

Wisdom for Relationships - A Weighty Matter

Psalm 115

Let's turn in our Bibles to Psalm 115 as we continue our series in the Psalms this summer. Also, I want to invite you back to our evening service. Pastor Stephen King will be preaching not from all of Matthew 19 and 20, but a portion of Matthew 20. Still, it'll be a wonderful sermon to hear about church planting and how God establishes his kingdom outposts as he seeks to spread his glory.

This morning we're going to be looking at verses one through 18. The entire Psalm when we read, but we're going to be digging in just few portions of this Psalm, but still, I ask you to please pay careful attention. This is God's holy and inerrant word.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name. Give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness. Why should the nations say, where is their God? Our God is in the heavens. He does all that he pleases. Their idols are silver and gold. The work of human hands. They have mouths. But do not speak eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel feet. But do not walk, and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them, O Israel. Trust in the Lord. He is their help in their shield. O house of Aaron, and trust in the Lord. He is there. Help! And there shield you who fear the Lord. Trust in the Lord. He is there. Help! And there. Shield! The Lord has remembered us. He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the Lord. Both the small and the great. May the Lord give you increase. You and your children. May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth. The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man. The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into silence. But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord.

Please be seated.

Sometimes it's necessary to state what is obvious, and that's particularly true in our litigious insane culture, where manufacturers are forced to say the most ridiculous things to escape liability for the customers, shall we say. lack of common sense. The first famous example was the historic lawsuit of a McDonald's customer who burned herself when she spilled the hot coffee she had just ordered through the drive thru. She said McDonald's should have warned her that the hot coffee. That she had purchased was hot. And a jury agreed. And she got an insanely huge settlement. Now, this warning can be found on every hot beverage cup in all fast food restaurants. Warning hot coffee is hot.

Okay, now you've been warned. But that's nothing. The following warning appeared a few years ago on a popular new scooter. Warning. This product moves when used.

For years you could find this on a bottle of night. All night. All the sleep aid helps you get your Zs. Warning. May cause drowsiness. Now, if you were to get a package of your favorite peanuts in a convenience store, you'll see this on the package. Warning contains nuts. That's why I bought it. This warning was included on a tag of a mattress. Do not attempt to swallow it. Now we know why you're not supposed to take the tag off. Someone might swallow the mattress. You can find this in the Husqvarna Chainsaw Manual in bold letters. Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands. You have got to state the

obvious. My personal favorite is still the one that Lisa and I discovered on a separate piece of paper in all caps in the package that our new iron was in. Do not iron clothes while wearing them. Seems like a time saver to me. Sometimes you have to state the obvious, but you know, those warnings seem hilarious, but really only necessary for the dimmest bulbs among us. The not so sharp knives in the drawer. But it doesn't take long for us to realize that it's painfully true for us as Christians. It's necessary that we be reminded of the obvious truth of what, in the end, everything is all about that which is obvious - that which is easier for us to forget, because it's obvious we take it for granted. But we must never take this for granted. The psalmist says in verse one, not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory. No matter what. No matter when, no matter where, no matter of whom. We must give God glory.

Now, perhaps one of the reasons why it's necessary to make the obvious statement we must give God glory is because the idea of glory and giving glory has become so common to us, or maybe even hard to define. We think we know what it means. I grew up in a tradition where the word glory was almost like, you know, I went to the store glory. They had what I needed. Glory. And I'm not joking in the sermon. Yes, you would hear it. Glory. That's a common use in that tradition. We have a general idea that giving God glory means giving God credit for what he has done, which is certainly true. We must give him credit. We generally understand that we aren't supposed to have selfish ambition to put ourselves first, and so we aren't to seek our own glory. But God's. The psalmist here seems urgently to be on to something deeper. He repeats himself and in what is really a plea, it's a petition. It's an insistent cry. Twice, he says, not to us, not to us, but to your name. Give glory. Well, the Hebrew word translated glory covered means to make heavy, or it means to, to give weight to to give glory to something is to give it its weight, its due weight, specifically when it comes to authority or power or responsibility.

