

Psalm 68:3 - The righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!

Let's say the next one together.

Psalm 9:2 - I will be glad and **exult** in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Turn to Psalms 1 in your Bibles.

During the **Getty Sing! Conference**, Aiden and I sang a lot of worship songs and we listened to a lot of great sermons.

I felt that John Piper's sermon, titled "**Glory & Humanity from Celebration to Lament**" was the most important for the church today. That sermon sparked a fire in me that lasted the rest of the conference...and I believe will last the rest of my life.

Piper actually spoke twice. First, he focused on the worshippers and his second sermon focused on the preachers. I want to spend this morning sharing some of his thoughts with you from that first sermon, and perhaps in doing so I will be obedient to what God placed in my heart during the second sermon.

Piper began with a question:

Why does the Book of Psalms have so many commands addressed to our emotions?

These commands are not:

- Testimonies
- Prayers
- Promises

All three of which are included in the Psalms.

BUT... **We are commanded** to have Godward emotions... Commanded to feel things toward God.

- **Love God**

Psalm 31:23

Love the Lord, all you his saints!

Later the Psalms command a negative emotion for those who Love God...

Psalm 97:10

O you who **love the Lord**, hate evil!

- **Stand in awe**

Psalm 22:23

You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and **stand in awe** of him, all you offspring of Israel!

Psalm 33:8

Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world **stand in awe** of him!

- **Exult** - show or feel elation or jubilation, **rejoice**, be joyful, be happy, be delighted, be elated, be ecstatic, be overjoyed, be jubilant, be rapturous, be in raptures, be thrilled, jump for joy, be on cloud nine, be in seventh heaven;

[Psalm 64:10](#)

Let the righteous one rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart **exult!**

[Psalm 68:4](#)

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the Lord; **exult** before him!

[Psalm 149:5](#)

Let the godly **exult** in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.

- **Delight**

[Psalm 37:4](#)

Delight yourself in the Lord.

→ **Other verses talk about how the believers delight is in the Lord.**

[Psalm 1:2](#)

His **delight** is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

[Psalm 112:1](#)

Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly **delights** in his commandments!

- **Be glad**

[Psalm 32:11](#)

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

[Psalm 34:2](#)

My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and **be glad**.

[Psalm 67:4](#)

Let the nations **be glad** and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.
Selah

[Psalm 118:24](#)

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and **be glad** in it.

- **Hope in the Lord**

[Psalm 130:7](#)

O Israel, **hope in the Lord!** For with **the Lord** there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.

[Psalm 131:3](#)

O Israel, **hope in the Lord** from this time forth and forevermore.

- Give thanks

[Psalm 106:1](#)

[*Give Thanks to **the Lord**, for He Is Good*] Praise **the Lord!** Oh **give thanks** to **the Lord**, for he is good, for his steadfast **love** endures forever!

[Psalm 118:1](#)

Oh give thanks to **the Lord**, for he is good; for his steadfast **love** endures forever!

[Psalm 136:1](#)

Give thanks to **the Lord**, for he is good, for his steadfast **love** endures forever.

- Shout for joy

[Psalm 33:1](#)

Shout for joy in **the Lord**, O you righteous!

[Psalm 35:27](#)

Let those who delight in my righteousness **shout for joy** and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant!"

[Psalm 66:1](#)

Shout for joy to God, all the earth.

[Psalm 132:9](#)

Let your saints **shout for joy**.

We are commanded to have Godward emotions... Commanded to feel something toward God.

Why? Why does God command our emotions?

Doesn't it just matter what we believe? **Why** does it matter what we feel?

Piper gives a very chilling response to this question.

We are commanded to have Godward emotions because, if we don't, we will perish.

And, God would spare us that.

Read Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man

who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,

nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
²but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

- He loves the Word. He enjoys his God and cherishes every word from God's lips.
- And this passion for God is accompanied by spiritual health.

³He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

⁶for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

God commands us to have Godward emotions because if we do not, we will perish.

We see that **Blessed is this man who delights** in the law of the Lord.

