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Psalms 145
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Eternal Praise to our Unchanging God

Hi, everyone. My name is Larry Adams, and I wanted to take just a moment to thank you for downloading the podcast of this message. At Golden Hills we are committed to exalting Jesus and preaching the word. Your downloading of this message is a great encouragement to us as we know that our ministry is going out to spread God's word all over the world.

We want you to know too that in no way do we intend these messages to be a replacement for your involvement in a good local church where, sitting under the authority of pastors and other teachers, you can learn to worship, grow, and serve and be engaged with a body of believers where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We realize also that some of you may be in areas of the world where there is no local church. Therefore, we're hoping that these messages you're using, as you gather with your family or other believers or people from the community, that it will be a great encouragement to you as you hear God speak into your life and help you to become disciples who are true reproducing followers of Jesus Christ.

If you have your Bibles today, Psalm 145, we're gonna be finishing up our series in the Psalms "People of Praise: Blessings from the Psalter." Now, we have 22 Psalms that we've looked at counting today. Obviously, there are many more we didn't look at. I'm hoping this whet your appetite to see that there are so many Psalms that point our praise to God for who He is and what He's done. Psalm 145 to the end of the Psalter, Psalm 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, and 150 are all centered on praise to God.

Today in Psalm 145, David wrote this song about the eternal praise he wants to give to a God who never changes. We're living in a world that's trying to change everything, but we have a God who never changes. Here's how David put it. Psalm 145, a psalm of praise of David:

- ¹ I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
- ² Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.
- ³ Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
- ⁴ One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
- ⁵ They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
- ⁶ They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
- ⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.
- ⁸ The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

- ⁹ The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.
¹⁰ All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.
¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.

- ¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
¹⁶ You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

- ¹⁷ The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.
¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
¹⁹ He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.
²⁰ The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
²¹ My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Eternal praise to an unchanging God. Let's pray together.

Father, this word points our minds and hearts to you as it should. You are the only one worthy of praise. I pray today God that as you unfold this word for us, we will leave here today with a higher, greater, deeper vision of God as you really are. We will never allow the world to change or alter that view, for you are the God who is unchanging and we are people to bring eternal praise.

Thank you for all the people here today. Thank you for all the people in Antioch. Thank you, God, for all the people who are watching streaming with us live right now. I pray for many who are struggling with their health, others who are away. I pray for missionaries and others on the other side of the world who are watching with us right now. I pray, God, you'll bless them. Wherever we are, may we learn to be the people of praise you called us to be and we'll thank you, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. Well, it's no surprise to you to hear me say that we are living in a world of change. Many of those changes are not good. Can you remember a time when boys were boys and girls were girls? They never wanted to be anything else, and everybody could tell the difference? Do you remember when a marriage was between a man and a woman and there was nobody who saw it differently?

I'm old enough to remember in public school beginning the day with the Lord's Prayer and the pledge to the flag. Amazing. Things are changing, and they're not always for the good. In fact there's so much change happening that even Christian moral values are being redefined.

You remember a couple years ago, Phil Robertson, the patriarch of the Robertson family on the A&E hit cable show *Duck Dynasty*? Even if you've never seen the show, they're a group of rednecks who live in Louisiana who are very outspoken about their faith. They're very politically incorrect, and they don't care. Phil Robertson said his mission in life now is to tell people why he follows Jesus and what the Bible teaches about right and wrong. But sometimes when he does that he gets in trouble. In fact in 2012 he was for a short period kicked off the show by A&E because of statements he made in an interview with *GQ Magazine*. Let me give you an excerpt of what got him kicked off the show. He has since been reinstated, but listen to what he said:

We're Bible thumpers who just happened to end up on television. You put in your article that the Robertson family really believe strongly that if the human race loved each other and they loved God, we'd just be better off. We ought to be just repentant and turn to God. Let's get on with it and everything will turn around.

Nobody got too upset about that, but then he said this about sin:

Start with homosexual behavior and just morph out from there: bestiality, sleeping around with this woman and that woman, and woman with those men.

Then he paraphrased the book of Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 6:

Don't be deceived. Neither the adulterers, the idolaters, the male prostitutes, the homosexual offenders, the greedy, the drunkards, the slanderers, the swindlers, they won't inherit the kingdom of God. Don't deceive yourself. It's not right.

Man, I'll tell you. The place came unglued when that article hit. Immediately GLAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation, issued a statement condemning the remarks as "littered with outdated stereotypes and blatant misinformation." By the way, if you quote the Bible, apparently you're quoting outdated stereotypes and misinformation. GLAD spokesman Wilson Cruz said – look at this: "Phil and his family claim to be Christian, but Phil's lies about an entire community fly in the face of what true Christians believe."

