

GIVE PRAISE TO THE LORD!

PRAISE HIM

Psalm 105:1 Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

The psalmist here is making a proclamation; an act of praise through proclaiming, telling people of everything that God has done for us. Well, we could certainly do that; we could tell the nations everything that God has done for us. The internet and social media give us a worldwide platform. We also could do this more grass roots or old school, we could just tell people, tell our neighbors and those closest to us, of what God has done for us. And we should. That is the “make known among the nations” part of the verse. Focus on the first part of the verse that says we are to “give praise to the Lord” for all of the things he has done for us.

Here is your first challenge or assignment for your prayer time today. Take 15 seconds and make a quick list. What are the things God has done for you that you should praise him for?

When you start listing the blessings, you start listing the things that God has done for you and they pile up quickly.

Take a minute and continue with your list list. Then pray a prayer of praise and thanks for the things on your list. _____

God, I praise you for all that you have done for me. I praise you for _____.

CONFESS AND REPENT

Repentance is very closely tied to humility. If we’re going to admit that we fall short, if we are going to admit that we are dependent upon God, we have to have the humility to admit that. We have to see ourselves in a way that requires us to come humbly before God and admit that his way is right and sometimes, we try to do it our own way. Our willingness to admit our shortcoming before God requires a humble evaluation of ourselves. This is a tough and sometimes painful process; it’s uncomfortable, but there is much gained from the act of humbly coming before God and there is a great reward with it.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Poor in Spirit” doesn’t mean that someone is spiritually starving, or that they are experiencing a physical poverty. Rather, he is saying that the poor in spirit are the humble, they have a humility about them, they understand their need for God, they rightly understand who they are in light of who God is. If that’s how we are, poor in spirit, if that’s how we approach God, then we are blessed.

As you repent today, approach God humbly acknowledging your dependence on God. If you have some specific things you want to talk to God about and repent of, take some time to do that now.

Father, I am gratefully dependent on you today. Thank you for loving me enough to give me this gift of repentance. I am humbled by your willingness to care for me. Thank you for being dependable because I need you so much every day.

REQUESTS

We can ask anything of God. In fact, He *wants* us to come to him with all types of requests. I encourage you to keep a prayer list of things that you are praying for and asking God for. If you have one already now is a great time to get it out. If not, you can start today to keep a list. The list can include things you are asking God for on behalf of others, as well as things you are requesting of God for yourself. It is a great way to be reminded of those things and to keep some order to them, and also as God answers the prayers you can go back and update those prayer requests and you'll have a record of all the things that God is doing and all the prayers he is answering. This is a great exercise and a great habit to get into and I encourage you to do that.

Today, focus this time of asking on "wisdom". God is so full of wisdom and we seem to always be running low on it. We should be sure that when we start each day that we are following God's will and following his leading and that we're making not just a good choice but we're making the wise choice, not just treating people in the way that we think is right but by wisdom the way that God thinks is right.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

God wants to give us wisdom; he wants to give us his insight.

God you are so wise, you always make the right choices, you always act in a righteous manner and I need your wisdom today. Please show me your ways, show me your wisdom.

If you have additional requests that you want to offer to God, take some time and do that now.

YIELD

Now as you conclude your time in prayer, surrender and yield in giving this day fully to God.

Psalm 63:3-4 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

When hands are lifted in the scripture it typically means one of two things: (1) It is an act of praise, normally of celebration. This is something we might still see today at a ball game or a concert when people are excited, they lift their hands. (2) The other time you see hands lifted like this in the Bible is as an act of surrender. Think of a small child when they need their parent, they just hold their hands up. They are saying, I don't know what to do, I need you, please come pick me up. We see this today as well, if the police say, "Freeze!" We want to put up our hands, indicating that we have nothing, you can

see all that we have, I'm not hiding anything, I'm only going to do what you say, you're in control of this moment.

This is often why people lift their hands during a worship service; to physically surrender and celebrate. The psalmist said, "God's love is better than life and so I will praise him." In an act of worship, celebration, and praise, he will lift up his hands in surrender.

Today as you yield this day to the Lord, lift your hands up. Acknowledge His sovereignty as you get into a posture of praise and surrender during this prayer of yielding.

Lord, your love is better than life. I am going to praise you every day for the rest of my life. I give my whole life to you. I lift my hands in total surrender to your will for my life and specifically for today. In Jesus name. Amen.

