

Real Prayers for Real Life

A Prayer of Praise

Psalm 145

August 3, 2025

Pastoral Prayer

We come before You as David did, overwhelmed by who You are. “Great is the Lord and highly praised; His greatness is unsearchable.” You are the King above all kings, ruling with power and majesty. You are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. You are faithful in all Your words and righteous in all Your ways. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. We stand in awe of You, O Lord.

And yet, Lord, we confess that we often live as though You are small and we are great. We are quick to forget Your faithfulness and slow to praise You for Your goodness. We let worry steal our joy, pride harden our hearts, and selfishness direct our steps. We confess that our words do not always declare Your mighty acts, and our lives do not always reflect the hope we have in Christ. Forgive us, Lord, for the ways we have failed to honor You as King.

Thank You for Your mercy that runs deeper than our sin. Thank You that, like Israel at Sinai, You meet our rebellion with compassion, not condemnation. Thank You for Your daily provision — for food, a place to sleep, and every breath we take. Thank You for the gift of this church family, for the children and students in our care, and for the privilege of declaring Your works to the next generation. And most of all, thank You for Jesus — the One in whom Your greatness, grace, faithfulness, and righteousness take on flesh.

Lord, we ask that You make us a people of praise — that our worship on Sundays would overflow into our weekdays. Teach us to rest in Your greatness when we feel small, to trust Your faithfulness when life feels uncertain, and to rely on Your grace when we fall short. Strengthen the weary among us. Comfort those who mourn. Provide for those who are in need. And help us, as a church, to cultivate the unwavering hope of Jesus in every generation. Make us bold in sharing the gospel and quick to declare Your goodness to our neighbors, our children, and our city.

And now, Lord, we lift our hearts to You in praise. You are near to all who call on You. You hear our cries and save us. You guard those who love You. “My mouth will declare the Lord’s praise; let every living thing bless His holy name forever and ever.” And so we do, O Lord — forever and ever.

In the name of Jesus, our great and gracious King, we pray. Amen.

Introduction

So, I realized this week that this Sunday is my two year anniversary as your pastor, and in part that means I can now make a controversial statement here or there and get away with it. So let's do it.

Have you been to Cali-n-Tito's? (slide). The reason I'm asking is because **I now believe it's THE BEST fast-casual restaurant in Athens.**

Controversial statement, I know, but I stand by it. It is THE BEST fast-casual restaurant in Athens. I've never been disappointed there, but I had a moment this spring when I went with some local pastor friends in our community that has radically changed my life and made me an unpaid advocate for Cali-n-Titos.

The experience was this: **I ate the CUBANO ESPECIAL (slide), aka, "the greatest sandwich in the universe."** Listen to the contents of this sandwich.

- Cuban bread. The most perfect cuban bread of all the breads. Not even celiac sufferers can resist this cuban bread.
- Grilled steak. HELLO. Seasoned perfectly, tender, juicy, abundant. I mean, come on.
- Ham ... because it's Cuban. Perfect.
- Lettuce, grilled onions, cheese. Not just any cheese. It's like they poured their amazing queso into the sandwich. It's ridonkulous.
- EGGS. JALAPENOS. MAYO. And the "piece of resistance" ... HOT DOGS.

Y'all, I'm telling you, we should end church right now and storm the east side venue. That's how good this sandwich is, and it's all I can get when I go there now. Ceviche is second, but it's not a close second. Every time: CUBANO ESPECIAL. You can thank me later, and you will, because it's that good.

So, I hereby declare by the authority vested in me as a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the state of Georgia, ***Cali-n-Titos is the best fast-casual restaurant in Athens, and the Cubano Especial is the best sandwich in the known universe.***

Have you ever experienced something in your life that's led you to become a staunch advocate for that thing ... something that you've personally experienced and become a full-fledged believer in? Something that, in your experience, is so exceptionally good and life-altering that everyone in your orb should know about it? Maybe it's a sandwich or a restaurant ... maybe it's a friend ... maybe it's a band ... maybe it's a tv-show or podcast or book ... but something in your life that was just so wonderful for you that you joyfully and willingly, if not a little obnoxiously, testify about?

This is what David is up to in Psalm 145. Psalm 145 is David's last psalm in the book. He's written lots of laments, lots of confession, lots of calls for justice, lots of wisdom ... and now, at

the end, for his final contribution, David writes a psalm that is just all in on the work and nature of God. He writes a psalm of PRAISE, and he is *effusive* with his praise. In the same way that you and I might praise a band's new song or sandwiches at Cali-n-Titos, David praises God.

