatedly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament which we will see in several weeks. Christ himself is the ultimate fulfillment of all of these things and the ultimate revelation of the goodness and the compassion of God toward sinners. Christ himself is the help to the downtrodden. Christ himself is the Savior of sinners. Christ himself secures these blessings for his people. Christ himself personally invites everyone downtrodden to come to him. He said in Matthew 11, "Come to Me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you'll find rest for your souls."

Christ himself is the fulfillment of all of this. Christ himself went to the cross. Christ himself cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" In obedience to the Father and in love for his people, he stayed there even though he could have called legions of angels to his aid. They would have been there [snap] like that. But he didn't. His mercy is so great that he gave his own life for sinners at Calvary, so great that he offers salvation as a free gift to be received by faith alone. Christ alone is the object, then, of our thanks and praise. As we remember Christ, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his intercession for us, his coming again one day to receive us into glory, the

way that he keeps us and sanctifies us and blesses us again and again and again and again and again, Christ himself, we look at Christ and we look at the end of Psalm 118 with the last words on his mind before it was time to go, we look at Christ and in response we say to the Triune Godhead, "We give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting." By faith we rest in Christ and in Christ and by Christ and on his merits and shed blood, we praise the Lord.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Thank You, our Father, for Your steadfast love, Your compassion on the helpless, and Your eternal truth. Lord Jesus, we believe, we affirm, we rest upon the fact that You and You alone are the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through You. We thank You that by Your grace and mercy You have led many of us through that narrow gate of Your shed blood and into the kingdom of God. We pray that You might have similar mercy on those that are lost here tonight, hearing this in subsequent media, we pray for Your mercy to be extended to them as well. Lord, they're helpless. They're dead in sin. They have no life within them. They have no ability to save themselves. O God, how are they going to be saved unless You show mercy to them too? And so it's our earnest prayer, Father, that each soul would find its rest and hope in Christ alone, and with hearts full of gratitude, we praise You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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