

The Goodness of God Psalm 65

This is a psalm about God's goodness.

The exact occasion of the psalm is unknown, but it appears that God has somehow judged the nation. Perhaps there has been a drought or a famine. God's people have come to the Temple to seek his face. He has heard them and responded affirmatively.

First: See the God of all Grace. 1-4a

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed. ² O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come. ³ When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. ⁴ Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts!

a) Grace in silent awe. 1a

Praise is due to you = Praise waits for you in silence

The psalm opens with a throng of worshippers in the Temple and the verse says they are praising God but not saying anything. There is a hushed silence.

This is when we know God has moved. We often interpret God's movement among us in laughter or weeping or jumping or dancing. But there are times we are afraid to move for fear we will bump into God.

In this case, there are no words to speak of God's judgment. And there are no words to talk about God's grace in forgiving the people and healing their land.

b) Grace in receiving vows. 1b

When we promise God something, we are not doing it to gain his blessing. Vows are not made to gain God's blessing but *because of* his blessing.

In this case, it may be that the people vowed to bring the first fruits of their harvest if God sent rain or stopped a plague. He has blessed them, and they are honoring their word. There were no 'poor mice' in the Temple that day. Every mouse was rich in grain.

c) Grace in listening to prayers. 2

Habakkuk 2:18-19 - *What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!*¹⁹ Woe

*to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise!
Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it.*

We are encouraged to pray because our God is not speechless. He is awake and he is not silent. He can and does teach us.

d) Grace in atoning for sin. 3

Is there anything in us that merits, deserves or moves God to give Jesus for us? No. God gives Jesus out of his own love.

The cross speaks well of God, not of us.

And this is the way you want it. If God gave Jesus for you, because of you, and you change, then, will God take back Jesus?

But we know that God will never forsake us because his promises are based on himself, and not us.

e) Grace in choosing worshippers. 4

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 - *The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but it is because the LORD loves you*

1 Chronicles 17:16 - *Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?"*

Luke 1:47-48 & 52-53 - *My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant....he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.*

1 Peter 5:6 - *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you*

We want God's grace and love to be centered in him and not us. He is unchanging. We are not. Only in God's choosing, do we have real assurance.

Gospel: He is the God of all grace / unmerited favor. If you want grace, God is your source.

Second: See the God of all Goodness. 4b-8

*We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!
⁵ By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas; ⁶ the one who by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might; ⁷ who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples, ⁸ so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs. You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.*

Ours is a prayer-answering, deed-performing God.

Have you tried other gods? What other gods have you tried? Popularity? Acceptance? Fame? Beauty? They are all fleeting. They are all unfaithful. They cannot do what you need done most.

*“Thou hast formed us for Thyself,
 and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.”
 (Augustine, Confessions (Book 1))*

Call it whatever you want but there is a God-shaped vacuum in your heart that only the God of the Christian Bible can fill.

- a) Only God can save. 5a
- b) Only God is the hope of the earth. 5b
- c) Every morning in the sun and every night in the moon and clouds, people see God. v 6-8

GOSPEL: The God whom you see in creation but can't specifically identify has made himself known in Jesus so that you can identify him and trust in him

John 1:1 & 14 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...*

By our own sin, we are separated from God, but He has bridged the gap in Jesus. We are required to, by faith, repent of our sin and trust Christ for salvation.

Third: See the God of all Provision. 9-13

I want you to see, not only *that* God does it – He cares for the earth; but *how* he cares for the earth.

Romans 8:22-24 – *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved.*

From the “rivers” (9) to the “ridges” (10) to the “pastures” and the “hills” (12) to the “meadows” and the “valleys” (13).

All the while, his “wagon tracks overflow with abundance” (11).

(You get the picture of a wagon filled with so much of a harvest that it tips the wagon from side to side and pours out grain, corn or spices as it travels.)

Conclusion:

An appeal to patience –

Throughout the Bible, patience is lauded as an essential element of a healthy mind and heart; a wholesome lifestyle.

It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) and we are often encouraged to possess it.

Hebrews 10:35-36 - *...do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance [patience/KJV], so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*

Hypomone = steadfast, enduring, perseverance, unswerving

As you reflect on Psalm 65:9-13 think about the patience creation needs to enjoy God’s grace, goodness and provision. Essential water begins in the mountains, like Hermon, often in the form of melting snow which, in itself, requires time. And then it meanders through the plains and finally into the valleys and meadowlands. This also takes time...and patience.

ILL – I try to plant just before the rain and sometimes when it is raining. But, to know when it is going to rain, I first talk to Stephanie. Whatever weather she has today, we will have tomorrow. How do I know this? The wind blows from west to east. It always has and it always will. But it still takes time for the rain to get from Oklahoma to Johnson City.

And this is the hard part; waiting, exercising patience. It takes time for what I know will happen, to happen. And when you are waiting on something, seconds can be excruciating. But the rain will come and with it, life-giving water.

Summer is taking its time getting here isn't it? It's been a cold May. But we know that summer will come. In the interim, we need patience.

Perhaps Covid-19 is the latest and most meaningful example of the need for patience.
Anything worthwhile requires time and spiritual formation is no exception.

Sometimes, thinking about what you're waiting for will give you the stamina to be patient.

- 1 – What are you waiting for?
- 2 – Has God promised it?
- 3 – Can you trust God's faithfulness?
- 4 – Reflect on God's patience!

The Bible promises us this: God is the source of all grace, goodness and provision. Wait on him.

Community Groups:

- 1 – How are you excelling during this pandemic?
- 2 – How are you suffering?
- 3 – What specific things can we pray about together?
- 4 – Consider how this text might be an answer to our prayers.
- 5 – Can you recall a time you were so overwhelmed you had nothing to say?
- 6 – Why can our promises to God, NOT gain his favor?
- 7 – What does the cross say about God?
- 8 – How does God choosing us, humble us?
- 9 – How does it provide assurance for us?
- 10 – How has God satisfied you with his goodness?
- 11 – About what are you presently impatient?
- 12 – How can you cultivate patience?
- 14 – How does reflecting on God's patience encourage us?

15 – End your time together with prayer for one another.