

# The Shortest Psalm

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**Bible Verse:** Psalm 117  
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Well, we come this evening in our study of the Psalms to the shortest of them all, the shortest Psalm, Psalm 117 and I invite you to turn there with me. Sometimes really big and important things come in small packages and this is certainly the case as we turn to God's word tonight. Psalm 117, a Psalm of praise. Beginning in verse 1,

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

Now you might at first glance wonder how we're ever going to get a full-length message out of two brief verses like this. I think Psalm 89 has, I don't know, 52 verses or so and we did one hour on it, but Psalm 117 has, it is concentrated truth, you might say. It's like a highly concentrated chemical that has to be diluted in order to be used appropriately. So much is contained here that it will take us the evening to unpack it all.

There are some interesting facts about Psalm 117. It is the shortest Psalm of all 150. It is the shortest chapter in the Bible and if you do some counting, you'll find that Psalm 119 is the middle chapter in the entire English Protestant Bible, and so we have come to the very center of Scripture here and we come to something that's appropriate because at the core of Scripture we find the core of the message of God to all of the world. While this Psalm is brief, it expresses the full authority and sovereignty of God over all of his creation. While this Psalm is brief, it covers every man who has ever lived and ever will live under the scope of its call. So while it is brief, it has much to say to us this evening and its significance can be found, as we'll see later, that it is even quoted by the Apostle Paul in his magisterial book of Romans. So even though there are two verses, we're going to break this into three sections here this evening and trust that the Lord will bless us for considering his word and going through it verse by verse in this way.

Our first section, we could say that this is a Psalm of praise. This is a Psalm of praise and the whole of the Psalm is connected by the way that it is structured. It begins with the command, the imperative, "Praise the LORD," and it ends in the same way. Look at it there in verse 1, "Praise the LORD," or praise Yahweh, "all nations," then it ends in verse 2, "Praise the LORD!" And as we often find in the Psalms, what is called technically an inclusio, it begins and ends on the same theme, the very structure is teaching us

something, the very structure says that everything in between is designed to support and to reinforce that overarching theme of praising the Lord. Everything advances that theme.

Now as we read this Psalm, it's also important for us to realize that it comes to us as a command. This is an imperative that we are to praise the Lord. God's word is telling us what it is that we are to do in response to his character. And it's not simply us, it's not simply you and me or us in this room, it's not simply the church, this goes out like a megaphone being broadcast to all of the world. All of the world is brought under the authority of this command. All of the world is responsible for responding to this summons to praise God. This is a vital necessity. It is vital because of the very nature of God, he is sovereign over all. He is worthy of praise by his greatness, by his goodness, by his grace. Everyone should recognize this God, Romans 1 says, even his hand in creation, expresses and calls men to honor him and to respect him and to praise him and respond to him with a joyful affirmation of his goodness. Along with that, God is to be praised because he is our Maker, he is the Redeemer of men and we see these things embedded in this Psalm. Everything about God calls forth the praise of man, and because of that, because of that it is a great great sin for men to not praise God. To refuse this is to invite his wrath and to invite his judgment upon you.

We've turned there often over the years but go back to Romans 1, Romans 1 where we need to see this. We cannot in our postmodern age dilute this command. We cannot marginalize it or set it aside because people don't agree with it. We don't have that option. No one has that option. The word of God, the person of God reigns supreme over it all and it is a gross sin not to praise him and to honor him and that applies to every person who has ever lived. It says in verse 18 that,

18 ... the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

They knew God by the basis of how he has revealed himself in nature but they refused to give him honor. They refused to praise him. They refused to submit to him. They refused to recognize him. So what we see, the alternative is to this summons in Psalm 117 is this, either you praise God and submit to him or you descend into ever-deepening spiritual darkness as a consequence. You're moving in one direction or the other. Those who refuse to honor him are condemning themselves to a life of foolish darkness and foolishness. The alternative is to respond in obedience to the call of Psalm 117 and praise the Lord.