- He's tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

On the other hand, the **wicked are not so**... They do NOT delight in the Lord.

And the text is very clear that these wicked who do not have Godward emotions **will perish**.

Delight in the Lord because if you don't, you die.

If we find more joy in other things besides God, we will perish.

Paul understood this. At the end of the book of 1 Corinthians, the 3rd to last verse, he says...

1 Corinthians 16:22

If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed.

To be cursed by God is to perish.

Paul doesn't pronounce this curse on those who have some misinformed doctrine. He doesn't pronounce it on those who don't go to church, those who haven't been baptized or even on those who do not believe.

Though a love for the Lord assumes a belief in the Lord.

BUT...He pronounces this curse on those who do not... **LOVE** Christ... They don't delight in him. They don't enjoy him. Their hearts are **NOT** made glad thinking upon their savior.

Paul says: Curse them!

When I speak on parenting, I will often say... ***If you are not enjoying your kids, then your kids are not enjoying you.***

Similarly, if you do not delight in your God, then your God does not delight in you. I'd go so far as to say, if you do not delight in God, then He isn't your God.

What is it that you love more than Him? Whatever **THAT is**, that is your God.

Revelation 3:16

¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Jesus would say: You are lukewarm toward me. I'm not first in your affections. You're indifferent toward me. Therefore, I want none of you. I will spit you out of my mouth.

The young man takes a knee. He pops out a ring and he says, "Will you marry me?"

She responds: Why? Why do you want to marry me?

He replies: Well, you're an ok gal. I think you'll make a good wife and mother. ***So what do you say?***

She replies: **No**. I'm not looking for a man who thinks I'm an ok gal. I want someone who is thrilled to be married to me.

Jesus is our groom and he would say the same: I'm not looking for a bride who thinks I'm an ok guy. I want a bride who is overjoyed to be married to me.

You say: "***You can't command my feelings***. You can't command me to be HOT or COLD. You can't command my emotions." **God can and he does**.

Why such a harsh penalty for not feeling something?

Why would you perish if you don't delight in God above all else?

Piper gives 2 answers:

1) Because God is supremely valuable.

He is precious, desirable and satisfying. He is so valuable that not to acknowledge that and not to desire him is damnable.

Notice that **Psalm 34:8** is not a request.

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

Imagine you went to great expense and great effort to lay out a banquet for your loved one. Only the finest meats, cheeses and breads. Delicious sauces. Tantalizing desserts. You invited all your friends and family to join in the celebration. And, **your loved one**...for whom you prepared this feast... she shows up with a to-go bag from McDonalds. She sits down at the table and refuses to touch the delicacies that surround her. Instead, she pulls out her burger and fries and begins to eat.

She takes no delight in the feast you have prepared for her.

Instead, she focuses her affections on the food SHE has brought.

Oh Christian, God has prepared a feast of heavenly delights for us to enjoy. And, yet so often we focus our affections on the fleeting pleasures of the world.

Can you imagine sitting down at the marriage supper of the lamb and the guy next to you says: Boy, we had some great times in Vegas. We really partied. Sometimes we took it a bit too far. Man, those were good times. But as they say... "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." – **NUDGE - NUDGE**

What would you think? --- This guy does **NOT** belong here. He's at the wrong party.

Why do we perish?

BECAUSE: We neglect that which is supremely valuable and we value that which is worthless.

Because, to the great offense of our God, we have rejected his banquet and valued the things of this world above the things of God.

2) Because God desires that His intrinsic value become an experienced preciousness.

God's intrinsic value: This is the supreme worth and value of God. It is in his very nature. Whether or not you acknowledge it, it's there. He is of supreme worth whether or not anyone praises his name.

And out of his love for us, he wants us to worship him, so that we have the great joy and delight of **experiencing** his value, his worth, his preciousness.

God's desire is **NOT** just to fill our heads with facts. Just to put doctrine in our minds. No, he wants us to experience the joy of knowing him. He wants us to experience the happiness that comes with having Christ as our greatest treasure.

God saved us to take his intrinsic worth and go public with it...that He might echo his Excellency in his people.

