

PSALM 9

INTRODUCTION

Let me start by dealing with a technical problem with Psalm 9 and 10. Some people believe that these two Psalms are actually one Psalm. They think this because the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, has in fact combined these two Psalms. This view of one Psalm has developed because an examination of these Psalms will show that there is an acrostic of the Hebrew Alphabet, beginning in Psalm 9 and ending in Psalm 10.

However these Psalms are separate in the Hebrew text which of course is the original text, and therefore I believe ought to remain as separate Psalms. Besides Psalm 9 has a completely different theme from Psalm 10. Now having dealt with the technical problem let's discover what this Psalm is all about. Well as I read and re-read this Psalm I began to discover its real theme, which is one of praise to the Lord. The Psalmist is taken up with the Lord, for he refers to Him 30 times in these verses. The Psalm starts with a note of praise.

1 THE PRAISE WHICH HE DESERVES (vs. 1-2 & 11)

David has made a conscious decision to praise His Lord, but notice that he wants his praise to be from his heart. David doesn't want to go through the motions, he doesn't want to be a mere formalist. He doesn't want to be half-hearted participation, but he wants to be a whole-hearted devotee.

Now it is surely true of us all, that praise to our God is something that we all have to work at. We do have to make decisions to praise God, because our hearts are so often so pre-occupied with ourselves, our jobs, our families, our problems, and even our church, that very often praise time within our lives is very often missing. If you think this is not a true assessment of ourselves then look through a typical day, apart from Sunday, and ask yourself, out of 16 waking hours, how many do we spend praising our God. How frequently is praise found on our lips?

Probably not often. Therefore we need to make a real effort to re-dress this lack of praise within our lives. How do we do it? I think it would help if we decided to express thanks to God for his goodness in one area of our lives each day. Perhaps we might need to express that to someone else, and I'm sure that we will find ourselves thinking more often about God's goodness and consequently start praising Him more.

But we also need to ask ourselves if we are whole hearted in our praise with our God. Have we entered into the singing of the hymns and the prayers this evening with our whole heart? Have we sung each word as if we have meant it, or are we singing the words while thinking about other things? Do you switch off during the prayers, and only come back to us when you hear the Amen? Do you let your emotions get involved in the praise to God, for it is hard to praise Him with all your heart, without your emotions being involved.

One of the problems with being a non-charismatic type church may be that we think that we should not show any emotion in case we are tagged with our charismatic friends. But we should be ourselves when praising and worshipping God. It is a serious business, but when you are in love with someone you show your emotions. Glad and rejoice (v 2) are emotional words are they not? So let your heart engage with God as you bring your praise to Him. Proclaim His wonders to others, be glad and rejoice and sing out His praise.

The Psalmist goes on to give His reasons why he has decided to praise the Lord with all his heart.

2. WHY WE SHOULD PRAISE THE LORD (3-20).

I obviously don't have time to go through each verse in detail so let's pick out some things that the Psalmist praises God for:

a) Victory He grants His people (vs. 3-6). - Now for the Psalmist he is thinking of physical victories. The enemies of Israel had come against them, but God has caused them to turn back, He has caused them to stumble and perish (v 3 & 5-6). This meant that God granted His people the victory because He is on the side of His people (v 4). Now of course within the Old Testament, victory for God's people meant victory in warfare, but for us we can praise the Lord for those spiritual victories that He grants to us.

Our great enemy is Satan and just as the nations tried to destroy Israel in battle, so Satan tries to destroy God's people. He does this by tempting us into sin, and then when we fall, he tells us we are no good, God doesn't love us any more we are failures. How can you still be a Christian and do what you have just did?

But of course God grants victory to His people through Jesus Christ. Jesus died to deal with sin and Satan and therefore once we are His people, although we may fall into sin from time to time we cannot ultimately be destroyed. In fact according to the book of Job, God has put limits on Satan, He is fighting with one arm tired behind His back. Although he causes havoc in God's church and among God's people, he is extremely limited in the damage he can do.