Now what does it mean to praise God here in this context? Well, to praise him means that you recognize the God of the Bible as being the supreme and only deity in all of the universe. You recognize God for his supremacy. While in the Old Testament times he was uniquely the God of Israel, it does not mean that he was the God of only Israel, he was still the God over all of the earth. So to praise him means that you affirm that recognition of his surpassing deity, you ascribe glory to him, from your heart you recognize who he is as he's revealed himself to be, and you honor him for that. "God, I glorify You. I give honor to Your name. I praise You for who you are." And you do that not simply with that kind of verbal affirmation but it is done in a spirit, an attitude of delight and rejoicing in him so that we can quickly see how this simple Psalm exposes people in the very core of their heart. Are you a person who praises God like that? Do you gladly and with delight recognize his supreme position in the universe, as it were, line yourself up under him rather than in opposition to him? Is he the God of your life as opposed to you being the God of your own making? Do you recognize him with a sense of joy and honor him, that I find delight in praising God because this is what he deserves and it's right that way? And Psalm 117 calls us to honor him in that way.

Look at verse 1 again, "Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him," some commentators have suggested that this has the idea of singing praise, "Laud" being a word that fills out or expands on the idea of praising the Lord. "Praise the LORD, Laud Him," these imperatives call us to extol God with great joy, and so it's a Psalm of praise. Now secondly, this is a Psalm for all the people. It's a Psalm for all of the people. This Psalm clearly goes beyond Israel to all of the earth and that's interesting in light of Psalm 115 that we had just studied a couple of weeks ago. You see in verse 9 of Psalm 115, for example, "O Israel, trust in the LORD." Verse 10, "O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD. You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD." There is this call to national Israel and proselytes to Judaism to honor God. What we see here in Psalm 117 as we progress through the Egyptian Hallel is this, is that it's expanding, the circle is expanding now beyond Israel and going out over all of the earth.

So you see it there in verse 1, "Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples!" Those terms "all nations" and "all peoples," they are in parallel with one another. They're saying the same thing. It's an echo of the second line, "all peoples" is an echo of "all nations," so that we see that this is a universal call. This Psalm in this brief two verse Psalm, it asserts its authority over everyone who has ever lived. I find that astonishing. Now what this Psalm is doing is it is picking up on a biblical theme that started all the way back in Genesis 12. If you go back to Genesis 12 with me, turn there in your Bibles, Genesis 12, this was the design of God from the beginning when he called Abraham out of his paganism. What this gives to us is a sense that God's redemptive purpose was always worldwide in its intent, in its ultimate intent, God's redemptive purposes were always worldwide. It always extended beyond Israel from the very beginning. So in Genesis 12, you remember he is speaking to Abram, who later was named Abraham, in Genesis 12:2, God says,

2 ... I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who

bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. [Here it is in verse 3,]  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

All the families of the earth. And so God from the very start of his promises to Abraham had in mind this worldwide focus that Psalm 117 brings into clear definition for us, and so Psalm 117 is consistent with what God revealed and said to Abraham from the very beginning.

Now if we fast-forward ahead, so to speak, if we go ahead into the New Testament, we find this same emphasis being brought out again. Psalm 117 is anticipating the promise of the gospel, the command to go, Matthew 28, to go and make disciples of, what? All the nations. In Luke 24:47 it says, "repentance for forgiveness of sins shall be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." All the nations. So Christ here, we see that Christ is fulfilling the call of Psalm 117 as he sends his disciples out just prior to his ascension, and tells them to go and to preach to all of the nations.

And so there are other key New Testament texts that emphasize this universal call. I want to take you to them. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Acts 10. The gospel, I've been reading the past couple of days Voddie Baucham's new book "Fault Lines," dealing with the racial issues that are being inflicted upon us by perhaps well-intended but certainly ill-informed men, and just giving us the sense of the universality of the gospel is part of what he is emphasizing in that book, and what we find is that there is no place for this kind of silly racial division that's being inflicted upon us. It is contrary to the universal scope and the universal harmony of the gospel. So in Acts 10:34 and 35, Peter opening his mouth said this, he said,

34 ... "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

There is this universal expression of the gospel that is to go out to all men.

