



Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

Five Solas

Be Present with God by Praying Scripture

Psalm 145:17-21

10/21/2018

Main Point

Praying Scripture rescues us from the rut of repeated prayers by giving us a fuller prayer life in agreement with God's will.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How has prayer ebbed and flowed in its prominence throughout your life?

What change would you like to see in your prayer life?

As we consider how we can be present with God through praying Scripture, we will look at a section of Psalm 145 as a guide. Primarily, we want to see how using Scripture as a guide for praying can move us from praying what Whitney calls "the same old things about the same old things," to a robust conversation that is focused on God.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 145:17.

At the beginning of the final section of Psalm 145, David extolled the virtue of God's character. The praise David sang to God was not connected to any specific blessing or deliverance that He manifested to His people. This was praise to God simply and exclusively because of who He is. His praise, based in God's character, established God as the metric for what righteousness and goodness are—without exception.

Think about how often you pray to God without reference to yourself or the matters immediately influencing your life and happiness. Why is that so hard to do?

What particular traits of God's character come to mind most immediately when you think of Him? What passages in the Bible can you think of that speak to those traits?

Beginning prayer in the manner that David did in Psalm 145:17 moves prayer beyond those issues that immediately exert pressure on the life of the disciple. It also places those specific issues in their rightful place beneath the grandeur and magnitude of God. Praying Scripture in this way removes us from the rut of our prayer laundry list to something deeper and more profound.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 145:18-20.

David moved from the character of God to the historical evidence of His character among His people. God's response to the faith-filled prayers of His people is one of covenant grace. He heard their cry and saved them. Part of the intimacy of prayer is recognizing that God is present, He hears, and He responds.

Describe a trying season in your life where you also felt God's nearness. How did that experience shape your prayer life? What impact did it have on your desire to pray?

How is God answering our prayers in part a response to His relationship with us? Why is it important to understand that relationship?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 145:21.

As the worship of the psalm progressed, David could not solely be a worship prompter—he became a worshiper himself. So it is with all of God's people throughout time. The disciplined meditation on who God is and how He acts on behalf of His people—recognizing that we are among that group—must move us to worship, by nature of Whom it is we worship. We cannot be unmoved.

As David walked through the special ways that God works in His people, did you connect any of the episodes of your life to David's words? If not, take a moment to do so. How does remembering God's faithfulness to you prompt you to worship Him?

What form does personal worship of God usually take for you? How often is that a part of your life? When it is a part of your life, what differences do you notice it making in your perspective and disposition?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Look up your favorite psalm. What prayer themes immediately emerge? How would praying through this psalm enrich your typical prayer experience?

Think about your schedule this week. When will you take the time to pause and pray through a passage of Scripture?

How might this approach to prayer help you internalize more of God's Word? How might internalizing God's Word regularly compel you to live sent?

Pray

Thank God for giving us the truth of His Word. Ask that He would use His Word to grow our prayer life and increase our intimacy with Him. Thank Him especially for being a God who draws us to pray and listens to us.

Commentary

PSALM 145:17-21

145:17-18. God is righteous toward his people, always just in all his ways. He never deals with his creation wrongly, nor does he ever mismanage them with inequity. God is infinitely loving, never needlessly harsh. God is near to those in need, ready to extend favor. He does not abandon his people who confess his name. Rather, he comes to the aid of all who call on him with grace and love.

145:19-20. God fulfills the desires of those who fear him, granting them true soul satisfaction. No person can be happy if he does not fear God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of everything good in one's life. The Lord watches over his own, protecting and preserving them. They keep God in their love, and he keeps them by his love. But to the contrary, all the wicked, or those who do not fear and love God, he will destroy.

145:21. No matter what others may say, David declares, my mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. This is a straightforward resolution to praise God (cp. vv. 1-2). Let every creature join this chorus of praise to God for ever and ever.

WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The psalmist concludes his poem by repeating his initial self-exhortation to solo praise (cf. Pss 103, 104), for which he has just given fresh grounds in vv 13B-20. Again he is acutely conscious of its inadequacy, sincere as it is. Only a congregation made up of all creatures (, "all flesh, everybody") could render adequate praise of God's transcendent power. The universal reference brings literary closure to the psalm, one that reverts to the wish at the beginning of its second half, in v 10a.

In v 15 the verb , "look," has a connotation of hopeful waiting (see W. Zimmerli, *Man and His Hope in the Old Testament* [SBT 2.20; London: SCM Press, 1968] 36; Wolff, *Anthropology*, 150). In v 18 , "those who call upon him," does not relate to cultic prayer but is a general term for the worshiping community of Israel, like those people mentioned in vv 19a, 20a, and also v 10b (J. Becker, *Gottesfurcht*, 148). In v 20 a chiasm reinforces the antithesis (Watson, *Traditional Techniques*, 372).

Closing rubric (145:21b). Metrically this phrase does not appear to be part of the psalm proper. It represents a liturgical refrain. One may compare the addition of Ps 115:18 in many MSS of MT (BHS) and the refrain , "Blessed be Yahweh and blessed be his name for ever and ever," after each line of the psalm in 11QPsa (Flint, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 114).

Explanation

Ps 145 is a solo hymn of exuberant praise; for instance, it uses "all, every" () no fewer than seventeen times. It was intended to stimulate the congregation to appreciate Yahweh's powerful and beneficent kingship over Israel and the world at large. To this end it uses both prayerful address of God and hortative testimony. It is marked by skillful artistry, especially discernible in its acrostic form, of which the poet was a master, weaving neatly into the

development of his thought its witness to Yahweh's total praiseworthiness, from A to Z. "The entire alphabet, the source of all words, is marshalled in praise of God. One cannot actually use all of the words in a language, but by using the alphabet one uses all potential words" (Berlin, "Rhetoric," 18).

Kingship, human and divine, has two sides, power over its subjects and commitment to their welfare. The title I have chosen for this psalm, "Tell of his might, sing of his grace," taken from Robert Grant's hymn "O worship the King," serves to express the double message of the psalm. Its theme of divine grace is divided into common grace to humanity and special grace to Israel. Isaac Watts, in his paraphrase of Ps 145, "Sweet is the memory of thy name," captured the distinction by his phrase "we who taste thy richer grace."

Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150 (Revised)*, vol. 21, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 373–374.