- His Spirit comes to dwell in us.
- He transforms us so that we love what he loves and we walk as Jesus walked.
- And so his glory is seen in our lives... as we are thrilled and radiant from delighting in Christ!

Psalm 34

⁵Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.

NOT to delight in Him is to dishonor him, and those who dishonor him perish.

But to **know** Him and to **worship** Him is complete satisfaction. Sheer delight! Pure joy!

This what **Asaph** felt when he penned the words of...

Psalm 73:25

Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

These are the words of a man who has found the Lord to be his chief delight and his greatest joy.

There's NOTHING else he wants!

Piper says, “There are no words that glorify God more.”

Whom have I in heaven but you?

...there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

Jesus, in his parables, pleads with us to treasure him more than anything else.

Matthew 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

This man makes an incredible sacrifice. He sells **EVERYTHING!!!** All that he has worked for his whole life. His most precious possessions. He gives them all up.

But he doesn't do it just because... *“it's the right thing to do”*.

He doesn't do it out of DUTY. He doesn't do it begrudgingly or with regret.

It says in his joy he goes and sells all that he has.

Many Christians *“do the right stuff”*, but they **don't** think and **feel** this way.

Hebrews 10:34 speaks of saints who get it. The text says...

For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Take my stuff. That's *not what I treasure*. Destroy my home. Steal all my valuables. **Plunder** my estate. And, I will **joyfully** accept it.

Why? Are these people out of their minds?

No. They have done a **cost-benefit analysis**. They give up everything and they get Jesus. The worth of all their stuff added together... Even the worth of their own comfort and their own lives is a **pittance** compared to the infinite worth of Jesus.

They knew they had a **better possession**.

A thrilling possession that they would never lose. A great joy that would be an **abiding one**.

They had Jesus!

Aiden asked his Father-in-Law, *“Why don't you lock your door?”*

He replied: They take my stuff. I forgive them.

Mother Theresa: The worst suffering on earth compared to eternity is like one bad night at a cheap hotel.

Which was somewhat encouraging to us. Because Aiden and I had 3 bad nights at a cheap hotel.

This is a critical issue for the Christian. There is a lot at stake for your soul and for the kingdom of God.

Piper says:

In human emotion, what is at stake is the glory of God.

God is glorified in the satisfying and delighting of my soul or I perish.

Emotions are NOT optional.

Piper says: I hate it when people say that emotions are...

- Icing on the cake
- The caboose at the end of the train

No. No. NO!

How do you become a Christian?

You see Jesus as most valuable.

Then, Piper gave a BIG Caveat.

There are Cloudy Days

He said, "It would be naïve to say that all of life stays unclouded."

That we are just thrilled, glad and ecstatic about Jesus all the time. Happy Happy Happy.

Turn to Psalm 6

The truth is...and the Psalms illustrate this fact...that we struggle. We struggle a lot. We struggle with:

- Doubts
- Sorrow
- Other things that woo our affections away from Christ

The Psalms make clear that our vision of God is often obscured. It is often conflicted.

Psalm 6

² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;

heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.

³ My soul also is greatly troubled...

How long?

⁶ I am weary with my moaning;

every night I flood my bed with tears;

I drench my couch with my weeping.

⁷ My eye wastes away because of grief;

it grows weak because of all my foes.

Turn to Psalm 38

Tim Keller said: I'm not a counselor, but if I were, I would tell my counselees to spend a lot of time in the Psalms.

The Psalms help us as wrestle through **emotions**. As we battle with **depression**. As we fight to keep seeing **Christ** as our treasure.

Psalm 38 – we see the struggle with health problems and guilt from sin

³There is no soundness in my flesh

because of your indignation;

there is no health in my bones

because of my sin.

⁴For my iniquities have gone over my head;

like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

Psalm 38:17

For I am ready to fall,

and my pain is ever before me.

Why do we cleave to the Psalms?

Because they are us.

We understand pain, weeping, failure, betrayal, suffering and infirmities of the body.

Some of the **Prosperity Gospel** people will argue, “Well...That’s pre-Christ. We don’t face that kind of suffering now because now we have the gospel. Therefore those **miserable Psalms** don’t apply to us.”