If you have some extra time and some extra prayer requests, or if you want to go back and list some more things to praise God for, feel free to continue your conversation with God and do that now.

JESUS IS A RESTORER

What if doing what was right would get you in trouble with the people in charge?

The next fifteen minutes is really all about you engaging with God. This isn't an in-depth bible study; this is an opportunity for you to personally connect with God in prayer to start your day off right.

Ever since 9/11, the security clearance check points at airports have gotten a little more thorough; you have to take off your shoes, your belt and you have to empty all of your pockets. This morning essentially do that as you prepare to connect with God and engage with Him in prayer. Empty your pockets, so to speak, as you come to him this morning; to check all of your baggage before the Lord as you begin to engage him today.

So how are you feeling? What are you bringing with you to prayer this morning? Express that to God and ask for his help in engaging him in prayer this morning.

God, I am feeling _____.

Tell God how you are feeling today. Let him know what is weighing on your heart or where you are emotionally right now. As you do, ask for his help to be able to pray this morning.

PRAISE HIM

Look at an account from Jesus' life this morning and allow it to help lead your time of prayer today. It is an account of Jesus having to face the people in charge and doing what was right was going to get him in trouble.

Mark 3: 1 (ESV) Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand.

Jesus entered the synagogue. The synagogue was where the Jewish people would gather together for weekly worship. Jesus went to the synagogue that morning to teach and to worship. *Jesus worshipped his Heavenly Father.* And we are called to follow his example and be worshippers just like Him.

Later in this story he does an amazing thing and he does an act of *restoration*, he *restores* something that this man has lost. And that's who Jesus is; Jesus is a *restorer*.

Praise Him today for who He is, that He is a *restorer*.

Jesus, I praise you today that you are a restorer.

What does it mean to you that he returns things to the way they are supposed to be?

CONFESS AND REPENT

The account continues...

Mark 3: 1-2 (ESV) Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him.

Here is a man that has a serious issue with his hand. Maybe it's preventing him from working and making a living. And these religious leaders are watching Jesus to see if he will heal the man. But they are not watching in hopes that this man will be healed and *restored*; they are watching to see if Jesus will heal and thereby violate their law that they made up so that they can accuse him and bring a legal case against him and remove his influence. Here are these men who are more concerned about getting Jesus than they are about seeing this man be healed because their hearts are hard. They don't love this man. They are actually way more consumed with bitterness towards Jesus than love for this guy.

This morning, how is your heart doing? Is it filled with love for the people around you? Are you longing for *every single person* around you to have blessing brought into their lives; to see their lives improve, to experience more good in their lives? Is that where your heart is today? Maybe for the majority of the people around you that is true, but is it true of *everyone*? If some of the people around you that have hurt you or upset you or maybe that your just tired of what they're doing, would you be excited if God brought good into their life today? Are you longing to see good in their life? Following Jesus means that we love the people around us; that we long for good and for blessing to be in their lives. Sometimes that's not always the case. Today admit that to God and ask for his help to live with a heart full of love towards everyone.

Jesus, I have not loved as I ought. I have not longed for good to come into the lives of every person.

If there is a specific person, would you tell Jesus right now who that person is? _____

For not loving like you, I ask for your forgiveness. And I admit I need your help to love like you. Please enable me with your eyes, your heart, and your compassion to be able to love those around me today. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

GIVE THANKS

We continue the account....

Mark 3: 3 (ESV) And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here."

Jesus looks at the man and he doesn't keep the man at a distance; he doesn't reject or push away this man with this physical deformity. Instead, he invites him to come close. He doesn't say, "You get all fixed up and *then* you can come to me". He said, "*come the way you are.*" That's exactly what Jesus says to us this morning. He doesn't say get all cleaned up and get all fixed up and come to me. He says "I see that you are broken, and I see that you have needs, so *come.*" His invitation is to come close to him.

Take a moment right now and thank him that he wants us to come close and that his invitation to you today is to come.

Jesus, thank you that I don't have to fix myself up to come to you. Instead, you invite me to come just as I am. I know that you could cast me aside, but you don't. Thank you for welcoming me with open arms again this morning.

And now as you continue in this prayer of thanksgiving, what are two blessings that Jesus brought into your life yesterday? Take a moment and tell him thank you for those two things right now.

