

HOW TO PRAISE

By John Richardson

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 89:1–5

[1] I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

[2] For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.”

[3] You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant:

[4] I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.” Selah

[5] Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

OBSERVATION

Steadfast love is not an isolated attribute of God; it is a relational aspect. God’s steadfast love is not an abstract feeling of goodwill that one should tap into; it is shared between God and those with whom he has relationship. The enduring nature of God’s love propels the praises of man, because (by comparison) our love is fickle.

- The steadfast love of God is understood by the psalmist to be worthy of his praises forever. Enduring love from God merits endless praise from man. Praise leads to proclamation. If you are enthralled by something, you share it. If you dine at a place that offers an incredible experience, soon you will be sharing that news with friends or family. Now magnify the idea: experiencing the love of God consumes you so much that you have to share it with others. This is the act believers call evangelism, which comes from a heart of great joy rather than obligation (v. 1).
- The psalmist’s words, “for I have said,” mean that in his heart it has been fixed/established. God’s love is established far beyond the reaches of earth, thus not bound by the events located here, but based on the plans and purposes of God alone. The faithfulness of God should bring joy to the reader as merit-based love is cast out of the equation of relationship with God. God remains faithful even though we at times can be faithless (v. 2).
- God’s faithfulness and love is bound by verse 3. The covenantal promise to David was that a king from his bloodline would sit on the throne forever. No one could anticipate that king to be Jesus, God becoming flesh to bring redemption. Jesus will reign forever (Hebrews 10:11-14). What does Christ do on the throne? He makes us more holy (Hebrews 10:14), sent the Spirit to reside with us (Romans

8:8-9), intercedes on our behalf (Hebrews 7:25), is our advocate when we sin (1 John 2:1-2), and is preparing a place for believers in eternity (John 14:1-3). Jesus is doing more than this, but we have limited space. One could spend a great time reading through God's Word to seek all that Christ is doing (vv. 3-4).

- Thinking about the amazing love of God through Christ is a celebration both individually and corporately. The reason believers miss gathering with others is more than what happens on stage (which can be viewed online); it's standing together in worship. Gathering as the church is the opportunity to praise the faithfulness of God among His people. When believers struggle to see God, others can remind them of God's work in their lives. A church gathered moves people to see God through every individual, building a stronger faith among the saints (v. 5).

OBEDIENCE

Celebrate the love and faithfulness of God. Build time in your day to worship God through singing, praying, writing, and meditating on God. Spend time remembering the love He has shown you.

- Many people keep a prayer journal (if you don't, now is the time), but it would also be helpful to keep a book of praise. Write down things that God has done or is doing as a means to reflect on how He is working in your life. Write down both good and bad things (current perspective), and reflect on how everything worked out for the glory of God.
- Grow in the joy of God and seek to share the love of God with others. Evangelism springs out of a joyful heart.
- Spend time in God's Word looking for the work of Christ in heaven. What is Jesus doing right now? How is Jesus continuing the mission of redemption on earth?

PRAYER

Seek God in reflection of all that He has done. Share with God the things that you've noticed Him doing in your life. Ask God to clarify how His love is being used in specific situations. Tell God the names of people with whom you plan to share His love.