Old Testament kings and those of authority are said to have I have covered or weightiness, glory, the glory of kings, the glory of those who have been given a call by God to lead a particular kind of weightiness. It's not an unknown term to us or an idea, because we will often talk about those who use or even misuse, if the case may be their own authority or position. We say they're doing what they're throwing their weight around. So it's that same idea. Some here will remember the 2000 election when the media swarmed all around the Latin phrase gravity was to describe the weightlessness of the Republican ticket and the heaviness that Dick Cheney apparently brought to it. Weightiness covered. Well, when we say we must give God, not ourselves, glory, we're saying not only that he has weightiness, he deserves to have weightiness ascribed to him. He is the one who deserves to have that authority to do, to be, to accomplish. God has weight. He has the right to throw around, and he alone has that. So we must acknowledge his right to do it by submitting to him. And his purpose is in trust and in obedience. Now, to say that God is the one who has weight in our lives means that his the presence of his weight, reorders the things that are important to us.

What we give weight to displaces the things in our life, if you will, reorders them. I saw a real on line this week. There are redemptive things that you can see online. It was that of a magpie. It looks like a big crow. You've probably seen them. They're actually very smart birds. And there was a glass of water that was not full enough for the magpie to take a drink, but all around it were stones, and they would pick up these stones and drop them in the glass. And as he dropped each stone in the glass, the level of the water would get higher and higher until he could finally reach his beak in and take a sip of water. Now I know it's not the weight of those stones that displace the water, but the idea is the same. Know it was their mass. But. But God's presence, his living presence in our lives, his glory

reorders our life. It disperses everything and puts it in a right place. And that is why we must give him glory. So I'm going to state something that you need to write down what's on the screen so you don't forget it. God alone deserves glory. Again, an obvious thing. Again we say verse one is a request. It's a plea from the Psalm is heart. And the implication is very clearly that we have a human tendency to get in the way of God's glory, to put ourselves in the path of the attention, credit, and honor he receives. It's almost like spiritual photobombing. We just got to get in there and somehow be associated with the glory. But God alone deserves glory. We need to be reminded of this for the rest of our days.

It is not we ourselves, but God who deserves to be credited with authority, power, and praise. Yes, he uses his people, but in them, as we will see, he creates that very desire for that glory, that zeal for glory that belongs to God alone. So God alone deserves glory first for who he is. Verse three. Very simple. Our God is in the heavens. He does all that he pleases. Verse 15, May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth. God is the creator. He is overall sovereign and the life he is in the heavens, though he may be away in the sense that he's invisible, he is living and powerful, and he orders all things according to his purposes, in contrast to those worthless, powerless idols which we'll look at in a moment. And verses four through eight, the nations. He is God. The contrast the psalmist makes is with the impotency and ridiculousness of the gods of the nations. They deserve nothing but contempt because they are literally human constructions. They don't even deserve any consideration beyond their capability, which is nothing. Maybe, perhaps his works of art. And that's so different from Israel's invisible but powerful living God and an extension of who he is.

God also deserves glory for what he does not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name. Give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness. Steadfast love. We see that throughout the scriptures, hesed more than just mere love or affection. It is God's specific covenant commitment to his people. It is God's bound faithfulness to all whom he has made his covenant promise with. Beginning with Abraham and through the ages, as his covenant widened and as the shadows became substance, when Jesus was revealed as God with us, his covenant love, steadfast love, and commitment to carry out the terms of the covenant of grace. Ultimately, in Jesus dying on the cross, paying the full penalty for our sins, and rising from the dead so that we might be with him as we just say. In that covenant fulfillment in glory. Now, Psalm 115 is part of the Egyptian Hallel. Psalms 113 through 118. Hallel means praise, and they're called Egyptian because they belong to a traditional liturgy that commemorates the deliverance of Israel from Egypt under Moses. The Exodus, Psalm 115 in particular, was sung and is still sung by Jewish families after the Passover meal.

But when you look at it, you can see that it isn't just a desire that we give God glory, it's a petition that God give himself glory. It's a plea for deliverance through the glory of God, one that looks back at God's past. Glorious deliverance, as these Hallel Psalms do. Looking back how God was faithful to his covenant promise. They call for God to get glory for himself. Now by delivering them in their situations. Verse two. Why should the nations say, where is their God? Israel seemed always to be in some precarious position, often of their own making, because they had turned away from the Lord in disobedience and in the worship of these very idols that are lifeless.

