

Psalm 65 | “God’s Girded with Goodness”
Preached on June 13, 2021 by Pastor Matt Brown

This morning, I want to preach out of Psalm 65...

Brett Blair tells the story of Martin Rinkart...

“Martin Rinkart was a minister in the little town of Eilenburg in Germany some 370 years ago.

In the year 1617, he was offered the post of Archdeacon in his hometown parish.

A year later, what has come to be known as the Thirty-Years-War broke out, and his town was caught right in the middle.

In 1637, the massive plague that swept across the continent hit Eilenburg... people died at the rate of fifty a day and the man called upon to bury most of them was Martin Rinkart.

In all, over 8,000 people died, including Martin’s own wife. *[pause]*

His labors finally came to an end about 11 years later, just one year after the conclusion of the war.

His ministry spanned 32 years, all but the first and the last overwhelmed by the great conflict that engulfed his town.

Tough circumstances in which to be thankful. But he managed. And he wrote these words:

‘Now thank we all our God - With heart and hands and voices; Who wondrous things hath done,
 In whom his world rejoices.’ *[pause]*

It takes a magnificent spirit to come through such hardship and express gratitude.”¹ *[pauseeee]*

Are you a person of thankfulness in every situation that you face?

And what exactly are you thankful for?

In our psalm for this morning, David writes and his song is filled to the brim with gratitude to God and the reason is because *of* God. *[pauseeeee]*

While we don’t know for sure the background of this psalm, based on the content of the psalm, it seems as though Israel’s land may have faced famine because of their sin.

Now God has forgiven them and given them abundance and blessing in the land.

Either way, if this is the background or not, the psalm remains the same: it’s a celebration of God’s goodness and blessing. *[pause]*

¹ Illustration found at <https://thedisciplers.com/sermon-illustrations-on-becoming-thankful/>. (Years updated for present day).

So let's look closely at the psalm, taking it section-by-section.

I'm going to read verses 1 through 4 to start - READ VERSES. *[pause]*

In this first section of the psalm, we see...

I. God's Atoning Goodness (1-4)

Don't you hate it when there is tension between you and another person?

It causes separation, conflict, and hostility.

It's very unpleasant, and can sometimes have serious ramifications.

That's why there's something special about a relationship that is reconciled, as peace is restored.

Well David and the Israelite community were able to feel the restoration of their relationship with God, which is the most important relationship in the world. *[pauseeeee]*

Separation between you and another person is a big deal, separation between you and God is a colossal deal.

You see, separation between you and another person brings very unpleasant results.

Separation between you and God brings eternal results.

This is why David is so exuberant when forgiveness and reconciliation come between him and God.

You can just feel David's joy coming forth, as he starts out by saying, "Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion." *[pause]*

He deserves praise; it is *due* Him.

It is proper, fitting, and right to give Him praise.

There is none more gracious, more good, more great. *[pause]*

This praise is in response to two things: his answering of prayers and his forgiveness. *[pause]*

God is the God who hears prayers.

He doesn't just hear them, but answers, so everyone should come to him! *[pause]*

Who are we that the God of the Universe would hear our prayers?

It just goes to show his love and care for His people. *[pause]*

Do you praise God for the simple fact of hearing your prayers?

Most often we don't think that way.

For how often do we come with a sense of entitlement?

How often do we come with a sense of, "I deserve to be heard."?

Yet we should come to understand that every single heard prayer is *grace*.

It's the grace of God to hear our prayers, and he's never in a rush.

He's never half-way listening, half-way focused on something else - but you always have his full attention. *[pauseeee]*

Another reason that David says that praise is due to God is because he atones for sin.

David says, "When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions."

Have you ever felt like David?

Have you felt like your sins prevailed against you and you were gripped in its mastery?

Have you felt like your sinful nature was just too strong for you, and it overwhelmed you?

The record of sins and the guilt of sins can be so overwhelming.

It's so strong, yet sin doesn't have to be your oppressor forever, for God atones for sin.

Though sin is strong, God's forgiveness is stronger. *[pause]*

This is what happens when we trust in Jesus Christ's sacrifice for our sins.