1. _____
2. _____

We continue the account:

Mark 3: 4-5 (ESV) And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was *restored*.

Jesus *restored* this man's hand. In one moment, it's withered and shriveled and unusable and in the next moment he stretches it out and it becomes *whole* and *completely healed*.

We have praised Jesus already this morning that he is a *restorer*. But take a moment now and ask him to do some *restoration* in and around your life.

What is broken that needs to be restored...in your family? Ask God to restore what is broken in your family right now.

What is broken that needs to be restored...in your friendships? Ask God to restore what is broken there.

What is broken that needs to be restored...at work? Ask God to restore what is broken there now.

What is broken that needs to be restored...in your finances? Would you ask God to restore what is broken there?

What is broken that needs to be restored...in you? Ask God to restore what is broken in you today.

YIELD

Verse 6 tells the conclusion of the account of Jesus and the man with the withered hand.

Mark 3: 6 (ESV) The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

They were so upset that Jesus had violated their law, so much so that they wanted to destroy him. Their hearts were set on destruction versus on celebrating the incredible miracle that they had just witnessed of this man being healed. If you know Jesus as your savior, then you know Jesus as a healer. Jesus has healed you and your relationship with God. Jesus has healed you from the punishment of your sin. Jesus has healed you from an eternity separated from God and that you will be with him in heaven forever.

Jesus has brought healing into your life and you've experienced that if you know him as your savior. So today, ask him to use you to be part of his plan to bring more healing into the world.

*Jesus, you are a healer and a **restorer**. There are so many people you want to bring hope and healing to in the world today. I ask you to use me. I give myself to you again today for your purposes. I look forward to what you have in store. In your name, I pray. Amen.*

Before you rush off to all the things that lie before you today; sit still, be silent and enjoy the presence of Christ as you continue to just sit in this moment. Know that He is enjoying this moment with you and He is loving spending time with you today.

THIS, THEN, IS HOW YOU SHOULD PRAY...

Over the course of the past several weeks you have been taking the first 15 minutes of each day to spend time with God in guided prayer. This time is usually spent focused on four areas: Praise, Repent, Ask, and Yield.

Each day we should praise God for who he is and for the things he does in our lives. We want to allow the Holy Spirit to point out any areas in our lives that are wrong, sinful, and hurtful and then repent of them. Then we want to make some requests of God, ask for some things we need, and then we yield the day and surrender it to God.

The reason we like to pray this way each day is because this is how Jesus taught us to pray.

Matthew 6: 9-13 This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

In this passage, the disciples have seen Jesus' prayer life and that he had this great prayer relationship with God, so they ask him, "Can you teach us to pray like that?" and this is what he said to do.

PRAISE HIM

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name..."

Jesus begins by telling God that he is his father, a close intimate relationship of leadership, and that hallowed is his name, that is holy, honored, set apart, and revered is your name.

God is great, and he is holy. Today as we pray, tell God how great he is. Also, God is our father, he is close to us, he knows us, and he is a wonderful leader of our lives. Tell God what his leadership means to you.

God you are holy and there is no one like you, no one as great as you, and no one else who is worth of my praise. You are my heavenly father. Thank you for your leadership in my life. Your leadership is important to me because _____.

YIELD

We often say a prayer of yielding at the end but here Jesus does it near the top. He says:

"Your kingdom come, your will be done..."

What we say to God when we yield to him is, "I'm not building *my* kingdom, I'm building *yours*. I don't want my life to be about *me*, I want it to be about *you*."

As you yield this day to God, focus on how your gifts, talents, skills, and resources could be used today to build God's kingdom.

Father, I want to give today to you. Show me how I can use all that you have blessed me with to build your kingdom. Lead me into today for your glory.

If you sense that there are some specific things God wants you to do today as an act of surrender, spend a few extra minutes here and talk that through with him.

REQUESTS

Next in Jesus' prayer model, we see him asking or making some requests.

"Give us today our daily bread..."

"Lead us away from temptation..."

"Protect us..."

When we come to God, we can ask him for *anything*. Jesus points out these three. This morning, pray for these three things for you and for those you love.

Father, today I pray that you will meet all of my physical needs. I will focus on you and your kingdom because, I can trust you to meet my needs today. Please, lead me away from trouble. You know me God and you know where I am most tempted to sin; keep me away from those things. This world is broken in every way by sin, please keep me safe from all of the corruption around me.