Have you ever praised God with your whole heart for the victory that He grants to us through Jesus Christ?

b) He Reigns Over Our World (vs. 7-8) - In the world in the Psalmist day as in our day, there was a power struggle. That's what war is all about. It's about trying to make other nations subject to your own, because man wants to reign. That's why many nations attacked and tried to destroy Israel. But the Psalmist can praise His God, because God is the only One who truly reigns. His reign is not a temporary one like many of the worldly kings for His reign is forever (v 7). Because he reigns He is qualified to judge and when He judges he does so in righteousness and he sees that people get justice (v 8)

Is this not a reason for us to praise the Lord with all our hearts? God reigns forever and He establishes His throne for judgement. He judges the world in righteousness and is just. We hear much of miscarriages of justice today. There are times when we don't get what we deserve, but with God everyone gets exactly what they deserve.

Of course for those of us who are Christians this truth is an encouraging one, for it means that although in this world we may not necessary get justice, ultimately justice will be done. But if we are not Christians then the truth that God reigns and judges ought to make you shake in your shoes. Because what do you deserve? The bible says hell, and that is exactly what you will get unless, you accept God's escape route in Jesus Christ.

If you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour it means that instead of you facing God's judgement and justice for your sins, you are accepting that Jesus faced that judgement on your behalf, and therefore justice for your sins has taken place by the death of the Lord Jesus. Of course if you don't accept Jesus as your escape route then you will face the judgement of God and justice will be done as we are sent to hell.

You may think that there is not much to Praise the Lord for here, but surely the fact that Justice is done, and the fact that there is an escape route from God's judgement for those of us who have placed our trust in Jesus who took God's judgement for our sins on our behalf, makes us praise our God. Spend some time thanking God for His justice.

c) He Protects Those Who Trust In Him (vs. 9-10) - This talk of God's judgement and justice, makes one afraid, that's why these verses are so helpful, because when we flee to God, we will find Him a refuge for the oppressed and a stronghold and One who never forsakes His people. Now David had known much about being oppressed throughout his life, but he also knew what it was to have God as his refuge. God had proved time and time again to be a stronghold. God had proved that He never leaves or deserts his people. If you read the bible from Genesis to Revelation, you will find this truth that God never leaves or forsakes His people. Therefore when they are being oppressed or in trouble they find that God is their refuge and stronghold.

Is this not something that we can praise the Lord for? For those of us who have been on the Christian pathway for many years, have we not proved God to be a refuge and stronghold? Can you think of one occasion or one moment when God was not with you? Has there ever been an occasion since you became a Christian when God has not been 100% committed to you. Of course not. Therefore we can and should praise Him for it.

If you are not a Christian then again I urge you to trust in Him. For it is to those who seek Him that the Lord promises never to forsake. Our families and friends can forsake us, but we will never be forsaken by the Lord, if you turn and trust in Him.

d) We Can Cry Out For Mercy For The Present And The Future (vs. 13-20) - I have no time to deal with these verses except to say that the Psalmist can cry out for mercy because of what he knows to be true. He has already mentioned the things He knows to be true. It is because He knows that God grants victory to His people and because he knows that God reigns forever, and because God is a protector to His people that he can cry out for mercy.

It is worth noting that it is still on the basis of mercy that David pleads. He is not assuming that because God is who He is, that some how God owes it to David to help him. No! When God helps, it is always on the basis of His mercy and His grace towards us. Look at the language in these verses, especially vs. 19-20. It's the language of a man who knows His God and knows how His God works within this world.

We can also cry out to God for mercy for our present situations and in all future situations. We can do so, because we know that God grants victory to His people. That He reigns and therefore works out His judgement and justice and finally He promises to protect those who trust in Him.

So let's finish by making it a habit within our lives to praise our God, let's take on board the things mentioned here in this Psalm and let's use these things as the basis for our praise to God.

Let's pray.