

1. A Psalm of Praise: Joining the Choir of the King

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 May 2013

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 0 0] 445, which if you have one of our visitor's Bibles, is page 524, page 524, a psalm towards the very end of the book of Psalms, and a very great psalm of praise.

So Psalm 45 then, which begins a song of praise of David. David, of course, the great king, the Lord's anointed, the king of Israel.

David says, I will extol you, my God and king, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.

On the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wondrous works I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

[1 : 1 8] They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness, and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks or shall declare you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind or loyal, unchangeably loyal in all his works.

The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand.

[2 : 3 1] You satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind, loyal in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

He fulfills the desires of those who fear him. He also hears their cry and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love him.

But the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Amen. May God bless us this, his word. Well, if you turn to the psalm that we read together, Psalm 145, page 524 in the Church Bibles, right at the end of the Psalter.

And this is very clearly a psalm of praise. And I want to suggest to you this morning, it's a psalm that is inviting us to join the choir of the king.

[4 : 0 0] A couple of weeks ago, when we were enjoying a lovely holiday, we thoroughly enjoyed being in Italy for the first time. And there's so much history, so much beauty, isn't there, in places like Rome and Florence.

Staggering. Almost means that you get over being charged seven euros for a coffee and nine euros for a glass of Coke.

Almost, not quite, for a Scotsman, that really did stick in the craw. So you'll be glad to know that in the spirit of Mrs. Thatcher, I managed to extract a euro refund. But that's another story, and I'll tell you another time.

Certainly didn't pay 54 pounds for an ice cream, that's for sure. But like most tourists in these sort of places, we took some guided tours. And I was struck by the sharp contrast that I noticed between two of our guides in particular.

One day we had really a very poor guide. Her repertoire really amounted to little more than constant repetition, really in quite poor English, of phrases like this. Look, this is very interesting.

[5 : 11] Look, this is very beautiful. And on it went like this. And of course, very quickly, we were bored. We were just switched off. And no doubt things these were very beautiful and very interesting.

But she told us nothing, and she explained nothing, to open our eyes to the interest, to make us see and appreciate the beauty and the wonder of these things ourselves.

But another day, we had a guide who was quite different. Even before we reached the places that we were to visit, she had so expounded the history, the story of these places.

She had explained the significance of these things. She painted such a rich picture for us that we were already spontaneously saying to ourselves, God, isn't that extraordinary?

That is staggering. And when we saw these things, we were filled with wonder. Our praise, if you like, was spontaneous because our hearts and minds had been given a reason to praise.

[6 : 16] Not just because we were being urged to praise something because it was the appropriate thing to do. And it seems to me that things are really rather similar when we think about praising God.

Quite often, perhaps, you've read books or you've heard conference addresses exhorting you to praise God more or to pray more. It made a great play on the fact that poverty and our praise of God and in our prayer to God is the result of a great lack or results, rather, in a great lack in our Christian experience.

Now, there may be, indeed, I think there is a lot of truth in that. But the problem is that that kind of moralistic exhortation, just to praise God more, to pray more, it doesn't really seem to help, does it?

It's like our guide telling us to be interested without actually interesting us at all. You can't be told, can you, to wonder and adore at something.

You've got to be led into wonder and adoration. And the truth is that so much exhortation to praise in the Christian church seems to do the very opposite.

[7 : 40] It seems to rather sink us into despair and a feeling of inadequacy. I don't know about you, but I certainly feel that when I'm at some Christian meeting and the so-called worship leader says, now, let's make sure we really, really, really praise God in this song.

And let's sing this song as though we really, really, really mean it. You know that sort of thing, don't you? Well, whenever I hear that, I just find my heart sinking. I want to sing a lament, not a song of praise, just to be awkward.

But praise is vital, nevertheless. You just need to look at these last five psalms in the Psalter after this one.

You'll see they each begin, don't they, with a command to praise. Praise the Lord. And not praising God is, in fact, a great sin. Just read Deuteronomy chapter 28 and verse 47, and you'll see that God holds Israel accountable because they did not serve him with joy and gladness in their hearts.

