

Days of Praise

My tongue will proclaim your righteousness, your praises all day long (Psalm 35:28).

Scripture: Psalm 35:1-7, 22-28

Song: “Tell It to Jesus”

When all is well, praise comes easily. But when we, like David, have been the target of someone’s malice, we’re tempted to cease giving God glory. In his book *When You’ve Been Wronged*, Erwin Lutzer advises those who suffer an injustice to remember that God is there. He knows how to redeem what has happened for our good and to His glory.

David experienced a great deal of injustice. The book of 1 Samuel records how David was hunted by Saul, hated by Saul’s men, and betrayed by his own friends. False witnesses rose against him, and many sought to kill him. Yet David continually went to God with the wrongs done against him. He poured out his heart to the one who would vindicate him. David refused to seek revenge, choosing rather to lift his prayer and his praise to his deliverer.

God alone judges rightly. He sees. He knows. And He will respond in His way and time. Experiencing injustice can be painful, but let’s choose now to commit every offense to Him. God will lift the burden of bitterness and free our hearts to praise Him with renewed joy.

Father, thank You that I can turn every hurt and heartache over to You. You alone are my defender. In Jesus’ name, amen.

April 29–May 5. **Sandra Vosburgh** is a Sunday school teacher, speaker, and director of women’s ministries. She lives in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

The Record of His Heart

Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands (Psalm 112:1).

Scripture: Psalm 112

Song: “Find Us Faithful”

When I came to know the Lord 45 years ago, I pulled out the Bible my aunt had given me on my 11th birthday. I recently took some time to scan its worn pages. The margin notations, underlined passages, and highlighted sections that were added over the years testified of my delight in the Word of God. When its pages grew too thin and fragile, I stored that first Bible away like hidden treasure.

David, the likely author of Psalm 112, delighted in the richness of Scripture. He repeatedly declared his commitment to obey God’s commands, not from a sense of duty but from joy. David stood on God’s promises, relied on His strength, trusted in His faithfulness, and rejoiced in His mercy. God’s truth was the light on David’s path and the lamp that shined into his darkness. Whether in times of grief or fear, David drew on the comfort of God’s Word.

Today, we have the option of Bible apps on our electronic devices to replace having a physical copy of God’s Word. However, we might consider the benefit of a tangible testimony of God’s faithfulness to us by leaving behind our marked and well-worn Bibles as a record of our hearts, preserved for our children, even as God’s written Word is a record of His heart, preserved for us.

Father, thank You for Your unchanging, infallible, ever-relevant Word. I will be faithful to store its treasure in my mind and heart. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Humble Boldness

[Peter said,] “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong” (Acts 3:16).

Scripture: Acts 3:12-26

Song: “Channels Only”

Have you ever known someone who kept a special gift or ability hidden because that person didn't want to step out and be seen or didn't want to seem like they were showing off? As believers, it's not always easy for us to know how to walk in humble boldness. Those two words may even seem contradictory to us. How do we avoid the pitfalls of both fear and pride as we live and serve in God's kingdom?

In today's passage, Peter provides a great example for us. He put himself forward when he saw the lame man's need, believing that God could heal him. When the beggar began walking and leaping, the crowd looked at Peter and John with astonishment. Peter quickly drew their attention to Jesus Christ and magnified God's power at work rather than keeping the focus on himself. God created a platform for proclaiming the Gospel, which Peter recognized as he extended God's gift of healing

As we use the gifts God has given us to meet needs in His kingdom, our role may be in the background at times, yet at other times, we may serve in very visible ways. In any case, we can use our gifts humbly and boldly as our focus remains on honoring God and making Him known.

Father, open my eyes to the needs around me, and give me the grace to step forward. Use the gifts You have given me for Your glory alone. In Jesus' name, amen.

The Mystery of the New Birth

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again” (John 3:3).

Scripture: John 3:1-8, 13-17

Song: “Born Again”

George Whitefield (1714–1770) and Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) corresponded as respected friends. In a letter dated August 17, 1752, Whitefield wrote these words to Franklin: “As you have made a pretty considerable progress in the mysteries of electricity, I would now humbly recommend to your diligent unprejudiced pursuit and study the mystery of the new-birth.”

