

Psalm 33

Introduction – The Psalm-singer instructs us in how to wait patiently in hope while in a spirit of exuberant praise. And this reminds us that religion is oppressive if God is not the way the Bible declares Him to be. We cannot rush to our duties, nor call for a return to “traditional values” if we build those duties on anything other than the doctrine which makes the duty: the greatness of Yahweh. And so the call of this Psalm is to praise, but it is to “*praise because*.” And the praise, based on “*the because*” provides the foundations for hope for present and future mercy.

Songs of Praise (vv1-2) – The call to rejoice is central and primary for those who have been made righteous in Christ, for even the act of our justification is to the praise of His glorious grace (Eph 1:5-6). These verses describe what that transformation produces in those whose hearts are upright before their God. They want to praise God and they call others to join with them. Their voices are not enough and so they seek out more voices, more instruments to support them, skillful musicianship to match the object of rejoicing, and shouts of joy. “*Heartiness should be conspicuous in divine worship*” – Spurgeon. *Skillfully* means years of practice and a “*new song*” reflects the attitude of the heart in the work of worship. Like the “*new commandment*” which John gives (1 John 2:7-8), this praise is refreshed and refreshing. Therefore, praise should be righteous, robust, loud, fresh, and skillful – and all of these matter.

The Perfections of Yahweh (vv3-4) – We are not only to rejoice in the LORD; we are to rejoice in the LORD “because,” and this is also a glorious gift. We are not worshipping a deity in spite of any shortcomings in his words or actions. His Word is right, His work is true; He loves righteousness and justice and so, guess what? “*The earth is full of the goodness of Yahweh.*” The earth might have been as full of terror as of grace, but it teems with kindnesses. Look anywhere, any one-square foot of the world and you can see the goodness of God (Rom 1:20). There are two books which declare the goodness and greatness of God: The book of His world and the book of His Word.

Contemplating the Power, Purpose and Love of the LORD (vv6-19) – What do His actions and words reveal? What do these two books declare?

Yahweh is the Creator/Ruler (vv6-11) – Note the veiled reference to the Trinity (Word, Yahweh, breath/spirit) in v6, Each involved in creation. The metaphors reveal the ease with which God created *ex nihilo*. His word, His breath, the Pacific Ocean kept in a vessel. We are summoned to be overwhelmed by the doctrine of creation (vv8-9) which is why those who hate God find such solace in evolutionism. But atheistic creation stories are suicidal; science only works because the universe has meaning built into it. This is why faith and science actually do not conflict at all; only theological and materialistic philosophies do. Ultimately, the origin of the universe is not a question of the scientific method but rather of philosophy/theology. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge.

Yahweh is the Ruler over All Humanity (vv12-17) – Yahweh did not simply create and then walk away. His counsel stands forever, continuing to work out His plans in each generation, each family, each person. This means that in order to mock God’s rule, we have to receive our breath, our strength, everything from Him in order to turn against Him – and He brings such counsel to nothing. No man and no kingdom can be saved by any force, military or otherwise, if God has not ruled such safety, deliverance, or victory, according to the counsel of His will.

There is much to consider in this section. First, we must not be afraid to proclaim such an exhaustive Providence. Because we do reject this, unregenerate man has seen a job-opening and this is the root of all forms of statism: government deity (somebody’s got to be in control). Second, God watches the obedient and the disobedient; He always sees everything. When we sin, we act as though God isn’t in the room. The Psalm-singer would remind you to “welcome God” in to your presence the next time you are about to gossip, or lust, or blow up in anger, or steal, or cheat, or get drunk. He’s right there after all. Thirdly, our nation should be on alert with these verses (vv16-17); far too often in the stories of God, the nations with the greatest military might (who trust in those horses) are the ones Yahweh loves to smack down.

Yahweh’s Peculiar Love for His People (vv18-19) – But there are other stories as well. Those who fear God, those who hope in His mercy, those who steadfastly follow Him whatever the immediate circumstances – these Yahweh loves to deliver, loves to relieve, loves to vindicate, loves to fashion with His richest blessings. In other words, those who acknowledge the goodness and greatness of God in both of His books, in His actions and words, they have “*the eye of Yahweh*” upon them in a wonderful way. Of course, Christ having been revealed to us, we see the fulfillment of such gospel-love.

Hope in the LORD and His Great Mercy (vv20-22) – We are called to “rejoice because...” and this provides the foundation for solid hope and patience of soul while we wait upon Yahweh. God will deliver, but He does so in the course of His story and so He is our help and shield because we need one (v20). We have rejoiced in what God has done, and we will rejoice in what He will do because we have trusted in Him (v21). We ask for mercy in accordance with this hope (v22) but that hope only comes with a present, robust, and refreshed praise for who God is and what He’s done.