William Still once put it like this, that heartfelt praise and joy is not the icing on the cake of our Christian experience. It's the cake. It's the very bread and butter of what it means to be God's people.

[9 : 04] Now, when you speak like that, sometimes, of course, the cynic will say, well, what a selfish, what an unattractive God this Christian God is who demands praise for himself all the time like that.

C.S. Lewis used to think like that. He writes about it in one of his books. He says he used to think like that until he realized the most obvious fact about praise.

And that is that real enjoyment of something or someone will naturally overflow into praise.

The world rings with praise, he says. Lovers praising their loved one. Supporters praising their team. Readers praising their favorite author. Walkers their favorite scenery.

And so on. He says we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.

[10 : 06] It is its appointed consummation. You see, you come back from a wonderful holiday or a great rugby match or a camp or a day on the hills or whatever it is.

And you talk about it. You show your friends the photographs. You describe it. You praise your experience. And if you never did that, the experience itself would actually be diminished.

And so it is with our praise of God. C.S. Lewis speaks about our very own Westminster Catechism and the first question that tells us that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

And what he's saying there is that to fully enjoy is to glorify. It's to praise. In commanding us to glorify him, says Lewis, God is inviting us to enjoy him.

Praise, he says, is inner health made audible. And you see, our praise, therefore, expresses this reality about our inner health, the inner health of our relationship with God.

[11 : 26] So the question then is how are we led into and nourished in that inner health of experience and enjoyment of God that is expressed in real and spontaneous praise?

Well, Psalm 145, I think, is an ABC, if you like, that does just that. Quite literally, it's an ABC because it's what you call an acrostic poem in Hebrew.

That means each verse begins with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet right through the alphabet. It's a learning method. And it's a lesson taught and led by a king, by King David, the sweet singer of Israel.

He's the one who is leading all his people together in praise. Verse 1 begins, doesn't it, with a king praising a far greater king. I will extol you, my God and my king.

I don't know about you, if any of you watched the funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral of Baroness Thatcher recently, or even the royal wedding a year or so ago in Westminster Abbey.

[12 : 32] I was struck, as perhaps you were, by the position of our queen. Normally, of course, she's the center of attention, isn't she? And yet in that vast building of St. Paul's Cathedral, she looked so very small.

And there she was, seated at the front, yes, but just surrounded by all the congregation addressing her praise to her God and king.

A sovereign praising a far greater sovereign. We should be very thankful, shouldn't we, for her example, as I think we should be for her Christmas broadcasts.

Certainly, I praise God for them. She's increasingly bold in these, in pointing her whole nation and commonwealth to her true sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it is here.

David, the great king, the Lord's anointed. And yet he knows that he has a far greater lord and king, the Lord his God. And, of course, David himself, as we know, foreshadows one far greater king, great David's greater son.

[13 : 44] He is the one, in the end, of whom these words most truly speak. Hebrews chapter 2 makes that very clear by quoting David from many psalms, including Psalm 22, where, again, he is leading his people in praise.

In the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise, says great David's greater son. God's true king, risen and ascended to glory.

He leads all his people in praise of God his father and their father, his God and their God. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever, says David here in verse 2.

And he's anticipating that far greater fulfillment. So what is God's king as our praise guide, if you like?

What does he tell us to make us join in the praise of our king with our spontaneous praise, wanting to join his choir? Well, he simply opened our eyes and our ears to understand what verse 12 of our psalm calls the glorious splendor of his kingdom.

[14 : 59] He opens our hearts, likewise, to the good news and the gospel of the everlasting kingdom of God. In the words of this psalm, he points us to a God who is a king of unsearchable greatness, and to his covenant, which is a covenant of unchangeable faithfulness.

And friends, you see, it's when God's people understand these wonderful truths, that they too will freely and spontaneously join in the choir of the great king and become a choir of unquenchable witness, who likewise bless the name of the Lord as they speak the glory of the king, as they tell of his glorious deeds to the whole world.