We acknowledge that sin prevails in us, the record of sin overwhelms us, and so we admit our dire need for forgiveness.

That's when we turn in faith to Jesus because of what he did on the Cross. *[pause]*

Our prevailing sin separated us from God, but Christ made a way to pay the price for our sins, so that it is no longer between us and God - he forgives!

And this is why David goes on right after this to say, "Blessed is the one you choose and bring near." *[pause]*

Blessing seen in access and nearness to God is a result of forgiveness.

It is *only* because God forgives that we can be brought to Him because sin separates us from God.

And so David is telling us that it's in being near to God that we are blessed.

Our only hope is in His forgiveness. *[pause]*

Only he can atone for our sin.

We can't do it ourselves.

We can't work our way to the point of working enough to clean the slate, but only God could do it.

That's why the Gospel is so needed! *[pause]*

Our sin problem is big, we can't solve it, and Christ bridges the gap by forgiving us.

He paid the price for our sins by His shed blood. *[pauseeee]*

Without God, sin would prevail against us forever, but because of God's grace, sin doesn't prevail against us anymore, but forgiveness reigns in its place.

And this forgiveness leads David to thank God and praise Him. *[pause]*

How often do you praise and thank God for His forgiveness? We should!

What else can we do since God has forgiven us of our great sin debt? *[pauseeee]*

David also shows us that being near to God and in His presence brings satisfaction.

This is why Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."²

It is God that brings true, deep, lasting satisfaction in this life.

He satisfies us with His goodness. *[pauseeee]*

David shows us that God deserves all praise because he hears people, who call out for forgiveness, and he forgives!

So there is blessing for the one forgiven, chosen, and brought near in relationship.

And this relationship, closeness, and presence brings satisfaction because you know the Good God. *[pauseeee]*

God deserves all praise!

Have you trusted in Him and experienced this goodness?

And if you have, do you praise him with joy? *[pause]*

² John 6:35.

We have a God who hears and answers our prayers, yet we act like we don't.

We have a God who has forgiven us our overwhelming sin, yet we act like we haven't been.

And we have a God who satisfies, yet we aren't. *[pause]*

Go to Him and experience these things anew!

Lift up prayers to him, remembering that he hears.

Rest in His forgiveness, remembering that you are forgiven.

And draw near to Him, remembering that you can be satisfied with His goodness. *[pauseeee]*

This section is actually the foundation for the rest of the psalm, so now because of forgiveness and relationship with God, David can talk about the rest.

And what is the rest? What's the next section?...

II. God's Awesome Deeds (5-8)

I'll now read verses 5 through 8...READ VERSES. *[pause]*

You know how as a kid, you are in awe of what some people can do?

Take a child to their first professional basketball game and see their reaction when they watch their first dunk.

Let them see a person in a cool, loud car drive away, and look at their reaction.

Or let them watch a police officer or firefighter up close, and they stand in awe. *[pause]*

When young kids encounter these sorts of situations, they stand in awe of what people can do.

David certainly isn't a child here as he writes, but he does stand in awe of God's awesome deeds. *[pause]*

David says, "By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness."

The word, 'awesome,' here refers to something awesome in power, which induces fear and respect.

It's sort of like seeing a huge truck roll past you, it's so big and powerful that it makes you fear and respect it.

So God's works are awesome in power. *[pause]*

And he often does awesome deeds in response to our prayers.

When someone turns in faith to Him, that's an awesome deed of God, for who can turn a dead person into an alive person?

When someone is saved from danger, that's an awesome deed of God.

When everything looks bleak, and he turns the situation around, what an awesome work of God!
[pause]

And his works are always done 'in righteousness'.

He never does anything wrong, but his works are always righteous.

From beginning to end, from the means he uses to the ends, they are right. [pause]

He is truly the God of our salvation, the hope of the world.

The people at the ends of the world, and of the farthest sea can put their trust in Him, for He is worthy of worldwide trust! [pauseeee]

David then goes on to talk about some of his awesome deeds, like his power over mountains and over seas.

He established mountains in strength, for he is girded with might. [pause]

God is so robed with strength that even the most stable mountains were founded by Him.