Listen to how he starts:

"I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever." (Ps. 145:1–2)

Did you catch that? "Every day." "Forever and ever." David isn't checking a box here. He's overwhelmed. He's standing in the presence of the King, and the only fitting response is awe-filled praise.

But let's be honest: that's not where most of us live. Most of us don't wake up thinking about how great God is. We wake up thinking about our to-do lists. Our emails. Our worries. Or just coffee. Even on Sundays, worship can feel like a routine. Something we "do." Cultural obligation. Duty. Habit. But far too often, not genuine praise.

Why? Because we forget who God is. We aren't contemplating His nature and His works ... His character and His covenant. We live like we're the kings—we make the plans, set the priorities, decide what matters most. But Psalm 145 resets the picture. It pulls our gaze upward. It says: You're not the king. God is. Not just David's King. Not just Israel's King. The King over everything—including you. And if you recognize that ... live in that space ... you'll effusively praise Him.

Body

But David doesn't just tell us to praise. He gives us reasons. Four to be precise. He shows us why praise isn't just a duty—it's the only fitting response when you see who God really is.

The Greatness of God

The first reason David praises God is because of His greatness. Look at vv. 3-7.

3 The LORD is great and is highly praised; his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation will declare your works to the next and will proclaim your mighty acts.

5 I will speak of your splendor and glorious majesty and your wondrous works.

6 They will proclaim the power of your awe-inspiring acts, and I will declare your greatness.

7 They will give a testimony of your great goodness and will joyfully sing of your righteousness.

You know, verse 4 particularly stood out to me because of our mission to cultivate the hope of Jesus in EVERY GENERATION, and become one of our core values is to involve all ages.

Verse 4 is what we're doing — passing on a living, breathing hope in Christ across generations inside and outside the church.

But more generally, think about the biggest thing that makes you feel small—mountains, oceans, galaxies. Those all whisper or perhaps scream God's greatness. But David's not just thinking of nature. He's thinking of God's mighty acts—His power in history. In creation and in our life experiences, God's greatness demands our awe.

Illustration

We spent 6 days in the mountains of western North Carolina last week, aka "God's Country." 65 at night, 78 in the day, low humidity, utter silence and peace. Deer, turkey, humming birds, hiking, vistas, waterfalls ... all things that make the Christian want to praise God, and help the Christian recall all the ways that same God has been great in their lives.

The Graciousness of God

David goes on to point out that God is not just great, but He is also gracious. He emphasizes this in verses 8-13, but let's just focus on vv. 8-9.

8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in faithful love.

9 The LORD is good to everyone; his compassion rests on all he has made.

In verse 8 here, David's quoting from Exodus 34—when God revealed His character to Moses. The context of God saying this to Moses and the Israelites is really fascinating.

God had rescued them from Egypt with signs and wonders, split the Red Sea so they could walk through on dry ground, fed them with bread from heaven. He called them His chosen people and invited them into covenant with Him — and before the stone ink was dry, they threw it all away. While Moses was on the mountain receiving the very words of God, they were at the bottom, melting their jewelry into a golden calf and calling it "Yahweh."

If there was ever a time for God to say, "That's it. We're done. You've crossed the line," this was it. And that's exactly what Israel deserved.

But then comes this stunning moment. Moses intercedes for the people and pleads to see God's glory. And when God reveals Himself, what does He say? Not words of condemnation. Not a list of charges. But this: *"The Lord, the Lord, a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth" (Exodus 34:6).*

Do you hear that? God introduces Himself to a guilty, undeserving people not as a God who's itching to punish but as One who overflows with compassion, grace, patience, and steadfast love. He doesn't disown them. He doesn't destroy them. He declares His very heart — that His grace isn't just an action He takes; it's who He is.

This is what David is marveling at in Psalm 145:8. This is what has David praising God. When he says, “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in faithful love,” he’s reaching back to that mountain moment — the moment when Israel learned that God’s grace runs deeper than their sin.

That’s the God we worship: the God whose patience outpaces our rebellion, whose mercy outweighs our failure, whose faithful love doesn’t let go even when we do.

The Faithfulness of God

David’s not done. He also praises God for His faithfulness. Look at vv. 13-16 with me.

13b The LORD is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his actions.

14 The LORD helps all who fall; he raises up all who are oppressed.

15 All eyes look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.

16 You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

God feeds the hungry. He lifts the fallen. He opens His hand to satisfy every living thing.

Illustration

Some number of you are in the agricultural business ... you know, there’s something quietly stunning about a faithful farmer. Year after year, before the sun rises, he’s up tending the soil. He knows when to plant, when to water, when to harvest. He pays attention to the seasons — and he doesn’t quit just because last year was hard. He shows up, again and again, because he knows that if he’s faithful, the land will bear fruit.

