

Reasons to praise God

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[0 : 00] Okay, anyway, we start first, then you just follow whatever, okay? Okay, just begin. Before I begin this morning's sermon, I would like to ask you a few questions.

Question number one, what is the Christian word that is pronounced almost the same way in many different languages? Yes. I'll give you a hint. It starts with the letter H and ends with the letter H. What is the answer? A shout out to the word. What is it? Yes, okay. Question number two, how many times does this word appear in the Old Testament?

Now you Google, you can use Google. How many times does this word appear in the Old Testament? The Google will tell you. How many times? The Google will tell you. How many times? In the Old Testament, I mean in the Old Testament. Okay, just let me give you an answer, okay? Yes, got it? Anybody got it? Some of you are very fast, you know. Wow, Google, huh? Twenty? Four times. There are 24 times. All these 24 times is found in one book of the Old Testament.

[1 : 18] Only one book in the Old Testament. These 24 times all appear in the same book. Which book is it? Psalms. Psalms, huh? Okay, Psalms. So we skip the question now. Three questions, okay?

Okay, I'll just skip the question. Now we go to slide. Five, huh? Five, huh? You can go to slide five. Five, five. Go down. Okay, okay, this one.

Psalms 1, 3, 5 begins and ends with the word Hallelujah. What does Hallelujah mean? Hallelujah comes from two Hebrew words.

Halal and Yah. Halal means praise. Yah means the Lord. So Hallelujah means praise the Lord. So simple. The word praise literally means make something shine.

So to praise, to praise is to boast about someone. To praise is to brag about something. Hallelujah is a call for stirring passionate praise to God.

[2 : 27] It is a shouting. It is a shouting call for corporate praise. Shouting. That's why when we utter the word Hallelujah, we don't say it softly.

We don't say Hallelujah, Hallelujah. We don't say it that way. We shout out the word Hallelujah. Shouting call. It is a shouting call for corporate praise.

Corporate. It is not praising the Lord alone. By yourself. It is actually calling others. Telling others. Come, come. Join me in praising the Lord.

Let us. Let us. Pray the Lord together. That's what the psalmist is doing in verse 1.

Psalmist is the one who writes the psalm. Just like the one who plays the piano is called the pianist. So the one who writes the psalm is called the psalmist.

[3 : 29] The psalmist says, praise the Lord. Actually, the praise the Lord is Hallelujah. Praise the name of the Lord. What does it mean to praise the name of the Lord?

The name represents the nature of the person. The name of the Lord represents God's nature. So to praise the name of the Lord is the honor.

To honor Him in all His attributes. To honor Him in all His character. Verse 1 continues. Praise Him, you servants of the Lord.

You who minister in the house of the Lord. In the courts of the house of our God. Who is to praise the Lord? Who are these worshippers? Verse 2 tells us.

Verse 2 says, it is those who minister in the house of the Lord. In those days, they were the priests. They were the Levites. Because they were the worship leaders of the temple.

[4 : 31] The priests and the Levites. They are the ones to praise the Lord. But are they the only ones? Are they the only ones?

Does that mean only the worship leaders now praise the Lord? No. No. Look down at verse 19. Verse 19 says, All you Israelites now praise the Lord.

All you Israelites, praise the Lord. So the Israelites, all the Israelites are also called to praise the Lord. Everyone here is to praise the Lord.

True worship is not just for the pastors, for the elders, for the deacons, for the very devoted. No, no, no. True worship is for every believer.

All believers, you and I, are exalted to praise the Lord. Verse 3. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

[5 : 35] Now the psalmist is giving us reasons to praise the Lord. Why praise the Lord? Why praise the Lord? Reason number one, because He is good.

God is good. The psalmist has experienced the goodness of God in his life. And if we call ourselves Christians, we too can say that we have experienced God's goodness in our life.

We have experienced countless blessings that God has poured into our lives. Yes, God is good. Tell your neighbor, God is good. As we think, as we think about God's goodness, we will sing praise to His name, for that is pleasant.