CONFESS AND REPENT

In Jesus' prayer, repentance comes toward the end when he says:

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.."

The point Jesus is making is that we all daily fall short and do things that are offensive to God. So, remember that God will forgive us when we ask and because of His forgiveness, we too should forgive others when their behavior offends us.

Lord, you alone can forgive my sin, please forgive me when I sin. Also, forgive me when I fail to forgive others. Show me by your grace and lead me by your Holy Spirit to forgive those who have hurt me.

You may need to spend more time. God might be showing you some things you need forgiven of. If he is, repent and ask for forgiveness. He may also be showing you people whom you need to forgive. If he is, ask for his help.

This is how Jesus taught his disciples to pray. If you need more time with God in any of these areas, take it now. If throughout the day you begin to feel like you need to pray some more, go for it. This is the first 15 you give to God, but you can also give God any other 15 you want as well. God Bless You!

INWARDLY WE ARE BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

PRAISE HIM

This is a powerful truth that Paul is delivering here to us and encouraging us with in this passage. He's basically talking to us about how we are going to have to change the way we see things and we are going to have to think about things differently. He has given us some great instructions, but He's also talking about some amazing blessings and some things that God does for us. He says that we are inwardly renewed every day. He says that we are never alone; that even in our tough days, the Holy Spirit is always there to renew us and restore us. That our troubles are achieving eternal glory and that God is not wasting anything in our lives. That we have eternal life; that heaven is our home. When we feel out of place here and we face the struggle and strain of this place, it's because God has prepared a home for us in heaven. Pray this prayer of praise this morning.

Lord, thank you for never leaving me, even in hard times. I praise you for renewing me day by day. Thank you so much for not letting anything that I go through be wasted. You redeem everything and you use everything. I praise you for a home in heaven and the hope of your salvation.

CONFESS AND REPENT

Reflecting on this passage, now turn and look inwardly at your life and see if your life reflects what is being said in this passage. Paul is talking about the way that we see things, and the way that we think about things, and the way that we react to things and the truth is there are times when we are in a struggle or in a tough time and all we can see is the pain or the trouble; all we can see is the suffering. We lose sight of him, lose sight of what he is doing in the world, and lose sight of what he is doing in our lives. When we do that, we don't react correctly, and don't interact with others correctly. So we sin, and miss the mark. This is what happens when we take our eyes off of Christ and we stop doing things his way and we stop focusing on his plan and we start focusing on our own. We fall into trouble and we mess it all up. So, take a minute and repent of the times that you have done that; that you have lost sight of what God is doing. Maybe there are some things that you want to talk specifically to God about during this time. Feel free to do that this morning.

Father forgive me when I see only the trouble and I take my mind off of you. I repent of seeking renewal on my own and I turn to you today for forgiveness and renewal.

REQUESTS

What Paul refers to as "light and momentary troubles" might actually be pretty big things. He says that outwardly we are "wasting away" because of these troubles. He is saying they are light and momentary in view of God's eternal glory and in view of what God wants to do through our struggles. But that doesn't mean that they are easy. And so, in the midst of these light and momentary struggles, mentally

we know that they are not going to last but it doesn't mean that it's any easier emotionally. Today, ask God for help during these "light and momentary troubles" and to renew you. Point to some specific places in your life where you need His work to be done, where you need to see His work being accomplished. First, ask God to be at work in your life.

Lord, I know that these troubles I am facing won't last forever. And I know that you are using them. But while I am in the midst of them, I need your help. God, I need you to

(Fill in the blank)

Ask Him what you need Him to do: to give you strength, to give you courage, to give you wisdom, to give you endurance, you need him to do a miracle. This is where you ask.

After this prayer, if you want to, get your prayer list out and spend some time praying for those you care about and your loved ones.

YIELD

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

This passage is a reminder to yield and to surrender to God's way. Paul says here that we don't want to look at the temporary things, but we want to look at the eternal things. He says we should not seek renewal in other places, but to seek renewal in God daily because He is the one that provides the renewal. He says we should not lose heart and that we don't have to lose heart. But all of these things are exactly the opposite of how we feel when things are hard, and we are facing trouble. We do lose heart and we do try to fix it all ourselves and we do tend to focus only on the problem.

