



“Worthy of Worship”

Psalm 65:1-13

June 28th, 2020

This morning we are going to be in Psalm 65. Please join me. The message is titled *Worthy of Worship*.

We come to this portion of Scripture at the end of June, and pretty much at the halfway point of what has been a very, very, very, very difficult year. 2020 has been a difficult year. There has been a flurry of memes on Facebook or Instagram with Marty McFly telling the doctor in the movie *Back to the Future*, don't go to 2020.

It has been a challenging year. 2020 opened with brush fires covering the continent of Australia. They were everywhere in that territory. 2020 opened with impeachment trials covering the news in the United States. At the end of the month of January, there was a helicopter crash that carried Kobe Bryant and eight other people, including one of his daughter. Some of us were very, very heavy-hearted after that. Then we went into that time where we began hearing about the so-called coronavirus.

As that virus spread, there were unprecedented quarantines that ordered us all to stay at home for not weeks, but months. There have been economic affects as a result of that. There have been emotional and psychological effects of that order, as doctors are reporting a rise in depression and suicide and abuse occurring in homes.

Just as it seemed that we were emerging from our homes from the strict quarantines related to Covid-19, we saw the horrific and violent death of George Floyd. Ten minutes of stunning video sent shock waves throughout our collective hearts. From there, there was wave after wave after wave of civil unrest that has continued into this very weekend as close as the Lakewood Mall, where there was looting and unrest taking place. It has been a very difficult year. 2020 has been tough.

In the midst of all of this, over the past month we have opened up to the book of Psalms. These past weeks we have been reminded that God is our refuge; that God is our strength; that God is a very present help in trouble.

Brothers and sisters, God is here. God is among us gathered in this place. Wherever you are, God is here to shelter our souls in His peace. God is here to strengthen our hearts and to give us courage to face the days that we are living in. He is our refuge and He is our strength.

This morning we are going to bring this brief series to its conclusion with Psalm 65. This is a little bit different from the Psalms that we have read these past several weeks. This Psalm is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving all the way through.

It is hopeful and enthusiastic and filled with joy and gratitude. There are no complaints or lament or anxiety or fear in it and this Psalm was written by the same King David who so willingly would tell the Lord and anybody else reading his writings about the heaviness that he so often carried in his heart.

The Lord brought times of refreshment to the heart and soul of King David, even as he was continuing to live in a world that was fallen. So the Lord, He has every ability to bring refreshment to the heart and to the soul of His people, to His church, as our hearts and our minds are fixed on His goodness and the manifestations of His grace that carry forth and continue on into our lives today.

God is good and we are going to see His goodness as we dig into Psalm 65 this morning. As I was reflecting on this Psalm, there is a sense in which I think this Psalm beckons us from the storm shelter and calls us to some other places to give us some perspective and reminders as to why we can praise the Lord.

So David who knew what it was to live in the tower said, Hey, everybody whose reading this, let's also go to the temple, and let's also go the ocean, and let's also go to the field of harvest. Let's be reminded that God is good and He is worthy of worship. He is worthy to be praised.

Let's read Psalm 65:

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song.

**¹Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion,
and to you shall vows be performed.
²O you who hear prayer,
to you shall all flesh come.
³When iniquities prevail against me,
you atone for our transgressions.
⁴Blessed is the one you choose and bring near,
to dwell in your courts!
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,
the holiness of your temple!
⁵By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness,
O God of our salvation,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and the farthest seas;
⁶the one who by his strength established the mountains
being girded with might;
⁷who stills the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of the waves,
the tumult of the peoples,
⁸so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your
signs.**

You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.
**⁹You visit the earth and water it;
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide their grain,
for so you have prepared it.**
**¹⁰You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth**
**¹¹You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.**
**¹²The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
¹³the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.**

There is a whole lot of joy going on in that Psalm. There is a lot of joy at the end, where even the elements of creation are rejoicing. You have the hills girding themselves with joy; the high points and even the valley's, the low places, they are rejoicing too. There is a lot of joy in that Psalm and we are going to explore what it has to say together this morning.

Here in this Psalm there is an emphasis also on prayer and answered prayer. In Verse 2, David said:

**²O you who hear prayer,
to you shall all flesh come.**

All the different nations of the earth will eventually come to God in praise and with prayer. Then David said in Verse 5:

⁵By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness

I was thinking about this Psalm and its element of prayer in the people that I have prayed with here at Bethel Grace through the years. I have had the joy of praying with so many different people and so many men who are now in the presence of the Lord, praising His Holy Name.