Look at Acts 13:47. From the mouth of the Apostle Paul, and actually let's go back and just fill in the context a little bit here because this is a key pivot point as the Jews were rejecting the gospel, Paul turns to the Gentiles instead. In Acts 13:44 it says this,

44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. 46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'"

So whatever the different ethnicities of the world may be on the different continents and in the different countries of the world, ultimately there is one human race descended from one set of parents, Adam and Eve, and there is one God over them, and there is one gospel of reconciliation to all of them, and the ones who receive that gospel in Christ are reconciled to God, the ones who reject it are lost forever. There is no other entryway, there is no other point, there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. So Psalm 117 brings us into this remarkable assertion of the universality of God, the universality of the human race, the universality of the call to praise him, and as the New Testament unfolds we see the universality of the gospel. This brings all of humanity into one place contrary to the racial division that's a being inflicted upon us by the spirit of our age. You and I need to recognize this, we need to reject that divisive rhetoric and stick to the gospel, stick to preaching Christ to everyone who will listen knowing that it is the same gospel that goes out to every man, woman and child throughout the world.

Romans 1:16, if you would turn there, I just want to bring this out from one other text. As you're turning there, I could remind you of Acts 17 where it says that God is declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent. He's furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead. In Romans 1:16, Paul says,

16 ...I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

And do you know what this means? Perhaps some of this is falling away as men are seeing through the emptiness of it, but what this means is that as we are teaching the Bible, as we are proclaiming Christ to men, we should not be trying to contextualize it and to make it specific to a particular group that's in front of us or to a particular type of people. What we need to do is we need to teach the Bible for what it says and trust the Spirit of God to apply that to hearts as they hear so that good Bible teaching in the United States carries over quite well into parts of Africa because it is the same God being proclaimed in the power of the same Spirit, elevating the same Christ to people who have the same need because they are all separated from God in their sin. So this has a harmonizing effect in ministry as well as in the call that it makes to people everywhere. So we see that this is a Psalm of for all of the people, that calls on everyone to praise the Lord.

Now this also tells us something about Christ as well. We can think about this from a Christocentric way. Turn over to 1 John, if you will, in the New Testament. 1 John 4. In 1 John 4:9 we see that this universal aspect gives us a sense of the universal love of God, that his love is extended and offered to everyone in the world. Verse 9,

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Now stay with me here, verse 11,

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Now look at this in verse 14,

14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

There is a universality about the gospel, not that all men will be saved, not that Christ died as a substitute for all men who ever lived, but rather in this sense Christ came to be the Savior of the world. Think about it this way, he is the only Savior that the world will ever have. Christ is the only Savior that the world will ever need and Christ is a Savior that is freely offered to everyone in the world, offered without ethnic distinction. Christ is offered freely on the same terms in the remote islands of the Pacific as he is in the city streets of New York or wherever else that Christ might be proclaimed. It is the same Christ preached to sinners who are all lost, and the same message goes out, if you repent and believe in Christ, you can be saved. So there is no one in the world that is excluded from the free offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As I said, the Apostle Paul quotes Psalm 117 in the book of Romans, if you'll turn to Romans 15, Paul quotes Psalm 117 to confirm the broad scope of redemption. Romans 15, beginning in verse 8. Romans 15:8,

8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

He's speaking about the Jews there. Then in verse 9 he says,

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles and I will sing to Your name." 10 Again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles with His people." 11 And again,

Verse 11, here he quotes from Psalm 117. He says,

"Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him."

So this is a Psalm for all of the people. It's a Psalm of praise that is designed for the blessing of all the people, calling them into joyful fellowship with the God who created them, and in New Testament terms, the one who alone reconciles them to his holiness through the person of Jesus Christ. So everyone is invited into the blessing of this Psalm and commanded to praise this God of whom he speaks.

Now that brings us to our third and final section here. Psalm 117, our third section. We've seen that it's a Psalm of praise, it's a Psalm for all the people and, thirdly, we could say it's a Psalm about God's perfections. It is a Psalm about God's perfections and this is why God is to be praised. We see the command there in verse 1, "Praise Him," and then in verse 2, he gives the reasons upon which God is to be praised. He informs our understanding, he informs our mind, he gives us content which should move our hearts to praise God in response to the command that has been given.

We see it there in verse 2, the people should praise God based on two of his excellent perfections or his excellent attributes. Look at verse 2 with me, he says, "For. For. Praise the LORD. For," this reason. "Praise Him because of this." That "For" functions as a bridge between verse 1 and verse 2, and he says, "Praise the LORD,"

2 For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And [second reason] the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!

And this word "lovingkindness" is an expression of the loyal love of God. God is a God who is faithful to his people. He seeks and procures their good and he does so in perfect faithfulness. Along with that, the truth of the Lord is everlasting. God is a God who cannot lie, Titus 1 tells us. God is a God of utter truth. And because of his love and because of his truth, God is to be praised. He is a God who is a God of loyal love, he's a God who keeps his promises.