Because that is the very heart of Christian praise, telling the world of the glories of his eternal kingdom. Let's look at this psalm a little more closely.

You'll see that verses 1 and 21, the beginning and end, are like bookends. The king declaring that he'll bless the name of the Lord forever. And the centerpiece, in verses 10 to 13, likewise, focuses on all the saints, likewise, blessing his name, proclaiming his glorious kingdom to the world forever.

And on either side of those verses in the center, our guide shows us why they're doing that, why they're joining in. So look first at verse 3 to the first half of verse 13.

[16 : 39] He shows us our God, who is a king of unsearchable greatness. Verse 3, great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

Our God, he is saying, is a sovereign ruler whose greatness is revealed in works of superabundant goodness and grace.

That's his message. God is great. But what does that mean? That's the question, isn't it?

It means very different things to different people. Often today, I think we would say that that phrase has a rather chilling quality, doesn't it? When we hear a crowd chanting, Allahu Akbar, Allah is great, God is great.

That's the cry, isn't it, of the Islamic jihadi as he's about to blow himself up and maim many hundreds of women and children. And there is, isn't there, a greatness that's terrible, fearful, full of foreboding.

[17 : 50] You sense that when you see some of these vast buildings and palaces that belong to the great rulers and empires of the past. You sense, don't you, the greatness of raw power.

You see that in the ruins of Imperial Rome, as I saw just the other week. The sheer scale of the Colosseum.

Those of you who have seen it, it's breathtaking. And when you start to imagine the greatness of the bloody spectacles that took place there, the merciless brutality that went on at the whim of the Caesars.

You sense, don't you, the raw power of that kind of greatness. Is that what we mean when we say our God is great?

Well, there is a right sense in which we fear and tremble at the greatness of God. The Bible tells us he is a God to be feared. He's not to be trifled with.

[18 : 52] He's not to be taken for granted. The fear of the Lord is the very beginning of wisdom, says the Proverbs. But that is not the focus of the psalmist here.

We're led to praise a greatness, the psalmist says, that is manifest in all the works of God. And his works are works of unsearchable goodness, of extraordinary grace.

Verses 4 to 6, they're full of God's great and wonderful works. That is, his interventions in the lives of his people. One generation shall declare your works to another, your mighty acts, verse 4.

Verse 5, the glorious splendor of God's majesty is revealed where? In his wonderful works. It's his awesome deeds, says verse 6, that declare his greatness.

Now, David is speaking very personally there. I will declare your greatness. It's exactly the language David uses in 2 Samuel 7 to describe everything that God has done for him and done for his family.

[20 : 02] Just as he had promised, calling him out of the fields and making him a king and a ruler over his people. Promising his seed would sit enthroned on that throne forever.

He says there in 2 Samuel 7, because of your promise, you have brought about all this greatness. It's the greatness of God's saving mercies to him and his family.

God's greatness is known in what he does for his people. And all he does, verse 7 says, all he does is full of abundant goodness and righteousness.

That word sometimes is translated deliverance, because God's righteousness is God's way of putting things to right by righting all wrongs.

Look at verses 8 and 9. God's greatness is above all a greatness in mercy, in steadfast covenant love over all that he has made.

[21 : 09] The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. As you know, that's a quotation, isn't it, from Exodus chapter 34.

The greatest self-revelation of God in the Old Testament, where on Sinai he appeared to Moses. Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock, and the Lord passed by and revealed his name to him.

The name that speaks of unsearchable divine greatness and goodness. The goodness of grace and of mercy and of compassion and of long-suffering love.

We shouldn't miss, by the way, that those words from Exodus 34 that are quoted here are some of the most quoted words in the whole of the Old Testament. Because they sing truly aloud of the kind of greatness that sinful human beings need from a deity.

And that is what we find in our God, the God of Scripture. Remember, Jonah quotes those words back to God in Jonah chapter 4 in a very disapproving way, because God has shown himself to be exactly that, gracious and merciful to that pagan city that had repented.