One of the ways to express our praise is through singing song.

Singing songs. God's people should be a singing people. And we should love to sing praises to God. I have a colleague, Christian colleague.

[6 : 45] He's from another church. You know what he says? S.I.B. punya S.I.B. punya orang. Pandai menyanyi. Oh, those who don't understand.

S.I.B. members are very good in singing. It's from another church. And I agree with you. I was in Miri. When I first post-to-Miri, I came from West Malaysia.

When I first post-to-Miri, and my head was singing. You know, they sing in parts naturally. Wow, we don't know. They just sing in parts. You know, every time singing. N.I.B. punya orang.

N.I.B. punya orang. They're very good in me. Oh, our sister. So I was so, wow, so taken. So enjoy the singing with them. Yes, God's people must love to sing praises to God.

Sing praise to His name. For that is pleasant. This is the second reason given to praise God.

Reason number two, praising Him is pleasant.

[7 : 44] When we praise God, we enjoy God's pleasure. There is enjoyment in worshipping God. There is enjoyment for us. But, this should never be the primary reason.

Because, we should not be, we ourselves should not be the focus of our worship. I praise God because I want to feel good. No, no, no.

I praise God because God deserves to be praised. And in doing so, and in doing so, it delights me. When I praise God, it benefits me, it edifies me, it gives me pleasure. Our spirit feels good after worshipping God.

That is the side effect of a good worship. but, we don't focus on ourselves. We don't, we don't also, we also don't focus on our praises.

[8 : 47] We don't focus on the activity of praise, on the act of praise. We focus on God. He is the object of our praise.

When we put our focus on God who is good, we will definitely experience His pleasure. Yes, worship does do us good.

And there's nothing wrong enjoying worshipping God because it is pleasant. Verse 4, For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession.

Here, the Psalmist give us a third reason to praise God. He has chosen Jacob for himself to be his treasured possession.

The word Jacob here refers to the nation Israel. It does not refer to the individual person a person Jacob. It refers to the nation Israel.

[9 : 58] He chose Israel not because Israel was great. No. He chose Israel because he loved them.

God told Israel this in Deuteronomy chapter 7 verses 7 to 8. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples.

You were the fewest. You were the fewest of all peoples. but it was because the Lord loved you.

Israel was called to praise God because he chose them.

This is also the reason that we should praise God because he has also chosen us. 1 Peter 2.9 tells us but you are a chosen people.

A chosen people. you are a royal priesthood. A holy nation. God's special possession that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

[11 : 11] He chose us not because we are clever, not because we are smart, not because we are beautiful, not because we are great or talented.

No, no, no, no. We are none of these things. In fact, God created us in his image to be like him in his character but we have ignored him.

We have ignored him and we lived lives that brought shame to him. We shame him. We shame him. And after all we have done to shame our God, God still chose us.

God chose us. He did not forsake us. God chose us. God chose to show kindness to us by coming in Jesus Christ.

More than that, God chose to pay the penalty for our sins. Romans 5, 8 says, But God demonstrates his own love for us in this.

[12 : 19] While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That is God's goodness revealed in his choice. We have nothing to do with this.

Nothing to do with this. We cannot earn a right relationship with God because of our sin. God has to earn it for us.

He chose to love us and save us. Despite our continual rebellion, He still loves and cares for us.

Our failures, our failures do not stop God from continuing to love us. Is He not worthy of our worship? Is He not worthy of our praise?

Yes, His choice, His choice to pay the penalty of our sins, deserves our total allegiance. Once He has chosen us, He transforms us.

[13 : 25] Once He has chosen us, He transforms us. We automatically become His treasured possession.

Once we are no treasure, now we have become a treasured possession. A royal treasure, a royal treasure, because we are owned by the king of kings.

We become a royal treasure because we are owned by the king of kings. Do you know that we are royal treasure, belonging to the king of kings?

kings? Think of it. Have you had a treasured possession? How do you treat your treasured possession?