And the reality of their apostasy made Israel's God appear to the nations powerless. He can't even keep his own people attached to him. Where is he? And their weakness made them vulnerable to attack, attack. And so the nations mock Israel and their God. But this is a plea of the remnant and the repentant. Give yourself glory. It reflects that that plea that God would demonstrate his glory through deliverance,

to show that he is faithful to his covenant promise and to his covenant love, that believers in such a position are under the duress of their own sin.

We even know what that's like under the taunts of mockers. They don't have to be convinced that they should give God glory, because God's glory is what they most desire, not vindication of them before the evil, but vindication of God's name in a lost world. What they want is for God to display his faithfulness is...Fidelity. Truth. Trustworthiness. It's sort of an exclamation point on that previous word Hassid steadfast love and faithfulness. There together, paired over and over again. In the Old Testament, we see that God is steadfast and loving, but it is his faithfulness that makes it personal. He is our covenant God, not just the covenant God. He is the God. The psalmist encourages his brethren in verses nine through 11 to trust now because he is a God who was faithful in the past, getting in verse 12, and he is the God who will be faithful in the future. God deserves glory because he shows steadfast love and faithfulness to us, essentially saying, I have made and will keep my covenant. And that means with you, not just a mass, but you, my beloved, I am your God.

In 1980, my family was going through a tremendous amount of difficulty, difficult situations. My grandfather, after a long battle of cancer, died. He was young, just in his 60s. My brother had gone through a divorce, caused a great stress in our family, and one of the boys was going through an awful rebellion. Despised all things Christian and my mother seemed to bear it all. And during that time, even my mother's relationship with my dad became stressed, and she tried to hold it all together and pleaded with the Lord to bring peace and rest to her family, asking, where are you? Why are you abandoning me? Will you please hear? Will you please answer? That's who you are. She used to listen to this radio station from Toccoa Falls Bible College in North Georgia. So, I lived in South Carolina, about 40 miles away. And she would listen to them, to that radio station and the preachers and teachers. And one day, while she was making a bed, all of us were gone. She heard an old Baptist preacher. It was a practice of the radio station to let local pastors share scripture and devotion every day. And this man came from somewhere in the mountains of North Georgia, and he sounded like he was a couple hundred years old, but also that he didn't even have much of an education. And he read Psalm 23 from the King James. And as my mom was making the bed thinking nothing of it, she heard this. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. And she said, just hearing that emphasis on my. God is my shepherd. I shall, I shall not want. She fell to her knees as she realized who she was really dealing with. This God, powerful in the heavens, was her faithful God. She knew it would be six years before I came to know the Lord. And difficulties still ensued in our family. The relationship with her mom and dad. The Lord just blessed that. But he didn't make everything perfect. But he was faithful and she realizes she was at that moment on her knees that whatever she was facing then ... though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Because this was her shepherd. This is the God that is shown to us here. The God who is in the heavens, who does all that he pleases, who has steadfast love and faithfulness to his people. He is not invisible. He is there. He is living. He is present. He is Emmanuel, and he will be faithful to show his glory in his people.

Every time someone comes to know the Lord, that's the glory of God being revealed. His covenant faithfulness as we grow in sanctification, learning from His word, hearing things that we've heard before, and suddenly seeing things not because they weren't there, but because the Lord is faithful to be our God, our Shepherd, and to teach us as we grow. He is getting glory in our lives. It is God who remains our shepherd, our fortress as we sing our help and our shield. As he calls out here to all of God's people. And it's in light of this truth, we realize the deeper necessity for our giving God glory. And that is, we must

give God glory because we become like what we give glory to. That's a hard thing to say. Strange sounding sentence, but it's a whole lot better than saying we become like that to which we give glory, which is more grammatically correct. You remember the statement you are what you eat. I hope no parents use that. I've never used it. My mom used to use it. You eat your broccoli because you are what you eat. I don't want to be broccoli. Well, that's the idea. Here you are, what you worship. We don't become divine, obviously, but those who worship lifeless, dead, powerless things ultimately become like that verse for their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths but do not speak. Eyes do not see. They have ears, but do not hear noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel feet, but do not walk, and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them. They are dead and powerless. Now it seems obvious to us that man made idols are not idols. We're more sophisticated than that, right? So what we do is we make our own intellectual constructs.