Now remembering that this Psalm occurs in the context of the broader Egyptian Hallel and remembering that the Jews would recite these Psalms 113 through 118 at the Passover and at other feasts, they are remembering their national history as they read these words, and as they remember their national history, what do they recall? They remember how God saved them out of slavery in Egypt. They remember how God saved them out of danger at the Red Sea. They remember how God delivered them and brought them into the land of Canaan and drove out their enemies before them. They remember how God exalted David, and prior to that how God saved them and delivered them through that cycle of sin and decline that is expressed in the book of Judges. They remember how God showed mercy to Ruth and to Boaz and extended the line. All of these things coming to their mind and the whole history of Israel, this is my point, the whole history of Israel is a manifestation of the love and faithfulness of God to them so that they look back in their history and they see proof in time and space reality of the loyal love of God to them, and the fact that he had sustained them for centuries if not a millennium by the time that this particular Psalm was written, shows the greatness of his loyal love to them, and it also shows the great power that enforces that love.

As you consider some of the great milestone texts in the history of Israel, turn to Exodus 34. Psalm 117 picks up on God's self-disclosure to Moses and makes it a ground of praising and honoring him. Actually, you can turn to Exodus 33 in verse 18. In verse 17 it says,

17 The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name." 18 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" 19 And [God] said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

So Moses had asked God to show to Moses his glory and God says, "I will do that. I will make My goodness pass before you. I will proclaim My name before you." And what does God do in order to manifest his glory to Moses? Well, look at chapter 34, verse 5,

5 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD.

Moses is calling on his name and watch what happens and watch the self-disclosure of God that takes place as he makes his glory known to Moses. Verse 6,

6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin;

At the core of this self-revelation of God, at the core of his glory as he said he would make Moses see his glory, God gives him verbal revelation about the nature of his character and he says, "I am a God of lovingkindness. I am a God of compassion. I am a God of grace. I am a God slow to anger. I am a God of truth." Lovingkindness and truth, central to this self-revelation that God gives to Moses about his glory in Exodus 34, Psalm 117 picks up two of those attributes, his lovingkindness and his truth, and makes them the grounds upon which God is to be praised.

So we find that not only is this lovingkindness, go back to Psalm 117, not only is this lovingkindness an aspect of God's character, this wonderful love and goodness that he shows to his people, look at Psalm 117:2. It would be enough if God was a God of lovingkindness, I suppose, but in verse 2 it says, "His lovingkindness is great toward us." It's not simply that he is a God of loyal love, his loyal love is great. And in what sense is it great? How could you and I as believers in Christ this evening, what would we look to to say that the loyal love of God is great? Well, what has he done for you? What did he do for you in your salvation? He rescued you from bondage to Satan. He rescued you from an eternal punishment in hell. He forgave all of your iniquities and imputed the righteousness of Christ to you. The Spirit of God came to indwell you as a seal, as a token of your future redemption. He is with you always even to the end of the age. He has brought you through trials and tears and troubles from the moment of your conversion until now. He is with you in your present distresses. And all of this goodness, all of this kindness, all of this great love being showered upon you when you had not been seeking it, you did not deserve it, you were not and you certainly were not worthy of it.



Don't you see, beloved, as you're contemplating your own salvation if you are in Christ tonight, don't you see that it should be echoing in your own heart to say, "Yes, I affirm that. I agree. The God of the Bible is God over all. Christ is the manifestation of God in human flesh and He has saved me and I want the whole world to know that His loyal love to me has been great. It has been of surpassing kindness to me that He has shown me, delivering me from my prior life, delivering me from the power of sin, bringing me into union with Christ and one day I will see Him face to face and be made like Him because I will see Him as He is." Is it not true in light of all of those things, can we say anything else than the fact that God's love toward us has been great? Christ has broken the power of sin, Satan, death and hell, I do not need to fear the grave. Do you see, my friends, do you see that God's loyal love overcomes everything that is counter to your well-being? It has overcome everything that would seek to do you harm. It overcomes it all in order to bless you. He's given us an inerrant word, the Spirit to help us understand. It just goes on and on and on.

