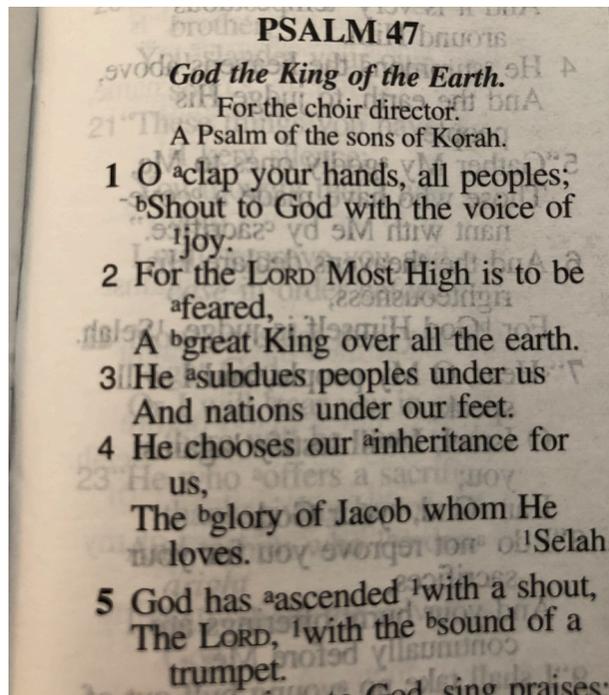


“God – The Object of our Worship”
Psalms 47, 65, 66, 95, 113, 117, 134, 138, 145, 150
Steve Mood

Introduction

- Have you ever thought about why you go to church? Is it to see your friends? Listen to the sermon? Sing songs? Listen to songs? Pray? Go to Sunday school? Go to People of the Word? Have you ever thought that we go to church primarily to worship God.
- Nelson’s Bible Dictionary in their article on Worship states:
- *Worship – reverent devotion and allegiance pledged to God; the ritual or ceremonies by which this reverence is expressed. The English worship “worship” comes from the Old English word “worthship,” a word that denotes the worthiness of the one receiving the special honor or devotion.* – **Nelson’s Bible Dictionary**
- Wayne Grudem in his Systematic Theology states:
- *Worship is the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts...Worship is therefore a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living, “to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever.” ... When we reflect upon the purpose of worship it also reminds us that God is worthy of worship and we are not.* – **Grudem, Systematic Theology**
- It is God who is worthy of our worship. God alone is the one whom we should worship. Everything that happens in a worship service should be directed towards God. Worship services are not primarily for us, but to and for God.
- *Because God is worthy of worship and seeks to be worshiped, everything in our worship service should be designed and carried out not to call attention to ourselves or bring glory to ourselves but to call attention to God and to cause people to think about him.* – **Grudem**
- This year in People of the Word we are studying the books of Psalms and Proverbs. As Carol has told us in the opening lecture, this year is topical in nature. We will study a different theme each week for the whole year. This week we are studying ten Psalms: **Psalms 47, 65, 66, 95, 113, 117, 134, 138, 145, 150**. The topic before us today is worship, particularly the object of our worship, God.
- **Lesson**
- A. W. Tozer in his book The Purpose of Man answers the question why we were made:
- *That biblically defined purpose is that we might worship God and enjoy Him forever. Apart from that, man has no other purpose, and short of that, man wanders in a spiritual disorientation taking him further from finding his created purpose.* – **A. W. Tozer, The Purpose of Man**
- God has made us for a purpose and that purpose is to bring Him glory, to worship Him, and to get to know Him better. Our focus in life should be directed towards God and the purpose that He has made us. It should not be directed toward ourselves, or even others, but towards God. We are going to spend eternity with God, glorifying His name, and worshipping Him.

- In the Psalms, particularly in the Psalms we are looking at today, there are three words we see repeated many times:
 - Psalm – to make music, to sing praise
 - Song – musical term, singing either individually or in a choir
 - Worship – to bow down before God
- One more introductory comment. As you read through the Psalms you will notice two things beyond the text of the Psalm itself. The first is that each Psalm has a title or theme before the text. That title or theme has been added by the editor of the English translation that you are using. Here is the beginning of Psalm 47 that is found in the NASB 1995 edition .