Even the roaring seas and waves are stilled by him. [pause]

Commentator David Guzik writes that, "An average hurricane releases energy equivalent to 200 times world-wide electrical generating capacity.

NASA says that in its lifetime an average hurricane can release as much energy as 10,000 nuclear bombs.

Yet God can and does still the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves."³ [pause]

In fact, he has power to still the nations, too.

The tumult of the nations are stilled. [pause]

And the result of all of this powerful work is that people stand in awe!

Even those who live the farthest away at the ends of the earth are in awe.

From east to west, people shout for joy. [pauseeeee]

Believer, your God is a God of might!

³ "Psalm 65." *Enduring Word*, 18 Mar. 2020, enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-65/.

He brings order, stability, and peace, so that any order, stability, or peace seen in this world is ultimately his doing.

Only he can establish mountains or calm the seas, and therefore, he is the hope of the world.

Not just of one nation, but the world! *[pause]*

His power, strength, and greatness is over all of creation. *[pauseeee]*

In Christ's life, he pictured this very truth.

By stilling the sea, he was showing us that He is the God of Psalm 65, stilling the roaring waves.⁴
[pauseeee]

If he can establish mountains, still the roaring seas, and calm the tumult of the nations - don't you think he is powerful enough to conquer any problem that he wants to in your life?

Stand in awe and rejoice!

He can answer your prayers by awesome deeds, so turn to Him in faith-filled prayer! *[pauseeee]*

There's one more section that rounds off this psalm and it shows us...

III. God's Abundant Provision (9-13).

Verses 9 through 13 say this...READ VERSES. *[pause]*

In November 1621, William Bradford, governor of Plymouth, called for a feast.

What was the reason?

The Pilgrims' first corn harvest was successful.

So he invited a Native American tribe that they had a good relationship with to join them as they celebrated for three days.

They were celebrating and thankful for the provisions that they had received.

This is the origin of what we call, "Thanksgiving."⁵ *[pause]*

So also, in a way, David's psalm celebrates provision, but much more than that, he celebrates the overflowing and abundant provision that God gives. *[pause]*

Verse 9 and 10 describe God "visiting" the land and watering it, for the "river of God is full of water". *[pause]*

⁴ See Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, or Luke 8:22-25.

⁵ History.com Editors. "Thanksgiving 2021." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 27 Oct. 2009, www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving/history-of-thanksgiving.

This pictures all the rain in the world coming from one source, God's river, which is full.

And the water that He provides enriches the land and blesses it with growth. *[pause]*

Just look around right now, and you can see an earth blessed with growth.

This comes from God alone, who waters it so that it is enriched.

Praise God!

And he doesn't just do it once, but throughout all the years of history, he has provided plentiful rain for the land. *[pauseeee]*

Verses 11 through 13 describe God giving abundance to the hills, valleys, pastures, and meadows.

Each description describes overflowing abundance, being full of grass, flocks, and grain.

Surely, God has so much and gives so much that the Psalmist can say that God's cart is so overflowing that even the wagon tracks that are left behind it, overflow with abundance.

[pauseeee]

The result of all of this abundant provision is that these places described are pictured as rejoicing with joy because of it all. *[pauseeee]*

In Christ's life, He displays this truth, as he feeds the 5,000.⁶

He provides, everyone eats their fill, and there is even some left over. *[pause]*

This all reminds us that only God can give water and plenty to the earth, and all of the earth is dependent on Him.

He provides and cares for His creation, but on top of that, he gives *in abundance!* *[pause]*

God is a God of plenty, so rejoice in the God of plenty!

If he can do this for his creation, don't you think he can abundantly provide for your needs?

His storehouse is never lacking, so look to Him, the God of all bountiful blessings. *[pauseeee]*

This Psalm is filled to the brim with thankfulness and praise for a good God, so that what we see is that...

Praise is due to the God who answers with blessing.

He answered David and the people of Israel with blessing, so he can answer your prayers, too.

⁶ See Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, or John 6:1-14.

He answers those who admit their sinners with forgiveness.

He answers those who are weak with awesome deeds.

And he answers those who are in need with plenty.

So let's praise him! Let's thank him! And let's go to him in prayer!