So let me say this. Perhaps you came in tonight feeling the weight of particular transgression in your recent past, perhaps you've come in with a cloud over your head of a sense of uncertainty about the love of God to you because your life has not measured up to your profession of Christ in recent days, perhaps it's been a matter of overwhelming difficulty or discouragement, frustration. Let me say this to you, Psalm 117 comes to you with precious words to your guilty and troubled soul. Rather than being in a position where you have to kind of work your way back into God's favor, as if that was the way that it worked and you had to, you know, you've got to do certain acts of penance and you've got to, you know, you've got to walk around with a heavy heart in order to pay and somehow make amends for what you have done, my friends, come back to the reality of who our God is and who he is to you in your salvation. God saved you because he is a God of great loyal love. He is a God of great kindness, of great patience, of great goodness to you. And yes, your guilt is great, so is mine, but the whole point of biblical salvation in Christ is that God has graciously extended his hand into our lives, shown as goodness that we did not deserve. He has taken away our sins. Scripture says that the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin, that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Don't you see that there is no barrier in God to a full and immediate reconciliation as you come to him with a confessing repentant heart of your sins? And that he is more than willing to embrace you now in this moment just as the father ran to embrace the prodigal son upon his return? That prodigal father was not, it was not about a human father, that was an illustration of the love of God for his erring children when they come back.

Well, I find that wonderfully encouraging to realize that when you and I stumble, and we all stumble in many ways, Scripture says, that God is like this, that he receives us in the fullness of his great lovingkindness in compassion that is utterly disproportionate to any merit that we could have possibly imagined. This speaks to the perfection of the compassion of God. And because, now to follow the force of the argument of the Psalm, you realize that God is like that, you appropriate his goodness by faith in Christ, and based on the promises of Scripture, then the outflow of that leads you to praise. "God, I

realize that I come to You with dirty hands. I confess what I have done. I confess what I have said. I confess the sinful motions of the remnants of my sinful heart. I confess it all to You, Lord, and it pains me to know that I have said and done what I did and said. That pains me, God, but I step beyond that and I rest in the goodness of Christ, I rest in the blood of Christ, I rest in Your great lovingkindness and therefore I have peace and joy despite my transgressions because I am trusting in the loyal love that You have showered on me in the Lord Jesus Christ."

This changes the way that you live life. This changes the way that you walk through the remnants of your sinful flesh. It changes how you respond in those inevitable times when you stumble in your walk with Christ. Our rest is not in our ability to measure up to the holiness of God. Our rest is that Christ has imputed his righteousness to us and that when we stumble and fall, the loyal love of God is there to sustain us, to keep us and to welcome us back without any kind of hesitancy on the part of God. And you say, "Well, if that's true, then that means His loyal love is great!" To which I say, "Yeah, precisely!" That's the point of the Psalm. That's why we praise him, it's because his loyal love is that great. He loved us before the beginning of time, he loved us in Christ before the foundation of the world, he loved us in Christ as Christ suffered for us at Calvary, he loved us in Christ as the Spirit applied that redemption to us in the moment of our new birth. He loves us in Christ as he sanctifies us throughout the intervening time between our conversion and our time we meet him in glory, and he will love us like that and in even greater manifestation to our understanding and our hearts throughout all of eternity. Now on what basis could we possibly be stingy and reluctant in our praise in light of that? "Praise the LORD, all nations! Praise Him all you Christians alike!"

Now we've spoken of his loyal love, read on in verse 2 there in Psalm 117,

2 ... His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting.

Now before I go into that second clause there, let me just say something here, that hopefully I don't need to emphasize much here at Truth Community Church but something that is worthwhile pointing out. All of that exposition I made just now of the lovingkindness of God and how he has shown love to us from our election to the cross, to our regeneration, to our sanctification, to our glorification, I want you to understand something. Those rich truths come from knowing theology. Theology is not an idle matter of curiosity, it is our lifeblood. The truth of Scripture is expressed in theological doctrine and accurate theological doctrine is what gives rise to genuine praise to God. We are responding to his person and we are responding on the basis of objective truth that has been revealed to us in Scripture. Someone who is weak in theology is going to be weak in his praise because he's not going to have the full-orbed understanding of all that God has done for him in Christ. And so we should never be like some who disdain theology, some who would hide certain aspects of the sovereignty of God because they don't think it's fitting to try to comfort somebody in their sorrows with the sovereignty of God. That's the most ridiculous thing a pastor could ever say. That's ridiculous. All of our comfort comes from who God is and in his sovereign love. The fact that God rules over all and

that he is kind to us, that is theology and that theology is the basis of the solidity of our hearts as we go through this wicked world. I don't have to convince you of that but there are others who need to hear that and contemplate the reality of it.