- The title added by the English translator is “**God the King of the Earth.**” Below that are two lines that are in smaller text type. Not all the Psalms have these lines. Some are different. Some are shorter. Some are longer. What is interesting about these two lines is that are part of the Hebrew Bible that we have. Those lines in the Hebrew version are in the standard Hebrew Bible. In fact, that are part of the Masoretic text from the tenth century. They are also in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew text made about 200 B.C.
- These lines are not to be skipped as we read the Psalm. They often give us important information about the Psalm. They were probably added by the editor of the Psalms, but they have been preserved for us. Often, they indicate who wrote the Psalm. There is often a term or phrase of the type of Psalm. There is also what is the accompaniment, song, choir, etc., when the Psalm is repeated. Sometimes there is the historical context when the Psalms were written. Some would consider these statements inspired. What I particularly want you to realize that these Psalms were intended to be sung. Tremper Longman in his commentary Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary states the following:

- *The Psalms' primary use during the Old Testament period was as the hymnbook of the people of God...we can see that the psalmists urge us toward a participatory and enthusiastic worship.* – Longman, **Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary**
- As I was preparing for this lecture, I read the Psalms over and over again. Knowing the lecture topic, I started noticing certain themes that were repeated over and over again. These themes are the six points in our lecture today. The depth of these Psalms is amazing and there is very little need to have many cross references outside of these Psalms. We will see the same theme repeated in many of the Psalms that are part of our lesson today. The first point is:
- **Point #1:** We are called to worship
- **Psa. 95:6** *Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!*
- **Psa. 66:16** *Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.*
- Worship is not an option. We are commanded to “come,” worshipping God, bowing down and kneeling before Him. Some believers feel that worship is optional. It is not. God calls us to worship Him. When we go to church on a Saturday or Sunday prepare yourself: We are going to worship God. We are going to be in His presence and we are going to lift our praise and worship to Him. We are going to direct our focus upon Him.
- Surveys about the church have been done over time. In 1993 45% of the people in the USA attended church. In 2020 this has dropped to 29%. What is even more alarming is that a hundred ago most people who went to church were there nearly 100% of the time. Twenty years ago, the average church goer went to church 3 out of 4 weeks. Today the average church goer only goes to church on the average 2 out of 5 weeks. If we are called to worship, why aren't we worshipping more often? If worship is important, shouldn't we be committed to it?
- **Point #2:** We are called to worship corporately
- **Psa. 66:13** *I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you.*
- **Psa. 47:1** *Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*
- **Psa. 95:1** *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord*
- We are to worship together with other believers. While we can worship alone, in the Psalms the overwhelming instances of worship show us that worship is to be done together: with other believers, praising Him together, singing to Him, witnessing what He has done. We are not “Lone Ranger” Christians doing it all by ourselves. We were created by God as social beings, and we are called to worship God with each other. During the COVID times we worshipped the best we could, often within our own homes. Now we are called to worship together, with one another, and praise God together.
- Tremper Longman states: *The primary use of the book of Psalms, the literary sanctuary, during the Old Testament period was in the public corporate worship of Israel... We have also observed that the primary use of the psalms was in the corporate worship of Israel, although a secondary use was in what today we would call private devotions.* – Longman