One phrase that I recall, especially among the men who would gather on Saturday mornings for prayer, they would end in a certain way. They would say at the end of the prayer, And we will be careful to give you the praise, for we ask it in Jesus' Name.

We will be *careful* to give you the praise. Whatever is going on in life, we are going to be resolved to recognize that you are the Living God. You are Good. You are worthy to be praised and we are going to be careful to give you that praise. That is what it says at the beginning of this Psalm.

¹Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion

I think that the nuance of that is that God is so worthy of praise, the level to which He is worthy of praise is way up high. Maybe the human praise He receives is somewhere lower, so He is not getting the praise He ought to get.

But we are going to praise Him. We are going to recognize how good God is and we are going to be among those who are praising His Holy Name from within, from that which is real because we are renewing our minds in His goodness to us.

So we do Bible study and we do theology. We study about God and His ways because theology leads to doxology. The study of God leads to the praise of God. I pray that the Spirit of God will be prompting us from within to praise Him with praise that is genuine.

So this morning we go to these three places with David; three places to praise God. Let's notice these places together. Each one gives another reason why we ought to give glory to the name of our Living God.

We praise God:

1. At the Temple (1-4)

Let's give praise for God's atoning grace

This is really where it all starts—that God forgives sinners like us and by His grace, He makes it so that our sin is removed and we are right with Him.

Look at what it says again in Verses 1 through 4:

**¹Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion,
and to you shall vows be performed.
²O you who hear prayer,
to you shall all flesh come.
³When iniquities prevail against me,
you atone for our transgressions.
⁴Blessed is the one you choose and bring near,
to dwell in your courts!
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,
the holiness of your temple!**

I want for us to take a look at Verse 3 and the language of sin that is used there. I think this is a very important verse about the doctrine of sin. It is very interesting because this is a verse that teaches us about sin, therefore, it teaches us about ourselves because we are all fallen in sin.

What is so interesting to me is that it paints this picture of sin prevailing against us. See how David put that in Verse 3?

**³When iniquities prevail against me,
you atone for our transgressions.**

David said, Sometimes sin prevails against me. I'm not the only one. It prevails against others too. When we come to you seeking forgiveness, Father, you atone for our sins.

It is very interesting because throughout the pages of Scripture, what we read is that there is something that is seriously amiss about the human condition. This is not only revealed in the pages of Scripture, all you have to do is take a look around you. All you have to do is look at your own life.

You will find that there is something messed up. There is an internal pull to do what we know we ought not do. There is an internal pull to do what is grievous, harmful and wrong. We are fallen in sin. There is a sinful nature that is living within us and it is an active thing.

Throughout the pages of Scripture, what we see is that human sin is personified as having a will of its own. David was talking here about when iniquities prevail against him. This reminded me of the first mention of the word *sin* in the Bible. Do you remember it?

The first sin occurred in Genesis Chapter 3. The first use of the word sin is in Genesis Chapter 4, with Cain and Abel, the first sons of Adam and Eve. They went and offered their sacrifices to the Lord. What we find in that text is that the sacrifice of Abel was of greater substance than Cain's.

God pointed that out. What happened to Cain? Cain became downcast and bitter and angry. Then what did the Lord say to Cain? Genesis Chapter 4 and Verses 6 and 7:

⁶The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

Isn't that interesting language? Sin is crouching at the door, like a predator waiting to walk through so it can pounce.

Then going forward into the New Testament, you have Paul teaching the church in Rome and the church in California about sanctification by the work of the Holy Spirit, telling the body of Christ not let sin rule over you. It's desire is for dominion in your life.

So we have to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus because sin lingers even within the people of God. I think that is what David was alluding to in his experience—when iniquities prevail against me. He spoke to that as something ongoing in his life.

I think that we can all speak of that as well. Sin prevails against us. So often Christians talk about when they used to be sinners in the old days. Well, what about sin this week? Is there anybody else in here besides me who has sinned, not back in the old days, but recently?

Christians, still have the battle with sin in them and some of you here, sin is prevailing against you. Maybe there has been this frustration and anger that has been inside of you and instead of crucifying it by the power of the Holy Spirit, you succumb to it and you have this bitterness that is growling inside of you. Maybe you even said some things that were sinful and wrong, not gracious but sinful.