[22 : 28] And Jonah's annoyed. I told you you'd be like that. Everybody knows you're that kind of God. In fact, as Derek Kidna points out, he proves there, verse 9 of our psalm, because God's mercy in Nineveh extended, didn't it, even to the many cattle in that city.

The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made, even to the cattle in the city of Nineveh. By the way, that gives the lie, doesn't it, to the nonsense that's sometimes spoken by some environmentalists, who want to pin the blame for all the rape and exploitation of the planet on the Bible's influence, on Christian theology.

What a lot of nonsense. As if God's command to rule over the earth was a command to disregard his precious creation, to mutilate it, to disfigure it.

Of course, it was exactly the opposite. God made man to rule over the world in his image, with his compassionate care, which is over all that he has made.

It's man, isn't it, who has cast off God's yoke. It's man who has scourged the world and disfigured God's image in a selfish, corrupted way.

[23 : 51] But the Lord, no, the Lord is good to all. His mercy is over all that he has made. Just read the fourth commandment.

In the liberated rhythms of the life among God's redeemed people, there's a Sabbath rest not only for his people, not only for the people of faith, but for every servant, for every sojourner, even for the ox and the ass, and every beast of the livestock.

Greenpeace, eat your heart out. God is good and compassionate. His mercy is over all that he has made.

Our God is a king of unsearchable goodness and greatness. An absolute sovereign ruler, yes, indeed he is. But one whose greatness is revealed in the superabundant works of goodness and grace, a goodness that is simply overwhelming when we see it.

That's certainly the impression conveyed by this king's words, as he points us to his God, to his true king.

[25 : 05] His words of personal praise are just poured out as he thinks about all that God has done in his life, and as he joins his praise with the praise of the many generations of all who likewise have seen God at work in their lives.

And that is what happens, isn't it, when we begin to meditate on the goodness and grace of God, when we think about what he has done in our own lives.

That's why you find that in so many of the hymns of praise that we sing. Oh, to grace, how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be, and I think of your goodness.

I was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see your wonderful works to me, oh God. Oh, how the grace of God amazes me.

And I begin to think of his works. Will we stop for a moment and just think back over our own lives? Isn't it true that every one of us who's a believer can bear testimony to the greatness and the goodness that we've experienced at God's hand?

[26 : 23] I certainly can. And as a people, as a congregation, as a family of faith, as we look back, even over recent months and years, which sometimes have been very dark and very painful and hard, can't we still testify to the wonderful goodness of God, the awesome deeds that he has done for us and among us in our life together?

Not only in his gracious provision of this place where we can still meet and continue our ministry, but hopes and expectations of so much more besides. Can't we sing with Fanny Crosby all the way our Savior leads us?

Cheers each wandering path we've trimmed. Gives us grace for every trial. Feeds us with the living bread.

Isn't that our testimony as a people to this very day? Surely our God is a king of unsearchable greatness. But secondly, you see, if you look from the second half of verse 13 to verse 20, we're reminded that our gospel is a covenant of unchangeable faithfulness.

The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind or better, unchangeably loyal in all his works. Same again there in verse 17.

[28 : 09] He's saying that our God is a saving redeemer whose covenant is marked by faithfulness and righteousness. What he says, he does.

What he promises, he will always fulfill. He is faithfully righteous and he's righteously faithful. He's unchangeably loyal in all his covenant promises in all the world and to all the world, but also in a very special way to those who are his own.

You see, verses 14 to 17 speak of God's covenant of restraining faithfulness for the whole world. His promise to preserve the world and to restrain evil.

Sometimes, you see, we may think, mightn't we, that God is great and merciful? But if that's the case, then how can there be so much evil still in the world? How can there be so much wrong, so much tragedy, so much sickness and even death?

If God is so great and so good? You see, the answer, the answer to that, of course, lies not at God's door, but at man's door once again.

[29 : 28] It's humans who are the anarchists in this world. It's humans who are the architects of this world's disasters, not God. Man rebelled against God and his gracious rule.