- My wife and I made a commitment when we got married that going to church, to worship God, to serve Him, was not optional. Even when we were camping on a Sunday, we would find a church service to go to. When we are on a cruise and were in port on a Sunday, we would find a church to attend. Attending church has not been optional for us or for our kids. When we visited our relatives or friends, we would go with them to their church. I would call all of us to make a commitment to worship corporately with other believers.
- As it also says in the book of Hebrews: **Heb. 10:24-25** *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*
- We are to be with each other, to help each other, but also to worship God.
- **Point #3:** We are called to worship God only
- **Psa. 47:6** *Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!*
- **Psa. 65:1** *Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.*
- **Psa. 66:4** *All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.*
- **Psa. 95:2** *Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*
- **Psa. 150:6** *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!*
- We are called to worship God only, to flee idols, to have no graven image, to not bow down to any other things or beings. Our worship is to be directed to God only. We are to praise our king. Praise is due to God only. All the earth is to worship God. All that has breath is to praise the Lord. Even in the last book of the Bible we are exhorted to worship God only.
- There are so many distractions in our lives today, but we are to be focused upon Him. Our politics are not going to save us. Our country cannot save us. Our education cannot save us. Our philosophy cannot save us. Our money or our things cannot save us. Our friends or family cannot save us. The environment cannot save us. And none of these should be worshipped. Our worship should be directed to the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It should be directed to the God only who came to this earth, to die for our sins, and was resurrected three days later. It should be focused on the God who is infinite and holds the world in His hand. It should be focused upon the God who leads and guides us and makes us conformed to His image. It should be focused on the God in whom we trust and have faith that He has provided the way of salvation for us.
- Our worship and our worship services should be focused upon Him only. Grudem states:
- *Because God is worthy of worship and seeks to be worshiped, everything in our worship service should be designed and carried out not to call attention to ourselves or bring glory to ourselves but to call attention to God and to cause people to think about him.* – **Grudem**
- **Point #4:** We are called to worship God for who He is
- When we are called to worship God. Who is He? What is He like? Why should we worship Him? What are to be reminded of Him during our worship services?

- (1) God is most high, almighty King, ruler over all nations
- **Psa. 47:2** *For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.*
- **Psa. 47:8** *God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.*
- **Psa. 95:3-5** *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.*
- **Psa. 113:4-6** *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?*
- **Psa. 145:13** *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.*
- God is Most High, the King of the earth. He rules over nations. He is above all else and all beings. His glory is not to be matched. He is seated on a throne. His kingdom is everlasting and will not end. He alone is sovereign over the whole universe. All are to acknowledge His right to rule.
- (2) God is all powerful, His greatness has no bounds
- **Psa. 65:6** *[God] by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might.*
- **Psa. 138:3** *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.*
- **Psa. 66:5** *Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.*
- God is all powerful and He can do what He wants when He wants. Nothing can frustrate His plans. We are to see all that He has done for us His children. We can observe what He has done and all people are without excuse.
- (3) God provides for our needs
- **Psa. 65:9** *You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it.*
- **Psa. 145:20** *The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.*
- God provides abundantly for us. He preserves us, but the wicked He will punish. Not only does God create us He also allows us to live and by His hand we continue to exist. Apart from Him we would cease to exist. God owes us nothing. We live by His good pleasure.
- (4) God is steadfast in His love and faithfulness
- **Psa. 117:2** *For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.*
- **Psa. 138:2** *I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.*

- **Psa. 138:8** *The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.*
- God's love has no bounds towards us. He is faithful and will fulfill His promises. He alone should be exalted. His love is steadfast and does not end. He alone is worthy of our praise and worship. We could spend a whole lesson on God's love toward us. If you look throughout Scripture, even in the Old Testament, God loves us. He is faithful. He does not forsake us.
- (5) God is gracious and merciful
- **Psa. 145:8-9** *The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*
- **Psa. 138:6** *For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.*
- God provides for us in ways we do not deserve. He is merciful and withholds what we deserve. His good is shown to all. God is more loving and kinder to us than we can even imagine. We deserve none of His mercy or grace, but He, in His great love, has showered us with both. He regards us, those who are so lowly, for He loves us and cares for us.
- (6) God has died for us and tests us
- **Psa. 65:3** *When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.*
- **Psa. 66:10** *For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.*
- **Psa. 66:18-19** *If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.*
- Though we are sinners and deserving of judgment only, He was willing to atone, to pay the price, for our sins, for we could not do this ourselves. He wants us to grow and become more like Him and He brings trials in our life to test us and help us grow. He is willing to forgive us when we admit to and confess our sins. He will answer our prayers. God's love is expressed to us in a way that is so amazing, that He was willing to become a man and to die in our place.
- (7) God is holy and righteous
- **Psa. 145:17-18** *The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*
- **Psa. 145:20** *The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.*
- God is holy and does not sin. He cannot abide the sinful, but He has provided a way for our sins to be paid for and we are holy in His sight. The consequence of sin is judgment and without Jesus' death on the cross we would all be destined for eternal judgment.
- Our God is infinite and we can only grasp a small part of what He is like. We will have all eternity to get to know Him more and even ten thousand years from now we will continue to worship Him. As we enter eternity God will live within our midst and we will be His people and He will be our God. Forever. I believe getting to know our God is critical and I would encourage you all to read His Word, reflect upon Him, and meditate upon His Word. I would