Maybe there has been sexual sin. Maybe you have been involved looking at things on the screen. You have done things with somebody who is not your spouse. A sinful desire has prevailed against you. This is just a couple of manifestations. There are so many different ways that we sin.

With David, therefore, we must keep going back. David looked at the lambs that were sacrificed on the alter at the Jerusalem tabernacle. We look to the cross of Jesus Christ. We look to that old rugged cross, where the Lamb of God was slain; where He experienced your death penalty for you that your sin might be nailed on the cross and left there; that you might bear it no more; that you might be justified by grace, counted righteous by God.

And not only left in a neutral position before God, not just your sin being taken away, but covered in His righteousness, so that you could stand before Him in holiness with joy, covered in grace. Your sin atoned for. This is good news and we praise God for His forgiveness in the Messiah.

We must constantly be going back saying, I'm struggling still with sin. Here is where I have fallen short. Here is where sin has prevailed. Forgive me and give me new power to walk in your Spirit, knowing that God loves me, that He has atoned for my sin.

That word *atonement* is wonderful. In the Old Testament, the concept of atonement had to do with covering over, like how the blood of all those lambs would cover over offense so God would not see it.

In the New Testament, we give heightened understanding of it. Not only is sin covered over, but we are cleansed from all unrighteousness through and through. Because of that, we are atoned. The great wonder of atonement is found in the English word *AT-ONE-MENT* within the word *atonement*.

We are brought into this wonderful intimacy with the Holy God through the shed blood of the Messiah, so that He can even invite us into His very house. That is how close we get. We are satisfied by the goodness of Your house, the holiness of Your temple.

He is the Father. We are His family and we come close into His presence in His very house, as those with privileged status. This is good news! Praise is due the Lord. Whatever is going on in the world around us, praise is due to the Lord for His goodness in forgiving sinners like us.

We praise God for His forgiving grace, and it satisfies us. Verse 4 say:

⁴...We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,

It is like we are satiated with something good. This the best thing in the world, being right with God. We pursue satisfaction over this, this, that, and that. And there are good gifts of common grace to thank God for, but the central thing is being united to God through His forgiving grace. This is where our praise begins.

We must always be mindful of His saving grace and give Him the praise that He is due. We praise the Lord at His temple. That is where David led us to back in his day, but the same theme is there—God’s atoning grace.

Where else do we praise the Lord? We praise God:

2. At the ocean (5-8)

Let’s give praise for God’s stabilizing power

Amen! We see in this portion of the Psalm that we can praise God for His stabilizing power. He can calm things that seem overwhelming in their force. Let’s see what it says in Verses 5 through 8:

**⁵By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness,
O God of our salvation,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and the farthest seas;
⁶the one who by his strength established the mountains
being girded with might;
⁷who stills the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of the waves,
the tumult of the peoples,
⁸so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your
signs.
You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for
joy.**

This got my attention because, as you know, I am a man who is dialed into the ocean. I enjoy the ocean. I spend lots of time actually in the ocean, riding the formations that swell up in the ocean.

This language of roaring seas and roaring waves really got my attention. I want to get detailed in this tour. (Pastor shows overhead slides.) I want to take to Nazare, Portugal, a fishing village that has massive, massive waves that breaks by the rock formation there. Whenever you see a surfer riding a sixty-foot giant wave they have been pulled into, that probably at Nazare.

There is also Teahupo, Tahiti, where there are massive, gnarly, beasts of waves that are so ridiculously thick, that it comes with bone crushing force. I also thought about taking you to classic big wave spot at Waimea Bay. I thought about taking you to Maverick's up north where there are big old giant waves.

Big waves are all over the place but, in the end, I said let's just go back to the ultimate iconic spot, to the Banzai Pipeline on the north shore of Oahu. That is a beautiful picture (shows slides). Those waves, they are dangerous. They are powerful. There is so much water moving in them.

Those waves are breaking over about five-feet below the surface. There is a coral reef under them. So many people have lost their lives in these waves. There have been professional surfers who have come out with broken bones. So gnarly!

I have not surfed waves like that. I have not surfed waves close to that, but I have surfed some waves that have been well overhead and big. You can swallow your heart when you are paddling into one of these waves.