- But I’d argue in response: Most of the scriptures that these people use to argue their case for their prosperity gospel are also found in the OT. They are pre-Christ.
- And...the NT talks a lot about Christians suffering: **What about** the sufferings of Jesus? What about the sufferings of the apostles?

Paul said...

Romans 9:2

I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

And yet, this same Paul said:

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

This is the great irony of the Christian life.

As Paul says in **2 Corinthians 6:10**, we are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing

This is the paradox in which we live as the saints of God.

The issue is this: **Part** of us going down, while the other part is going up.

2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

There is a lot of **sorrow in this life**: Crime and Wars. Bad news. Our bodies are wasting away. Our loved ones are dying. Some of them are dying without the treasure. Without Christ.

As Piper spoke you could hear the **groaning** of his heart. He said: "***There are so many sad things in my life.***"

2 Corinthians 5:2

² For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.

We fight for joy until we die. Our lives hang on it.

We battle against delighting in anything more than God.

And the Psalms help us to do that.

Psalms 34:17

Cry for help!

David gives this testimony. He says...

Psalms 34:4-5

⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.

People of God, in the midst of your suffering, **LOOK!** Look to the Lord!

Confess your sin and cry out to him in the words of Psalm 51...

Psalms 51:2

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

We are beggars who walk the earth. We are constantly pleading with the Lord for help.

Psalm 130:1-2

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!
O Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

Martin Luther said: We worship the Lord **de profundis**. – out of the depths

It's a battle in this life. And, we have to lean on our God for strength. The Psalms help us to do that.

When people ask **CJ Mahaney**, How are you, **he says**: "Better than I deserve."

Why? Life's hard, but I get heaven. I'm a sinner, but I get forgiveness. I deserve hell... OH I deserve hell, but I get Jesus.

Bob Kauflin: When people ask me how I'm doing, I say FANTASTIC. But I've started changing that because it can come across as shallow. So I'll say something like, "I'm overwhelmed. I'm struggling to get this project done by the deadline. I've got some aches and pains. But Christ died for my sins. So, I'm doing FANTASTIC."

In the midst of trials, the **Psalms** help us to keep an eternal perspective, which in turn helps us to be joyful in the midst of suffering.

Turn to Psalm 42 --- Psalm 42:5-6 – The Psalmist speaks to **himself**. He says: What's wrong with you? Get yourself together. Get your heart and mind in the right place. Think on eternal things!

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you...

The Psalms **validate** our painful emotions and they direct our attentions heavenward. They empathize with our weaknesses, but they also help us remember the goodness of God when we are in the valley of the shadow of death.

They encourage us to look to the Lord.

Psalm 130:5-6

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

⁶ my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

The Psalms help us lay aside our obsession with the things of this earth and focus our affections on Christ.

Piper says: Behold and embrace Jesus as your all satisfying treasure. That's what it means to be saved!

And the rest of life is WAR!

We fight this war to destroy the idols of our hearts and make Christ our greatest delight.

Every other delight in this life, we need to see as either an **idol or a gift**:

- **Idol**: something that tempts us to love it more than Christ --- It needs to go!

- **Gift:** something we see as a blessing from God, something that inspires greater appreciation and thankfulness, something that inspires worship

We need to destroy the idols and worship God for the gifts.

If this process and this battle is slow for you, do **NOT** turn to broken cisterns or empty wells, but wait.

We live in a conflicted state, and the Psalms help us to cope with that.

I personally, ***hate this reality***. So often, I find that there is a war in mind. A war to keep my thoughts on eternal things. A war to keep my affections Godward.

This morning I give you a **Warning, a Promise and a Book**.

- **Warning:** **Delight** in God or perish.
- **Promise:** **You** will be most joyful when you find your delight in God.
- **Book:** The **book of Psalms** helps us with these things.

I long for the day when I will be with Christ and there will be no conflicting emotions. My passion will be all Christ.

Where I will be able to sing **more truly than ever before...**

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all ... Here in the love of Christ I stand.