Still man made, but still that which we give more weight glory to than we give to God. An idol is a false god, a false thing that we ascribe weightiness to that which looms largest on our own individual horizon, that which disorders realigns our life. Think of that magpie. That's the weighty thing that ultimately we serve. And as we serve, we will become like the steady diet of our of what we prize. And what we praise eventually shapes our identity. If money is what we prized and driven by our love for it, we become greedy. If the praise of men is what we prize, then we become fickle and we will ride every tide of public opinion to keep up with the Joneses and everyone else. If beauty or attractiveness is what we prized, and we will pour everything into ourselves and become vain, if the past is what we prize. Glory days, then we will become like the past, over and done with and ineffective in the present or the future. As the Scripture says, it is not out of wisdom that we long for days of glory denies the fact that God is at work in his covenant promise. Now and in the future. None of these have power to redeem or to deliver us. They are greedy gods that take more and more from us, dehumanizes and ultimately make us unloving, bitter and hard. And they destroy and consume us. But by the same token, if we become like what we give glory to, if we are what we worship, if we give glory to God, we will become like him. That is like God Himself.

We will love his glory all through the Old Testament. God is zealous for his own glory for his name. And that is what the psalmist is, is catching on right here. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name. Give glory. He has said, I want what you want, and that is the glory of your name. Deliver us. Yes, and we will enter into that glory. But it is your honor. Both Moses and Joshua said to the Lord, what will the nations say if you do not keep your promise, your glory is in view here, your honor. We are what we worship. And again, I don't mean to say that we become divine, but those who give glory to God become like him, and they begin to reflect who he is. As we feed deeply on His word, then we see him for all of his mercy, as well as his power and his grace. And that's exactly why the psalmist calls them to trust in the Lord. As we saw in verses nine through 12, he has blessed us in the past. He's shown his glory in delivering his people. He will do it again.

Trust in the Lord, all of you, both small and great. Those who've experienced the glory of God through the blessing of his deliverance from their sin, have received blessing. And that blessing is the presence of God and the very glory that he has promised. He says we will share. Turn with me to Second Corinthians for the New Testament.

Paul seizes upon this in several places, but here in particular, it's a passage that seems almost like a parallel to Psalm 115 and what he says, II Corinthians 4, beginning at verse five, he says, what we proclaim is not ourselves, not to us, not to us, O Lord. But Jesus Christ is Lord with ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake. For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is God's desire that we reflect him as we behold him. And he has designed back in Psalm 115 for us to proclaim his glory in the realm that he has given us to live.

Verses 14 through 18 are really a sermon unto themselves. But I think what we can say here as we look at this is that that we are in this theater of blessing that God has given us as his people. Think of Psalm 67, the Lord bless us so that the world may know the heavens. Verse 16 are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man. The dead do not praise the Lord, but we are not dead. We live on this earth, nor do any who go down in the silence. Now he has given us a message in our mouths, but we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. It is we who proclaim the glory of God in this world as he advances his kingdom. The earth is the realm of God's glory even now and one day in its full completion, as we enter into glory with none of the boundaries, none of the brokenness, God's glory will run unhindered through the universe. So how do we cultivate this zeal so that we become like God and long for these things along for his glory, like he longs for his glory?

Oh, the Psalm is here, says we must recount his glorious mercy in our lives. He's he looks back the deliverance of his people. And to know that we can trust him. Now think of what God has done for you. The Lord is your shepherd. He has delivered you, and he is with you. John Piper has said, if you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drawn deeply and are satisfied. It's because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great.

As we drink deeply and feast deeply at His Word, beholding his glory there way, he will make us to long for what he longs to want, what he wants that his name would be glorified in all the earth. Nothing could be heavier than that. That we would desire to see him, not us as individuals, as Briarwood Church, as Christians. He is the one who deserves the glory. And the blessing is that by his grace we share in that glory in some measure now. But again, in eternity it will be beyond comprehension. So I want to close with these last words of Jesus. High placed priestly prayer in John 17. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. A righteous father, even though the world does not know you. I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, his glory. And I will continue to make it known that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. And his glory will run unfed and through this earth.

Let's pray.

Father, thank you so much that you have condescended to reveal to us who you are. I pray that you would equip us with all that we need so that we might desire in this world, your glory of all things. Sharing the gospel, telling people that God gets glory through the salvation of sinners who trust in him alone so that their sins are forgiven and righteousness is given to the to their account, and that you will never leave them or forsake them.

And Lord will. As we come to this table, would you nourish us and strengthen us and get glory among us.
We ask these things in your name, Lord Jesus.

Amen.