Here is the interesting thing about it: this Psalm talks about God's power. His power is seen in the force of the ocean and the same places that display His power are often just brought to total tranquility and peace. Behold, the Banzai Pipeline at a different time of the year. (pastor shows picture of a calm and tranquil sea).

I visited the north shore once when I was in college. We had to surf on the west side of Oahu because the north shore was not breaking. When I visited the Banzai Pipeline, it looked this—calm and serene. That was probably a good thing. I didn't need to get maimed by those waves.

I remember being there and thinking that it was so amazing. At some point in the year, the Banzai Pipeline is so powerful and at other times, it is just so tranquil and peaceful. In this text, David, carried by the Spirit of God, gave God the glory and recognition for it all. God is powerful. There are some powerful sights to be seen in this world, and God can take even such astonishing waves and show that He rules over it.

There can be so much upheaval in the ocean, or it can be so tranquil. There is a point of application. Verse 5:

**⁵By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness,
O God of our salvation**

This is all in the context of answered prayer, and Verse 7 goes on to say:

**⁷who stills the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of the waves,
the tumult of the peoples**

There is the gnarly sea of the ocean water. Then there is the sea of humanity, a human race that is fallen in sin and there is so much turmoil that occurs, so many uprisings throughout the world, but God has power even to calm the peoples. That is what this verse is saying. It is also saying that God will do this in answer to prayer.

I do not expect that there is going to be pervasive global peace until King Jesus comes back with His reign. That's when it is going to be as calm as the Sea of Galilee after Jesus calmed the storm.

However, there are pockets of peace that occur on the earth. Often this correlates to the prayerfulness of the people of God. David was recognizing that in the Old Testament. Here is what Paul said in the New Testament. I Timothy 2: Verse 1 and 2

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

The Lord calls His people to pray for everyone that there might be peace on the earth. There are going to be pockets of peace and we need to call upon the Lord, and now is a good time for us to be calling on God about all the turbulence, asking Him to intervene and to settle things and people so there they are not getting harmed.

There is a correlation between prayer and this kind of peace in the earth. We are to pray to the Lord. We are to call upon the Lord! I hope there a hundred people on Zoom next week when we gather for prayer. Let's pray, because the Lord can calm gnarly things.

Full on, full blown international peace comes with the coming of the Messiah but in the meantime, internal peace comes right here and now. The Lord desires us to know His peace. Whatever is going on in the world around us, He wants us to walk in His steady peace, so we call upon the name of the Lord together.

Are you praying? Somebody said that here is a really, really good way to embarrass a Christian: ask them about their prayer life. I resonate with that, but let's not be satisfied with that. Let's pray.

Let's pray individually. Let's pray together. Let's pray in the morning. Let's pray in the daytime. Let's pray at nighttime. Let's pray, giving thanks and praying at all times that He might work in us to be agents of His peace in this world.

There is one more place that we go. One last place to praise the Lord. We praise God:

3. At the harvest (9-13)

Let's give praise for God's abundant provision

We see God's ability to provide. His abundant provision is expressed for us at the end of this Psalm. Let's read Verses 9 through 13 once again. We praise God at the field of harvest.

**⁹You visit the earth and water it;
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide their grain,
for so you have prepared it.**

**¹⁰You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth**

You have to love how the Lord is depicted here as the gardener of the earth. He is present. He is near. He has His river and He waters things personally. Isn't that amazing to see?

That is the picture of the Lord providing the water, the hydration. Then you see the effects of it all. Verse 11:

**¹¹You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.**

**¹²The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,**

**¹³the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.**

This is such an amazing picture. As I understand this, what we have here is a vision of the harvest land of Israel. It pictures a surge of uncommon productivity under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, God's covenant with Israel as mediated through Moses in Old Testament times.

What we read in the Old Testament is that when God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt, He took them to Mount Sinai and He established a covenant with His people whom He had just redeemed. He laid out six-hundred and thirteen laws which were most remembered in the Ten Commandments, which were the core and the central of all six-hundred and thirteen laws, teaching us to love God and to love other people.

Reading Deuteronomy Chapter 28, what we see is God's relationship with His people under the Mosaic Covenant. It was a conditional covenant. It was kind of a cause and effect thing. God said, Israel, you obey the Law and you are going to be prolifically blessed, agriculturally, in your military life, in your prosperity. It is going to be wonderful and to the glory of your Lord.