Now zoom out and think of God. Only His “farm” isn’t a plot of land — it’s the whole creation. Psalm 145 says every living thing “looks to Him,” and He provides “at the proper time.” Birds migrate, fields bloom, calves are born, and bread finds its way to our tables — all because God’s faithful hand keeps opening. And when we fall, He lifts us up. When we’re oppressed, He sustains us.

That’s David’s point: God’s faithfulness isn’t occasional; it’s woven into the rhythm of the world. Every sunrise, every harvest, every answered prayer is His way of saying, “I keep my word. I haven’t forgotten you.” So when David calls God “faithful in all His words,” he’s not just thinking about a verse written on a scroll — he’s thinking about a God whose faithfulness is visible everywhere, from His promises to His providence, from the bread on your plate to the breath in your lungs.

And for His faithfulness, David praises the Lord.

The Righteousness of God

David's nearly done. Lastly, he praises God for His righteousness. Look at vv. 17-20.

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all his acts.

18 The LORD is near all who call out to him, all who call out to him with integrity.

19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry for help and saves them.

20 The LORD guards all those who love him, but he destroys all the wicked.

David likens God to a judge who gets everything right in every case all the time. God is the judge who knows everything — not just the case before him at any given time, but every detail of every person's life for all time. He can't be bribed. He isn't swayed by public opinion. He doesn't overlook evil out of convenience or hand out punishments out of spite. He sees perfectly, weighs perfectly, and acts perfectly.

That's what David is celebrating in Psalm 145. When he says, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways," he's reminding us that God always judges, governs, and responds with absolute rightness. He's near to those who cry out for help. He guards those who love Him. And yes — He destroys wickedness.

We live in a world where we see wrongs go unpunished, where powerful people get away with evil, where justice feels delayed or denied. But David looks at the Lord and says: "Not with Him." God is righteous in all His ways. He never misjudges. He never overlooks. He never fails to make it right.

And for that, David praises the Lord.

Conclusion/Application

Reflecting on the character and works of God, David saw God to be great, gracious, faithful, and righteous. And for those reasons, he PRAISED GOD. **And on this side of redemptive history, we have the true and better reason to praise God.**

Greatness and Jesus

For it is in the person of Jesus that God's greatness steps into full view. His authority over creation (calming storms), over sickness (healing the blind and lame), and over death itself (raising Lazarus, His own resurrection) shows that the greatness David sang about has a face.

Colossians 1:16–17 ties it together: "Everything was created by him... he is before all things, and by him all things hold together." The greatness of God isn't just distant majesty — in Jesus, the greatness of God walked among us. And for this, we praise God.

Graciousness and Jesus

Jesus also perfectly embodies God's gracious heart. In Christ, God's compassion becomes flesh. Jesus eats with sinners, forgives the guilty, and welcomes the outcast (Luke 19:10). His cross is the ultimate display of God's graciousness — taking the wrath we deserve and giving us mercy we could never earn. John 1:14 says it plainly: "The Word became flesh... full of grace and truth." Jesus is the embodiment of God's grace and compassion, and for this, we praise God.

Faithfulness and Jesus

It's in Jesus that we fully know that God is faithful. Every promise of God — for redemption, for a King, for a new covenant — finds its fulfillment in Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20). From His birth as the promised Son of David to His promise to return, Jesus shows us that God keeps His Word, even at great cost. And for this, we praise God.

Righteousness and Jesus

And of course it is in Jesus where God's righteousness is on full display. Jesus not only lived in perfect righteousness, He gives His righteousness to us. Romans 3:21–26 tells us that through the cross, God remained "just and the justifier" — upholding His righteousness while making sinners right with Him. In Jesus, righteousness isn't just a standard to admire; it becomes a gift we receive.

Do you see it? Do you believe it? (*four slides quickly*)

- God's greatness is revealed in Christ's power and lordship.
- God's graciousness is embodied in Christ's compassion and cross.
- God's faithfulness is fulfilled in Christ as the long-awaited promise-keeper.
- God's righteousness is accomplished and applied through Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

Jesus is Psalm 145 in flesh and blood — the great, gracious, faithful, and righteous King who invites us into His Kingdom. And it is to Him that I invite you today to live a life of praise.



Closing Prayer

Lord, fix our hearts on You — the great, gracious, faithful, and righteous King. Thank You for Jesus, who shows us Your greatness in His power, Your grace in His cross, Your faithfulness in His promises, and Your righteousness in His life and resurrection. Send us out with the hope of the gospel on our lips and praise for You in our hearts, so that every generation might know and trust in Jesus. We pray this in His strong and saving name. Amen.