

Psalm 145 (excerpts) **I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name forever and ever. ² Every day I will praise you. ³ Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. ⁴ One generation will commend your works to another. ⁵ They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. ⁶ They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. ⁸ The LORD is gracious and compassionate; slow to anger and rich in love. ⁹ The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. ¹⁶ You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.**

Brothers and Sisters Appreciating God's Goodness:

A husband and his wife were sitting silently on the front porch one summer evening. After 42 years of marriage, he was beginning to realize how much his wife meant to him. He wasn't much for conversation, but finally he said to her, "*You know, Doris, you've been such a wonderful woman that there are times I can hardly keep from telling you.*" His compliment was truly "underwhelming."

What do you think? Do we Christians sometimes do that with God? Do we at times "underwhelm" him with our silence when we have so many opportunities to express our praise? Psalm 145 is just the opposite. It is an *outburst* of praise to God by King David. We have those times too -- like when you go camping and get up early to watch the sunrise over the lake & hear the birds singing to greet the day. Your heart and mind are overwhelmed with a sense of God's power and majesty, and you actually say: "*O Lord, you are so great and good! Thank you for such a beautiful world and such a wonderful day in my life!*" You may even hum "*How Great Thou Art.*"

In Psalm 145, the psalmist David is reminding us to **Praise God for His Awesome Works.** (1) *His awesome works to save*, (2) *His awesome works to provide.*

1

Psalm 145 is a continual doxology, one long "praise phrase" that credits God with providing all that we need. Seminary Professor John Brug writes, "*Psalm 145 emphasizes the providential and redemptive love of the Lord -- which is really the theme of the whole book of Psalms.*" In it David is saying God has done everything well from keeping us alive on earth to giving us life in heaven.

We praise God first and foremost, of course, for his free gift of eternal life through faith in the Christ. Think of the huge mess God got us out of! David said, "*The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.*" We totally rebelled against God, yet he promised and sent a Savior whose perfect life and innocent death spiritually disinfected us from all our sin. In spite of the fact that our lives are filled with selfishness and stubbornness, David says, "*The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.*" Instead of boiling over like a Hawaiian volcano, God's anger against our selfish sins is tempered by his deep love for the sinner. His anger for our sins was transferred to Jesus.

So what does David do? He praises God! Greater than any sunrise at the lake is the picture of Jesus on the cross! That's why David could say (even though he didn't yet know all the details about the Savior), "*I will praise your name forever and ever.*" Let's not ignore the significance of that one little word "*forever.*" Notice it's not just, "*I'll praise you during my earthly lifetime,*" but it's "*I'll praise you forever!!*" David believed as we believe: death is the end of nothing and the beginning of everything for God's people.

David proclaims: "*One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.*" The most sincere and important act of praise is to tell someone else what God has done for them. David says that begins right here in our families. Get your children ready for heaven. Our 80 or so average years here on this little planet come and go like a flash. This generation of Christians is doing what Christians did here for generations past at St. Paul's, beginning in 1901: Praising God

through Christian education. God's **"awesome works"** are proclaimed in LES, SS, VBS, CAT, ABS, -- as well as in our Christian homes through teachable moments and family devotions at our kitchen tables or bedsides. **"One generation commends God's works to another..."**

Last week we had a *Worship at the Cross* service here for the developmentally disabled. I had the privilege of sitting next to one young man whose name is Kevin. Our WATC volunteers know Kevin. He doesn't sit still long and he doesn't say much more than 1 or 2 words in a row. However, during worship my jaw dropped. With all the rest of the worshipers, Kevin confessed clear as a bell: **"Lord, I am sorry for my sins"** and a moment later, **"Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving my sins!"** Remarkable! All I could think was, **"Praise God for the gift of faith planted by the Holy Spirit in this special young man!"**

2

We praise God for his awesome work of saving us from sin and giving us eternal life. We also praise God for his awesome work of providing for our daily needs. Or do we?

Well, we do, but sometimes we spend more time complaining about things, or wishing things were different, than we spend time praising God for what he's given us. Here's what David says, **"The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing."** Everything we have comes from the generous hand of the Lord.

Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph and renowned scientist, once pointed at an insect's delicate and intricately formed wing and said, **"If God makes all these small things around us on earth so exquisitely beautiful, what grandeur must he attach to the things beyond, unseen, and eternal?"** Let's not take for granted God's creation around us: the color burst of the marigold, the lonesome yet perfectly-pitched song of the black-capped chickadee, the glow of the full moon on a summer night. Pay attention to the "little things" and don't be surprised at how much more often you will lift your heart in praise to God! And to Samuel Morse's point, if this is what God has given us here, just imagine what things we will see and inherit in the world to come! As Paul wrote (quoting Isaiah), **"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"** (1 Cor 2:9). Our view of things from heaven will be mind-blowing!

Because we are people with imperfect faith, we often wonder if God has a plan for us as we live day-to-day in this world. Here's something Luther wrote: **"The ways of God's providence are like Hebrew books: they must be read from the back in order to understand."** If we could see our lives from back to front (end to beginning) as God can, we would say, **"Ahhh, I totally understand now!"** It's like Joseph and his brothers. They hated him and sold him as a slave. Joseph experienced many trials and injustices. However, after years passed and he and his brothers met again, Joseph said to them, **"Don't be afraid. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives"** (Gen 50:19-21). In effect, God let Joseph see the end of the book. It all made sense.

Fellow believers, today, tomorrow, and forever, *Praise God for his awesome works!*

Amen.