They would see this abundance all through the land as a testimony to the peoples around them. However, if they disobeyed, they would be cursed. There would be consequences that would be experienced. The land would go arid. Their armies would be defeated. Their prosperity would be withdrawn.

That was God's covenant with Israel at that time through Moses. That's what David saw here. Talk about one of those punctuated times in Israel's history. They were not going out after false gods, when they were walking in the statutes of the Lord, they were obeying His Name, walking in Him, and the land was responding with a harvest that was explosive and beautiful and wonderful to see.

Those were the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, and we must understand those things as we read these kinds of portions of Scripture. Now, we are living in the days of the New Covenant and that kind of cause and effect relationship with material blessing and abundance has subsided.

Yet, there is a way in our new covenant with Christ in this redemption that He has given us by grace, where He is going to cause us to prolifically bear fruit. He is going to cause us to bear fruit in the fruit of the Spirit and in the fruit of good deeds as we abide in Him.

We don't have that same conditional covenant with material prosperity as they did in the Old Testament. That is not the case. You go throughout the earth and you will find that perhaps some of the godliest, the most devoted Christians are persecuted and living in poverty. Yet, they are living in the Spirit. They are living in the grace of God.

Their lives, the persecuted church throughout the world, they are a rebuke to the prosperity gospel that we hear so much about today. Some of the people that are living in the Spirit, they are at the same time persecuted. They are bringing glory to the Lord in the way that they live their lives.

But we must see in texts like this that there is a fruitfulness in New Testament times that is glorious and wonderful. This issue of productivity, it is a pervasive New Testament issue. It is everywhere in the New Testament, that God will bear abundant fruit through His people.

Does that language ring a bell? Remember Jesus with His disciples in the Upper Room? He had been teaching them, saying, If you abide in me, when you stay close to me, when you are attached to me through prayer and by lingering in my truth and word, you will bear fruit.

We are talking about the fruit of Christian character and Christ-likeness. We are talking about the fruit of good deeds, so that Paul would say to that little church in Colossae, a little church in a little city that had a big name, Colossae—Colossians.

Paul said in Colossians 1:9 and 10

⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and

understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God

There is the sense that when we are abiding in the Messiah, remaining close to our Savior, the relationship with Him starts to flow forth in the character of our lives and the works of our hands. It becomes prolific. This is what glorifies the Lord.

So we pray that there would be this harvest of fruitfulness from our lives and from our church. But Jesus said, Abide in me. Abide in me. Abide in me. He said in that context of John Chapter 15 and Verses 7 and 8:

⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

That is what Jesus said. Jesus said, You didn't choose me, I chose you to go and bear fruit. This is the kind of fruit He was talking about. But it happens relationally as we are living life consciously in the Messiah, as we are close to Him, it just starts coming from us.

I was at home with mom and dad until I was about twenty-seven-years old. My parents planted an orange tree sometime before I left home. That orange tree, just by the fact that it was planted in the ground, it began producing all these oranges. Many of you have benefited from the orange tree in dad's backyard.

You know how good those oranges are. Those oranges are bursting with juice and they are sweet and, get this, they are healthy. They are good for you! We bear fruit, we produce things from our lives that are good for people around us and to the glory of God. That is the vision of fruitfulness for the Christian.

God had the ability to do that in Israel in that material way and He has the ability to do it among us in this spiritual way. We praise God when the people of God joyfully do the works of God, because this is the fruit that He produces through us. Are you abiding in Him? It is so easy to drift. Do you all know the song? Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing. Prone to wander, Lord I feel it.

I like surfing. You paddle out. The waves are good, but there is something called a current, a drift. You want to be in a certain place, but you keep drifting. That old sinful nature will drift away from the Lord and we must keep saying, Lord, I need to come back and rest in the shelter of your wings. I need to keep coming back to the place of atonement, where I am reminded of your saving grace.

I need to keep coming back to prayer, where you show that you do awesome things working through the prayers of your people. I need to keep coming back with the desire for fruitfulness in my life, from my churches life, from the body of Christ through the world. Then our lives bear fruit.

Bethel Grace, be encouraged. There is a God that is worthy to be praised. Your praise is due Him. I pray that it will be in your heart to take seriously what has come through David by the Spirit to us, that we might give Him the praise that He is due to the glory of His name and for our good and for the good of the people who are around us.

With that, I'm going to close in a word of prayer.