How do you treat it? You will be extra careful with it. You will take good care of it. You make sure it is not damaged.

[14 : 28] You make sure it is not lost. You make sure it is not stolen. You make sure it is not stolen. God also cares for his treasured possession, but so much better.

His care for us is long term. He cares about us having a right relationship with him for eternity.

He cares about developing our character to be like his. Our problem is, you know what our problem is? our problem is that we care about our looks.

We care about our looks more than our character. We care about our earthly possessions more than our relationship with God. We care about what others think of us more than what God thinks of us.

We care about what brings us pleasure rather than what brings God pleasure. We need to realize that even though God loves us and cares for us, it doesn't mean that God will protect us from every sort of harm, every difficulty, every sickness, or even physical death.

[15 : 50] It doesn't mean that God will protect us from all this. God does not busy himself, God does not keep himself busy every moment to remove hardships from our lives, remove hardships and difficulty from our lives, and replace them with happy events.

God does not busy himself always wanting to give us a happy time on earth, have a good time on earth. No, God doesn't do that.

Steve Brown noted, he says, for every non-Christian who has cancer, a Christian will have cancer, so the world will see the difference.

And for every non-Christian who has a business failure, a Christian will have a business failure, so the world can see the difference. What difference? What kind of difference? What does Jesus, what kind of difference that Jesus has made in your life?

When you handle cancer, when you handle business failure, what does Jesus, how does Jesus affect that? Nothing. Surely, if you call yourself Christian, the difference Jesus made in your life, you will handle cancer, you handle business failure differently.

[17 : 10] God wants us to trust him more and more. God wants us to be more and more like Jesus.

Carl Lung Quis was a former president of a Bible college. In 1988, the picture, can you see the picture? The picture, the picture, Carl Lung Quis was a former president of a Bible college. In 1988, the doctors told him he had a rare form of blood cancer and three years later, three years later, he died of this cancer. He wrote this letter the day after he heard the news of his cancer. That day, in the hospital room, I picked up my Bible when the doctor had left. I turned to the joy verses of Philippians, thinking one might stand out.

But what leaped from the pages was Paul's testimony in chapter 1. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or death for me, for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. [18 : 28] And I discovered that a verse I have lived by in good health also was a verse that I could live by in ill health. To live Christ, to die gain by life, but by life or by death is all right either way.

So I simply trust that God in his own way will carry out for me his will, which I know alone is good and acceptable and perfect by life or by death.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Carl Lungquist worshipped God in the hospital room. Verse 5.

Verse 5 Now. I know that the Lord is great. The Lord is greater than all gods. Reason number 4. Why praise God?

Because he is great and greater than all gods. The psalmist says that I know, I know that the Lord is great.

[19 : 43] How does he know that the Lord is great? How? He knows through the word of God. Almost every verse in this psalm is found in other parts of the Bible.

For example, stories in verses 10 to 11 are taken from Numbers 21. This means that to write this psalm, the writer actually took the ideas and verses from other parts of the Bible and arrange them into this special psalm.

To do this, he had to know the word of God very well. And through the word of God, he comes to know the God of the word. He knows that this God is great.

Like the psalmist, we need to know the word of God. We need to read it. And through it, come to know the God of this word.

And to know, after knowing the God of the word, we will know that he's a great God. The psalmist not only says that our Lord is great, he says our Lord is greater than all other gods.

[20 : 58] I'll speak more on this contrast with other gods when we come to verses 13 to 18. Now, why is our God great?

The psalmist gives us the reason in verse 6, and it's also another reason to praise God. Verse 6, the Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. reason number five, he does whatever pleases him.

The psalmist tells us, the psalmist tells us that God is the Lord of all creation. God's greatness is seen in his control of the heavens, in the control of the earth, in the control of the seas.

Our God is a sovereign God. God does whatever he pleases. God's greatness is not only seen in his control of nature, it is also seen in his control of human history, especially in his redemption of his people.