also encourage you to read a book that tells us more of who God is. For the last twenty years or so I have read J. I. Packer's book Knowing God at least once a year. The last ten or so years I have read A. W. Pink's book The Attributes of God and A. W. Tozer's book The Knowledge of the Holy. Over the last year I have added R. C. Sproul's book Enjoying God Finding Hope in the Attributes of God to my list of books to read yearly. But, above all, I would encourage you to read your Bible every day. For in it you will find what God has revealed to us. We will find who God is.

- **Point #5:** We are called to express our worship in multiple ways
- (1) We are to shout, sing loudly, clap our hands, making a joyful song
- **Psa. 47:1** *Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*
- **Psa. 47:7** *For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!*
- **Psa. 65:1-2** *Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!*
- **Psa. 95:1** *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!*
- We are to express our joy and praise God verbally. It is singing, and shouting. We are also to clap our hands to the Lord.
- (2) We are to tell others what God has done
- **Psa. 66:3** *Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.*
- **Psa. 66:16-17** *Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue.*
- **Psa. 66:8** *Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard.*
- **Psa. 145:11-12** *They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*
- We are to tell others what God has done. We are to make this known to those around us. We are not to be quiet, but to boldly tell others about Him. Notice that this is also in the context of a worship service. We are to testify to others what He has done.
- (3) We are to lift our hands to praise God
- **Psa. 134:2** *Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord!*
- Do you lift your hands when you worship God? Why not? If you feel comfortable, express your worship through the lifting of your hands. The nation of Israel did this in their services.
- (4) We are to give thanks
- **Psa. 113:1** *Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord!*
- **Psa. 138:1** *I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise.*

- Our praise is directed toward God, who He is, what He has done, and testify how He has worked in our lives, and how we are dependent upon Him. Give thanks to God. Show your appreciation for what He has done for us.
- (5) We are to praise God with instruments
- **Psa. 150:3-5** *Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!*
- All are to praise Him. We are to praise Him with trumpets, string instruments, tambourines, pipes, and loud cymbals. We are also to dance. We are to express ourselves not only by singing, but also through instruments to praise His name. Those who worship without musical instruments are missing a big part of what worship is to include.
- *Of course, the impressive list of musical instruments reminds us that Psalm 150 was sung; indeed, all the psalms were sung. The psalms appeal to more than the intellect. They also arouse emotions, stimulate the imagination and appeal to the will. Music enhances the arousal of emotions. – Longman*
- **Point 6:** We are called to worship God continually
- **Psa. 113:3** *From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!*
- **Psa. 134:1** *Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord!*
- **Psa. 145:1** *I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.*
- **Psa. 145:2** *Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.*
- **Psa. 145:5** *On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*
- We are called to worship from the rising to the setting of the sun, by night, forever and ever. We should worship more than just on Sunday morning. It should be a continual habit in our lives. In fact, our worship should be unending. Find a time during the day when you can read God's Word, to reflect and meditate upon it, and spend significant time to Him in prayer. God wants us to acknowledge who He is, but He also wants us to trust Him and put our faith in Him. One way this is shown is by turning to Him in prayer. Prayer is important, it changes us and also it can be an instrument to change things in our lives.
- **Application**
- What can we take away from these passages? Three things come to mind:
- (1) Make a commitment to attend corporate worship services every week. We are called to worship together with other believers. This is so important for our continual spiritual growth and also that we can encourage others and be encouraged ourselves.
- (2) Make a commitment to worship God only and not to allow anything or anyone to get our focus off of Him. Examine your life and with God's help to see what you need to remove from your life that is hindering your spiritual growth in Him.

- (3) Make a commitment to turn to His Word and pray with Him every day. Select a time you can do this. I like to do this after I eat breakfast. I used to do this before I would go to sleep at night. Whenever or wherever you do this, make it a habit in your life.
- Let us pray...