Genesis 3 describes the tragic beginning, but Romans chapter 1 spells out the calamitous consequences for us. Human beings have dishonored God, Paul says. They've become foolish in their thinking, darkened in their hearts.

And three times, he tells us, because of that, God has given us up, left us to our own devices to do with the world what we want to. Given us up to debasement in heart and in mind and even in bodies.

You see, the mess and the misery of this planet is squarely laid at the door of man. So easy, isn't it, for us to forget just how deep that depravity can be.

I was on holiday. I was reading again a novel, historical novel, all about the times of the Second World War. And just to have to grapple again with the atrocities of the Nazi Reich.

[30 : 43] And all that went on under that regime of utter darkness and wickedness was just staggering in scale. So easy for us, isn't it, to forget that the heart of man hasn't changed.

Weren't you shocked this week reading that story of the kidnapping of those three girls in Cleveland, Ohio, in the middle of a modern city in America, that that can happen?

And yet, you see, the real miracle is that despite all this, God has not yet executed total and final judgment on this warped and wicked planet.

He's preserving it. And we must be eternally thankful for that. We need to remember that, don't we?

When sometimes, sometimes, no doubt, we're longing for God to end all the suffering and the evil and the wrongdoing. When we say, Lord, won't you bring an end to all of this terrible kind of thing? But what are we asking God when we pray that?

[31 : 45] That's to ask, isn't it, for God's final judgment, for complete and real retribution for all sin, for all offense against God, including our own.

Don't be mistaken. That day will come. Peter tells us that clearly, doesn't he, in his second letter, the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly, as he calls it.

And God is not slow, says Peter, in doing justly to punish evil. But he is patient. He's patient.

Not wishing any to perish. And so he is still, in his great mercy, keeping the world, preserving it until that day.

And restraining man's worst evil so that it will not yet utterly be destroyed. And so that we, as human beings, with our self-destructive impulses, will not utterly self-destroy and take this whole planet with us.

[32 : 55] And God has been, and still is, unchangeably faithful to his covenant promise to do that. That was his covenant, wasn't it, way back with Noah, Genesis chapter 9.

Never again, says the Lord, will there be a flood to utterly destroy this earth. God will not allow man's evil to become so utterly unrestrained that it will utterly destroy this world.

No, in his mercy, he is restraining evil, keeping it on a leash, and blessing this world nonetheless in spite of all its sin and rebellion and rejection of him.

Our Heavenly Father is a God who sends the sun and the rain on the evil and the unjust. He makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, says Jesus.

He sends rain on the just and the unjust. And that's what verses 14 to 16 are speaking about here. It's what we sometimes call God's common grace to all creation.

[34 : 09] He feeds and clothes. He gives the joy and the laughter of family and of friendship. He gives fulfillment in our human lives with abundant generosity to all.

Every day of life on this planet for every creature is a day of the abundant blessing of God's grace. Every day is owed to his unchangeably faithful word of covenant promise to this world.

Of course, there's more to his faithfulness even than that. And that's what verses 18 to 20 are spelling out wonderfully for us. It's not just a restraining faithfulness to all the world, but God's grace to us is a redeeming faithfulness to all who are his own.

His covenant promise to be present with his people and to rescue all who are his own for all eternity, forever and ever. See, that's the whole purpose of God's preservation of this world.

That's the whole purpose of God's restraint on evil so that we're not destroyed. It's to give time. It's to give opportunity for his greatest grace and mercy, for his saving covenant of redemption, first given to Abraham, to call out for his very own, a people who would be his forever through the seed of promise who at last was made known in great David's greater son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

[35 : 52] From the beginning to the end of the book of Psalms, indeed, from the beginning to the end of the whole Bible, it's clear that an ultimate division of all humanity will at last be made clear.

Psalms 1 opens the whole book of Psalms with this absolute contrast, the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. There is, says the Lord, a refuge for the righteous forever, beyond death.

But equally, the way of the wicked, he says, will perish. There is a judgment day to come. God is faithful to his covenant of restraint, but only, says the Bible, until all is fulfilled, and then there will be that final judgment.