You know, I'm getting way off track here but that's okay. Human comfort is fine as far as it goes. Christian fellowship is very very important and I delight in the fellowship that is expressed here in this church. But if you've gone through very deep sorrows and have felt the overwhelming waves of grief flooding over your souls, you come to realize that there is a limit of the ability of even the best of Christians to comfort you. There is a limit to the ability of a pastor to extend that which your heart needs. Ultimately the only refuge we have, ultimately the only refuge we have is the fact that God is like this, that God is a God of lovingkindness and he is a God of truth. A pastor, a Christian friend, can't help you when you go home and there's conflict in your family. You can't go in and help there and ultimately sustain that. There is encouragement but it's not an ultimate rest that we find. Ultimately our only rest is in Christ and we understand these things as we study his word and we let sound theology come from our study of God's word. And so these things are really important to all of life. This is our life that we're talking about here. This is everything that is precious to us and it is expressed in the truths about the reality of the attributes of God and the work and person of Christ.

So we go on in verse 2. It says, "His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting." It's this second attribute. By truth, he is indicating the trustworthiness of God. God has made promises and he will keep them. He says that we will see Christ face to face, he will keep that promise. He says that he is working all things together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose, he's keeping that promise. He said that he would be with us always, he is with us always. As a result of that, we fear no evil. What God has promised to us, he will do. What God has promised to provide, he will provide. His truth is everlasting. It is eternal. It cannot be broken. So we rest in that, we have confidence in that, we praise him for that, and we praise him not because – watch this, this is really important – we praise him not because we necessarily see that working out in the circumstances that surround us today, we praise him in response to what his word says, we praise him in response to truth not what is happening in the world, not is what is happening in your life, not based on what you feel even at the moment, you praise him in response to what his word says. "God, I see this. I'm suffering right now but in response to Your word, even though I don't see solutions to what's troubling me right now, God, I praise You because of Your lovingkindness and Your truth." God's word stands now and it always will.

Now I ask a rhetorical question: what God is like that? Who is like that of what we have been speaking here this evening? A God of loyal love and a God of truth, a God who never changes, a God who always keeps his promises, a God who always provides for his people, a God who has his eye on them and says of his people in Zechariah, "They are like the apple of my eye." The apple of the eye being the most sensitive part of the body, just being so careful to protect the apple, that's how God views his people. God is love, Scripture says. What God sends his own Son to reconcile hostile sinners to himself? What God takes on human flesh, dies on a cross in great agony and suffering physically

and, more importantly, spiritually to bear their sins in his own body? What God sacrifices himself for the sake of rebel people like us? Who is like that? The one true God is. His lovingkindness is great. His truth is everlasting. He is unique. He is transcendent. He is near. He is loving. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Such a free offer going out to sinners everywhere. "God demonstrates His own love toward us in while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I'm convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

His lovingkindness is great. Praise the Lord. And the amazing thing as we gather together in our beloved fellowship here today, it's not just about us, it's for all peoples, it's for all the nations. All are called to join on this and Scripture teaches us that in the coming age, all this will be fulfilled. It will be shown that God called people from all nations to himself so that there would be no people group unrepresented in the great chorus of praise that will be offered to him in the end. In Revelation 7:9 it says this,

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

That's what's coming. That will be the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 117. The ultimate fulfillment of this still future to us. I'm going to be there in that great moment with that great multitude. Are you? If so, what else can we say except, "Praise the LORD!"

Let's pray together.

*Father, Your eternal plan is breathtaking in its scope. Your perfections are breathtaking in their scope. Your Son, the Lord Jesus, is breathtaking in His glory. Your Spirit is breathtaking in His work on our behalf. Eternity will be more than breathtaking, it will be a wonder to behold and we will never tire. Our hearts will never tire of Christ alone. Thank You for Your loyal love. Thank You for Your truth. We offer You our praise tonight in obedient response to Your holy word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

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