Today’s passage reveals that Nicodemus went to Jesus by night—a time when the crowds had likely dissipated, the city was quiet, and an interview with Jesus could be conducted with less distraction. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus cared about keeping God’s law and was seeking the truth about Jesus. Yet, he was lacking the kind of spiritual life Jesus described. Jesus’ words seemed a mystery to him that night, but Scripture reveals that later Nicodemus would come to follow Jesus (John 19:38-42), and it seems certain that he learned what Jesus meant when He said, “You must be born again.”

Even to those who have believed in the Son of God and received eternal life, the new birth remains a mystery. Yet we rejoice in the miracle brought about by God’s Word and His Spirit at work in our hearts—bringing about a spiritual rebirth by His grace through faith.

Father, thank You for new life in Christ. I’m forever grateful that salvation is by grace through faith, not by the works of the law. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Let's Keep Meeting

As for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple (Psalm 5:7, *KJV*).

Scripture: Psalm 5

Song: “We Have Come into This House”

According to a 2021 study conducted by Lifeway Research, 4,500 churches across 34 denominations in the United States closed their doors in 2019. In another 2021 US study—this one by Faith Communities Today—researchers found that over the last 20 years, the median attendance at worship services has dropped from 137 to 65.

The psalmist declares his commitment to come into the house of the Lord and worship Him with reverence and rejoicing. David's desire had been to build a temple for the Lord (2 Chronicles 6:7). He longed for a place for God's name where God's people could meet and worship. The importance of corporate worship can be seen throughout the New Testament writings. The author of the book of Hebrews clearly instructs believers to continue to gather, especially as the day of Christ's return approaches (Hebrews 10:24-25).

I once heard a minister tell his congregation that when an issue arises within the church, we should ask ourselves, “Am I part of the problem or part of the solution?” As the ministry of the local church faces challenges today, may we, by God's grace, be part of what brings about spiritual growth and encouragement of the saints.

Father, thank You for the fellowship of my local church. I delight in gathering together with other believers to worship and serve You. In Jesus' name, amen.

In the Image of Christ

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).

Scripture: 1 John 1:1–2:2

Song: “O to Be Like Thee!”

I asked my son to review the results of a recent MRI. As a radiologist, he is trained to recognize the presentation of any abnormality that would need to be addressed by a specialist. He interpreted the various shades of gray, and the light and the dark areas found on the images. He explained how the use of contrast improves clarity and diagnostic accuracy.

The apostle John uses contrast throughout today’s passage, comparing the light of God’s righteousness with the darkness of sin. John wanted his readers to examine themselves in the light of truth. God is light, and there is no darkness in Him. None. God’s image is completely holy. His wisdom is pure. His goodness, without partiality. His power, free of malice. And His love, selfless. There is no gray in His character, no shifting shadows of change (James 1:17). Therefore, John says it is impossible to walk in His light and remain in the darkness of sin.

If our self-examination in light of God’s Word reveals an issue to be addressed, we have good news. When we confess our sin to Him, He is faithful to forgive us, to cleanse us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9), and to bring us out of our darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Father, thank You that I can walk in Your light. Stamp Your own image deep on my heart. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Great Grace for Great Need

God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith (Romans 3:25).

Scripture: Romans 3:21-30

Song: “Grace Greater Than Our Sin”

In 1894, Dr. Eleanor Chestnut (1868–1905) served as a medical missionary 300 miles up the Bei Jiang River from Guangzhou, China. On one occasion, Dr. Chestnut performed a leg amputation on an injured worker. Complications arose, and the patient’s wounds required a skin graft. Finding no donor, Dr. Chestnut provided her own skin to meet the urgent need.

God’s justice requires full payment for sin: death of the offender. However, in His compassionate love, He provided a substitute: His own Son. The Law of Moses required the blood of an animal to be sprinkled on the mercy seat in the holy of holies of the tabernacle (and later, the temple) to atone for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16). However, Jesus our Savior removed the necessity of this practice when He shed His own blood to atone for our sin. Jesus took the guilt of humanity on himself and willingly paid the penalty. Through Christ’s death on the cross, God’s justice was satisfied.

Doctor Chestnut’s patient didn’t do anything to merit her sacrifice. He simply received the skin graft offered to him, believing this was the only way he would heal. In the same way, we must receive the sacrifice Jesus has provided. It’s only by grace through faith that we can be saved and receive new life in Christ.

Father, thank You for Your amazing grace. My need is great, but Your grace is greater. In Jesus’ name, amen.