There's nothing, by the way, friends, nothing in all the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ that is plainer than that absolute certainty.

And it's just as plain. It's plain as a pike staff here in verse 20, the second half. Do you see it? All the wicked he will destroy. You might be outraged by that.

[37 : 10] Many, many people today are outraged even to consider such a thing. All the wicked God will destroy. I find it strange because if you then ask that person, well, do you not like that because you are wicked?

They get very angry with you and say, how dare you call me wicked? I'm righteous. Well, if you're righteous, why should you not be worried? Why should you be worried about God destroying the wicked? That's the question, isn't it?

Who are the righteous? Who are the righteous whom the Lord loves, as Psalm 46, verse 8 says he does? Who can stand in the judgment?

As Psalm 1 says, the righteous surely shall. Who are those who God preserves? As verse 20 says here. Who he saves? As verse 19 says.

Well, it's not the morally perfect, if there could be such a one. It's not the spotless, the pious, the religious. Certainly not the self-righteous and the proud and the sanctimonious.

[38 : 21] Nor is it those with great pedigree and position and privilege. Who can it be then? Well, look at verse 18. He is near to all.

Notice, all who call on him. Verse 19. Who fear him. Verse 20.

Who love him. His unchangeable covenant promise is to be near and to fulfill the heart's desire and to save all such as these.

He preserves them. Perhaps better to say he watches over forever. All who love him.

And that's why this king, great David, praises the name of his king and his lord forever. He knows personally the unsearchable greatness and the unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord his God.

[39 : 33] And that's why our great king, great David's greater son, leads us in praise in the midst of the great congregation of all the redeemed. Because he, above all others, knows the unfathomable depths of the Father's goodness and grace to those who are his own.

Because he, above all others, knows the cost at the very heart of heaven itself of making that grace and mercy known to those who are his own.

And that's why, friends, he calls us, his brothers and sisters, to join in his kingly choir and to sing with him this great song of salvation. And that's what verses 10 to 13 give us the words to do right here at the very heart of this psalm.

Here is a choir of unquenchable witness. The people of this king are a speaking people. And their praise is marked by unceasing proclamation of his everlasting kingdom to the whole world.

All God's works, verse 10, shall declare you. It's a better translation. It's like verse, it's like Psalm 8 and Psalm 19.

[40 : 52] The creation declares God's glory simply by existing. It shows forth his praise. But it's his saints, verse 10b, do you see?

It's his own people who alone truly know his saving wonders and therefore can truly bless his name. It's we who have that wondrous story to sing of a God whose unsearchable greatness, of a God whose kingdom power, whose gracious glory has been revealed to us and is now revealed to all the world in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's we who have a gospel of unchangeable faithfulness, which is still utterly faithful today as he still preserves this earth, as he still preserves people's lives so that the promise of his eternal salvation will reach the very ends of this earth as Jesus has promised.

So that all, all who will call on him and fear him and love him, he will save and he will watch over forever and ever.

You see, friends, that's our glorious calling. It's what it means to be a Christian, to join the choir of the great king, to bless his name the way he loves to be blessed through his people speaking and telling and making known his mighty deeds and his saving mercies so that those who hear also will want to come and join the choir and sing with us forever the glory of his eternal kingdom.

[42 : 49] You see, the bigger the choir, the greater the sound. And this choir and this song is for all the saints, all who are his own.

every believer is called to join the choir of our great king. All the saints shall bless you.

So listen to the words that we are to sing. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures throughout all generations. That's our song, friends. May that song be heard from our lips and in our lives this very week as we go about our business and our work and our classrooms and the streets and with our friends.

May indeed it be our song forever until our Lord himself comes to lead all who are his in that great chorus of praise.

[44 : 11] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, how we praise you for your unsearchable goodness, for your unchanging promise of grace.

so help us and lead us, we ask, that we might be a people of unquenchable witness to the Lord who loved us and gave himself for us.

For we ask it in his name. Amen.