So, for us to have this opportunity to not lose heart, for us to live that way, we have to yield our lives to God, even in the midst of struggle. Maybe today is not a struggle for you, but today is just you yielding to whatever is going to come today. But we have to continually remind ourselves to yield to God's will to do things the way that he says to do them.

Lord, give me the faith that Paul had, let me see like he saw, renew me with your Spirit, and strengthen me in this time of light and momentary trouble. I want to face the struggle your way. Take my life as yours today, I dedicate it all to you. – Amen

Feel free to stay as long as you need to in conversation with God. Or just spend some time quietly listening to what God is saying to you.

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

Today start off by reading some scripture from the gospel of John, where Jesus prays for us. That is very encouraging to us. Let that passage of scripture guide your time in prayer today.

John 17:20-23 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

PRAISE HIM

Take a moment and just think about this: that Jesus, the Savior of the world, prayed for *you*. He prayed for you and me; he prayed for us. That's amazing! Take a minute and praise Jesus for praying for you. How incredible is that!? God's plan in sending Jesus into the world was to provide redemption for us. And while he's here, he has such a love and compassion and care for us that he takes time to pray for us.

God, thank you for Jesus. I praise you for salvation. I praise you for providing redemption for me through Jesus. Thank you for thinking of me. Jesus' name is great, and I worship you today.

In his prayer, Jesus prays specifically for us for two things, both very important. He prays that we would be one, that all Christians and all believers everywhere would be one - that's a prayer of *unity* – that we would be united. And what that means is that the relationship that we have with Jesus should be the most important thing about us and so that should unify us. All of the things that might divide or separate us, faith in Jesus, salvation in Christ alone, unifies us. And so what happens is that we are to make Christ and the worship of Christ our highest priority, such a high priority that nothing else matters. We should live as if we have one priority, to worship Jesus. If that were true then all of Christ's followers everywhere would be united in that. That is what he is praying for; that we would carry this high, high priority and that we would be united in that. Jesus says unity is important, that *the world may believe*. We get to be a witness for the truth of the gospel, that Jesus is who He said He was and that He did what He said he was going to do and that He rose from the dead and that salvation can be found through Him.

Today we are talking about priority and about witness. We're talking about God being our number one priority. The worship of Him in the way that we spend our money, in the way that we speak to people, in the way that we keep our calendar, in the way that we pray, in the way that we think, in everything. We worship God in everything that we do. And that His worship become our top priority.

Join Jesus in this prayer today. Pray for all Christians, that by the power of the Holy Spirit they would make Jesus their top priority today, that Jesus become such a high priority it seems as if they have only one priority. Pray this for yourself, pray this for Christians you know by name, pray this for Christians all over the world.

God, I ask you first to show me how to make worshiping Jesus my top priority today. I ask you to point out anything in me that is sinful, and anything that I have made a higher priority. I repent and ask you to forgive me. May your Holy Spirit lead me to worship you and you alone today.

Father, I also pray for _____ (name some Christians you know), that they would make worshiping Jesus their number one priority today.

Lord, your church is world-wide, and your people are everywhere. Today I pray that all Jesus followers everywhere will worship you and live with you as their top priority. In doing so Father, we will be one. Unify us in this, that we will all follow you with our whole lives.

The other thing that Jesus points out in this passage is witness. When we are unified under Jesus as our top priority, and the worship of God is our number one priority, we prove that what is written in the gospel is true and we get to be a witness to people who are far from God. In effect we are praying "God, save everybody, everywhere." We want everyone to come to faith in Jesus. But also, more practically, there are some specific people that you should be praying for today. Think of those people who you want so much to have the relationship with Christ that you have. Pray for them, that in our unity, by making the worship of God our number one priority, that we might be a witness to them that they might come to faith through our witness, our testimony.

God, please give me your strength to make you my number one priority. Let those around me see my witness of your truth and goodness and come to be saved through Jesus. I pray for the salvation of _____ (name people you know who are not Jesus followers yet). Thank you for Jesus and for the salvation you have provided by his death, burial, and resurrection.

You may have several people on that list that you are praying for salvation; take whatever time you need to pray for them. Continue to pray for them throughout the day, that by making the worship of God our number one priority this morning, we would be a witness to those around us and that people would come to know Jesus because we have the right priorities. Pray that Christians everywhere are unified in that.

If you feel burdened to pray specifically in an area that maybe we didn't spend a lot of time on, feel free to continue in prayer this morning praying through those areas or needs.