

Praise the Coming King – 1. Our King is so Big

Psalm 96

¹ Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. ² Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. ³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. ⁴ For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. ⁶ Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary. ⁷ Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. ⁸ Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. ⁹ Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. ¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. ¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. ¹² Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. ¹³ Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.

"Big things come in small packages." This statement is proven true throughout the Bible. From Abraham as one lonely 90 year old man, to the orphaned slave child Moses to the shepherd boy David – God's Word teaches us great truths from the smallest of people. Yet, there was a limit as to what God could do through these people. Abraham would only live so long. Moses would not be able to enter the "Promised Land." David's kingdom would grow only so big. Human beings can only do so much.

Do we ever put God in a box? Do we, in our minds, put a limit on what God can do? We all would say that we don't. Do we ALWAYS trust that God is in control of all things in our lives? Do we really expect God to answer every prayer we pray to him? Do we think that we have to help God along a little bit in our lives?

God is so much bigger than we can realize. God spoke this world into motion. He created the smallest molecule to the largest ocean. The Psalmist says that if you want to begin to see how big God is, take a look at the world he created. **"The Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary."** If you have ever stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon, you can't help but marvel at the God who created in this massive and beautiful canyon. Saying that it was slowly washed out by the Colorado River over millions of years, take away glory from our God. You can't help but marvel at the Rocky Mountains in the western part of our country. As you stand on the shore of an ocean, you can't help but marvel at how much water is there. We have a BIG God who has done BIG things.

But even bigger than all the things in this world he created, is the salvation that he has given us in Jesus. Don't make God's salvation too small. What do I mean? Sometime people look at their lives and think: *God could never forgive me for that.* The guilt of past sins is crushing them. Or we think that God would save us because after all *we're pretty good.* We think that somehow we can contribute to our salvation. By doing so, we make God smaller and us bigger.

Our God is bigger that we can ever imagine. He has created a massive creation. Even though God may have put limits on what we can do, he doesn't limit himself. I can't even begin to imagine what Jesus suffered for our salvation. Our salvation is ginormous. So, when we look at that small baby King in that manger at Christmas, let us also remember that he is BIG. His grace and salvation is bigger than we can ever imagine. Let us join the psalmist in praising our King who is so big.

Praise the Coming King – 2. Our King Calms Our Fears

Ps 107:23-32

²³ Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. ²⁴ They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep. ²⁵ For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. ²⁶ They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. ²⁷ They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. ²⁸ Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. ²⁹ He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰ They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. ³¹ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. ³² Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

Fear is an emotion that we have all experienced. I was going to take our boat out for the first time on Lake Michigan a number of years ago. I had been out on rough lakes before, so the bit of a wind really didn't scare me. The waves didn't look that bad. After all, it was 16' boat with a 75 horsepower motor on it. I had this picture in my mind about going up the shoreline of Lake Michigan up to downtown. We launched the boat down at Bender Park. Everything was good, until we went around the breakwater barrier there. The first wave came over the front of the boat, and I thought we were going under. I've never seen so much water come over the front of the boat. I managed to get it back around the breakwater. My heart was filled with fear when that first wave hit the boat.

Our portion of Psalm 107 begins with sailors going about their daily business on the water. It appears that it wasn't their first time on the sea. They thought that *they were truly the captains of their own ships and masters of their destinies*.

They could be no further from the truth. Then one day things all changed. A storm came up. The Psalmist describes it this way: **"They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end."**

We are not much different. We have a tendency to be consumed with our plans and purposes. We can be consumed at times with the illusion that we can control our lives and the circumstances of them. When our God intervenes in his creation in sudden and unexpected ways, it reminds us that we are not in as much control as we thought.

It is at those times that we need to remember that the God of creation is in control of the wind and the waves. He can stir up storms, but he also can still the storms. Jesus looks so tiny in that manger. One day he will look at the wind and waves and say: **"Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.**" (Mark 4:39) We don't need to live in fear. Our King has everything under control. We hear Psalm 107.

Praise the Coming King – 3. Our King Cares for his World

Ps 147:7-18

⁷ Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp. ⁸ He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. ⁹ He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. ¹⁰ His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man; ¹¹ the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. ¹² Extol the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion, ¹³ for he strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within you. ¹⁴ He grants peace to your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat. ¹⁵ He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. ¹⁶ He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. ¹⁷ He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast? ¹⁸ He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.

What makes the perfect Christmas gift? I googled that question on my computer, and one of the first articles that I read promised to give me over 3000 Christmas gifts and ideas. Another only gave 1000 ideas. How in the world does that help me? What would make the perfect Christmas gift for each of you here tonight? I think, a common thread that would run through many of those gifts ideas is that it should be something that says you really care.

Throughout the pages of the Bible, it is really clear that Jesus cares. That little baby in Bethlehem is going to show the world just how much God really cares. Our Psalm gives us a picture of the God who continues to faithfully and lovingly care for his world even though his world is broken and rebellious. He just keeps pouring out his grace, his love, on us. God isn't some kind of cosmic maintenance guy who is just keeping the lights on for a while. He is planning, preserving, directing and bringing to fulfillment his plan in the exact way he desires. The proof of his care – the little child in the manger in Bethlehem. Let's praise the coming King who cares for his world.

Praise the Coming King – 4. Our King Endures Forever

Ps 136

^{136:1} Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. ² Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. ³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. ⁴ to him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever. ⁵ who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever. ⁶ who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever. ⁷ who made the great lights — His love endures forever. ⁸ the sun to govern the day, His love endures forever. ⁹ the moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever. ¹⁰ to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt His love endures forever. ¹¹ and brought Israel out from among them His love endures forever. ¹² with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; His love endures forever. ¹³ to him who divided the Red Sea asunder His love endures forever. ¹⁴ and brought Israel through the midst of it, His love endures forever. ¹⁵ but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea; His love endures forever. ¹⁶ to him who led his people through the desert, His love endures forever. ¹⁷ who struck down great kings, His love endures forever. ¹⁸ and killed mighty kings — His love endures forever. ¹⁹ Sihon king of the Amorites His love endures forever. ²⁰ and Og king of Bashan — His love endures forever. ²¹ and gave their land as an inheritance, His love endures forever. ²² an inheritance to his servant Israel; His love endures forever. ²³ to the One who remembered us in our low estate His love endures forever. ²⁴ and freed us from our enemies, His love endures forever. ²⁵ and who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. ²⁶ Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.

Repetition is the mother of all learning! Think back to when you first learned to write. You practiced making your letters over and over again. You learned how to make them in a way that soon became second nature to your hand. As you learned to read, you learned the sounds of letters and practiced reading the same words again and again. Repetition can be a valuable tool in learning.

There are some sections of the Bible that are harder to read than others. Then there are those sections that you can't miss what the author is trying to say. In Psalm 136 there is one phrase that will be repeated 26 times. His love endures forever. Like I said, you can't miss it. Why did Jesus come – His love endures forever. God gave a promise to save this world. He accomplished it in Jesus. He wants us to know that his love will endure forever. For that we praise our coming King. Amen.