[22 : 19] Reason number six, reason number six, why praise God? Because he is the great redeemer. He is the great redeemer. He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt and defeated many nations to give Israel an inheritance.

Verses eight, he struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of people and animals. He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.

He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings, Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan, and gave their land as an inheritance to his people, Israel.

God displayed his greatness in the realm of human event. He brought down mighty Egypt. Pharaoh could do nothing to stop God from judging his nation.

Pharaoh could not stop God from killing the firstborn of the Egyptians. God used slaves, slaves, to defeat the powerful nations, the many powerful nations.

[23 : 24] As he journeyed in the wilderness to the promised land. King Sihon and King Og were the first two kings to be overthrown as recorded in Numbers 21.

God made sure that the crops, the vineyards, the homes, and the cities of Canaan were handed over to Israel. God is a great redeemer.

He redeemed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He also redeemed, he also redeemed us from slavery, but from a different kind of slavery.

He redeemed us from slavery to sin. For the Israelites, it is out of Egypt into the promised land. For us, it is out of sin and condemnation into his glorious inheritance which is life with God throughout eternity.

Our glorious inheritance, life with God throughout eternity. Notice how the psalmist presents praise to God.

[24 : 38] How the psalmist presents his praise to God. First, he tells us that God is good. Then, he says, God is great.

God is good and God is great. The goodness of God provides the boundaries for the greatness of God.

The goodness of God provides the boundaries for the greatness of God. Such a powerful God is good for us. You may say, power corrupts.

Absolute power corrupts absolutely. This has happened. This has happened in Malaysia. And it's still happening. Scandal after scandal.

When one person is vested with so much power, the power tends to corrupt him. Human power corrupts because we are infected by sin.

[25 : 39] God's power will not corrupt. God's power is bounded by his goodness. In fact, God uses his power to bring out his ultimate goodness for us.

He used his power to ensure Jesus went to the cross to die for our sins. Acts chapter 4 verses 27 to 28 Indeed, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed.

They did what your power and will have decided beforehand should happen. See verse 28? These people who conspire against Jesus, who goes against Jesus.

They did what your power and will have decided beforehand should happen. That's good news for us. God's power will ensure Jesus went to the cross to die for your sins and for my sins.

God's power is indeed bounded by His goodness. You praise the Lord. Verse 13 gives us the reason number 7 to praise God.

[27 : 02] Verse 13. Your name Lord endures forever. Your renowned Lord through all generations. Reason number seven. His never changing name and never ending fame.

After mentioning God's incomparable greatness, the psalmist praises God's never changing name and never ending fame.

Someone say this, the Bible scholar, God does not change. He's immutable. Immutable means cannot, won't change. He's immutable to use the proper theological word for his unchangeability.

God is not only good, but He will always be good. God is not good. He's always the same in His eternal attributes. We will never find Him to be less good than He has been to us in the past.

Now we come to verse 14. For the Lord will vindicate His people and have compassion on His servants.

[28 : 12] Reason number eight. Why praise God? Because of His vindication and compassion. Vindication means bringing justice.

Bringing justice, okay? The good and great God will bring justice, righteousness and compassion to His people. God is sovereign. God is sovereign in creation and redemption.

He can and He will vindicate, He will bring justice to His people in the future. He can vindicate us because He has the power. He will vindicate us because of His love.

He can vindicate us because He has the power. He will vindicate us because of His love. His goodness and greatness are for us, not against us.

As Romans 8, 28, 31-32 say, And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

[29 : 13] If God is for us, who can be against us? This God who is good and great. If this God who is good and great is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but give him up for us all, how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things?

Yes, God's goodness and God's greatness are for us, not against us. Now we come to the Lord's contrast with the idols, beginning from verse 15, beginning from verse 15.

The idols of the nations are silver and gold. Made by human hands. They have mouths but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see, they have ears but cannot hear, nor is their breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. What a contrast. The creator is contrasted to man made idols. Idols have no life in them. They can't speak, they can't see, they can't hear, but God can. Can an idol choose Jacob to be his treasure possession? No. Can an idol make clouds rise from the ends of the earth and send out lightning? [30 : 30] No. Can an idol bring Israelites out of Egypt and defeat Pharaoh? No. Why not? Why no? Because they are dead.

