

Poems, Prayers & Promises



Prayers of Thankful Praise

Key idea:

Our prayers should be filled with thankfulness and praise for all God has done, and this should build faith for what He will do in the present and future.

Key text:

Psalm 138

- ¹ I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; before the “gods” I will sing your praise.
- ² I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.
- ³ When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.
- ⁴ May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth.
- ⁵ May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great.
- ⁶ Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.
- ⁷ Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.
- ⁸ The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands.

Key points:

1. Psalm 138, and indeed the whole book of Psalms, is a song of thanks and praise.
2. A Christian should be full of thanksgiving and praise.
3. Psalm 138 gives six reasons we should give thanks and praise to God:
 - God’s love and faithfulness (verses 2, 8)
 - Answered prayer (verse 3)
 - The growth of God’s Kingdom (verses 4-5)
 - God’s care for the lowly and resistance of the proud (verse 6)
 - God’s preserving Presence in our troubles (verse 7)
 - God’s future faithfulness (verse 8)

4. There are many “gods” in our culture which try to destroy gratitude and joy:
 - Consumerism & advertising - greed & dissatisfaction
 - Photoshopped and curated lives - envy over people and lives that are not real
 - News & social media - doom scrolling disaster & conflict
 - Busy-ness and hurry - no time to enjoy and reflect
5. Three practices will help us give thanks and praise to the Lord in the presence of these “gods”:
 - Take time each day to consider God’s blessings and give Him thanks
 - Practice Sabbath each week to rest, worship, and give thanks and praise to God
 - Look for ways to pass God’s blessings to others

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why was the book of Psalms titled “Songs of Praise”? What about all of the laments? How can lament lead to praise?
3. Is thanksgiving and praise something I do periodically, or should it characterize my whole life? What is the difference?
4. When I consider the six areas Psalm 138 gives thanks and praise to God for, which of them do I give thanks to God for most often? Which one do I tend to forget? How can I remind myself to give thanks to God for this area?
5. When I consider the “gods” of our modern world that undermine gratitude and joy, which one is the greatest temptation in my life? How can I undermine its effects on my life? What change can I make this week to not allow it to undermine gratitude and joy?
6. When I consider at the three practices to build a life of joyous gratitude, which is the weakest area in my life? How can I grow in this area starting this week? Who will I get to hold me accountable to grow in this area?
7. Who will I call or see to encourage this week? Who can I encourage to worship this King this coming Sunday?