But our Lord is alive. He is good and He is great. Our Lord can do what the idols cannot do. What is the impact, what is the effect of these idols on those who worship them?

Verse 18 tells us, those who make them will be like them and so will all who trust in them. What we worship will affect how we behave.

Our belief will shape our behavior. The idol worshippers become spiritually lifeless. They become spiritually senseless like the idols they worship.

They are spiritually blind. They are spiritually deaf. And they are spiritually powerless. They have become what they worship. You may say, I don't worship pieces of metal, wood, and stone.

[31 : 40] Maybe we are not traditional idol worshippers. But we may worship non traditional idols. And their impact on us is exactly the same.

We become what we worship. If we worship certain supermodels, you know supermodels, the beautiful models, supermodels, if we worship certain supermodels, we become vain and self-centered.

If we worship certain football players, I know some of you like football games. If we worship certain football players, we become aggressive and bombastic. If we worship certain actors and singers, I know some actors and singers, we become immoral and depressed.

Some of them are quite depressed. If you listen to the private life. If we worship Ringgit Malaysia, we become greedy and materialistic.

God worship Jesus, we become more and more like him. If we worship Jesus, we become more and more compassionate. If we worship Jesus, we become less and less self-centered.

[32 : 52] If we worship Jesus, we begin to hate sin more and more. Worship is a main tool. It's a main tool God uses to change us into the image of his son.

I repeat this. Worship is the main tool God uses to change us into the image of his son. Worship here is not just singing some song.

Singing a few Christian songs won't change us much. Worship here is focusing on Jesus. Worship here is beholding Jesus. Worship here is acknowledging Jesus for who he really is.

Worship here is seeing Jesus as the most desirable thing in the entire universe. This kind of worship will transform us into the likeness of Jesus.

After spelling out how good God is and how great God is, the psalmist aptly close with a call to God's people to praise him, to worship him.

[34 : 04] Verses 19 to 21. All you Israelites, praise the Lord. House of Adam, praise the Lord. House of Levi, praise the Lord. You who fear him, praise the Lord.

Praise be to the Lord from Zion to him who dwells in Jerusalem, praise the Lord. The last phrase praise the Lord is Hallelujah. After listening to this sermon, what can you do?

Here there are some application. Application number one. Notice that in this psalm, there's no request for God to do anything. There's no request, you know.

You look at the psalm, this whole psalm, no request for God to do anything. It's just praising the Lord for who he is and for what he has done. There are many things we can praise God for, but I want to bring your attention to the center of this psalm.

the center of this psalm. Verses 8-12. Notice that at the heart of this psalm, at the center of this psalm, the psalmist is praising God for redemption, for delivering them out of Egypt into the promised land.

[35 : 18] So it is good for us, good for us to find ways to thank God regularly, if possible daily, for redeeming us out of our biggest problem, our sin.

We can thank the Lord, we can thank the Lord Jesus for dying on the cross for us. Praise Him for His great redemption. If you have not experienced His redemption, then I would like to encourage

you to put your trust in Jesus, put your trust in Jesus who has gone to the cross to die for your sins. When you believe in Jesus, when you receive Him as your Lord and Savior, you will experience God's forgiveness and His redemption. Then you can start praising God for His great redemption. That should be the central of our praises to Him. Application number two. When you read your Bible, when reading your Bible, before you close it, before you close it, ask this question, what does this text teach me about the goodness or the greatness of God?

Any passage? Before you close it, ask this question, what does this text teach me about the goodness or the greatness of God? Goodness will refer to forgiveness, will refer to His mercy, His love, His kindness.

[36 : 51] God's greatness will refer to His sovereignty, His power, His control over nature, His control over human events. This is a practical and powerful habit that will help you to grow in your knowledge of God.

Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! The musicians can come on now.