Here's the leader of GLAD the Gay and Lesbian Alliance saying that when Phil Robertson quoted the Bible he was lying, and true Christians don't believe what he said. Wow. So a new definition of what it means to be a true Christian is emerging. It's someone who loves everybody, tolerates sin, makes no distinction between right and wrong, and sees every view as equally valid. In fact, if you speak out against the sin of the politically correct crowd, you'll be labeled as pushing "vile and extreme stereotypes."

Well, that's how this crowd views God's eternal truths. In fact, it's no different than what God told Isaiah exactly what would happen when we turn away from God. Isaiah 59 verse 14. Listen to this:

¹⁴ So justice is driven back,
and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets,
honesty cannot enter.

¹⁵ Truth is nowhere to be found,
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.

The Lord looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.

You see, in the world we are living in today, if you don't like the way things are going, if you can't live the sin you want to live, if you can't do what you want to do because God is in the way, then you just change God and change what He says. It's easy. What's tragic is that even many Christians and churches are adopting the same views.

Bailey Smith, pastor, author, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, gave a message one time quoted in *Decision Magazine* last year where he said this:

If any institution deserves the name of Duck Dynasty, it's not the program that's rated on A&E, rather it's the church. The church of this generation deserves a PhD in ducking. So many churches are so complicit they could be called a dynasty. When Phil Robertson of the popular television show Duck Dynasty said, "Homosexuality is a sin" he was right. He was in lockstep with virtually every major religion in the world. What's sad is that the church has ducked the issue so consistently that this statement appears to be controversial. The church must speak the truth instead of caving in to current liberal distortions.

Dr. Gerald Harris, the brilliant editor of the *Christian Index*, wrote this:

Should we love homosexuals?

He was implying, "Should we love sinners or immoral people or sinners of all stripes" is what he was talking about. But he said:

Should we love them? Absolutely. Should we smile in favor of their perversion? Absolutely not. We must never confuse tolerance for love. Tolerance is furtively, clandestinely, surreptitiously beginning to infiltrate the church. It looks attractive. It looks inviting, benevolent, and right, but it's shallow deceptive, misleading, hypocritical, and wrong. Do homosexuals and other sinners deserve rights? Yes, of course they do. They deserve the right to be loved by the church, taught by the church, redeemed by the gospel that's preached by the church, led to repentance by the church, and nurtured by the church as new creations in Jesus Christ. Every sinner needs that from the church.

Franklin Graham summed it up like this:

As I have reflected on this event and the rising tide of evil and iniquity that threatens to engulf our nation, I have come to several conclusions. Like the church in Thyatira that tolerated immorality in its midst, the evangelical church today has grown all too accepting of sin. The church is ducking the vital moral issues of our age. Rather than influencing our culture by being gospel salt and light, the church has itself become influenced by the permissive culture in which we live.

People, the church was never supposed to look like the world; God, in turn intended that the world would in time begin looking like the church. But increasing numbers of people, even Christians, are living as though there are no absolutes, no transcendent truths to which we are held accountable. As God's people move further and further away from the standard and the absolutes of God's Word, we become prey to the cultural pressures that are changing God and changing His Word.

That's why Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4 verse 1:

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ² Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

People, the liars are not those who are quoting the Scriptures. The liars are the ones who say those who quote the Scriptures are lying. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 verse 2:

² Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season (Correct); correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

We can turn aside all we want. We can invent God to be whatever you want Him to be, but it doesn't make it true. In fact, the further we may move away from the unchanging God, the more mess our lives and our world becomes. As God told the prophet Malachi in Malachi 3:6: **“I the Lord do not change.”**

In Psalm 145 and the five Psalms that close out the Psalter are hymns of praise to an unchanging God. It's why David lived and wrote the way he did to exalt this God who had met him and knew him and forgiven him and chastened him. David knew it was not a matter of changing God to fit his needs, it was a matter of David being changed by God to know Him as He was, to know Him as He is. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the eternal, unchanging God. As God's people, David tells us we are called to offer eternal praise to our unchanging God.

Who is this God that David knew he praised forever? He said, “He is the Lord and the King. He is love and compassion. He is holy and just. We give eternal praise to our unchanging God who is Lord and King. David put it like this in verse 1:

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
² Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

³ Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
⁴ One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
⁵ They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
⁶ They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Look at verse 10:

¹⁰ All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.
¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

I never met King Louis XIV of France. He died in 1717. I know many of you think I'm probably old enough to know him, but I'm not. He must've been a very humble guy because he wanted to be called Louie the Great. Louie the Great was the monarch who declared “I am the state.” His court was the most magnificent in Europe, and his funeral was the most spectacular.

Now, the arrangements for his funeral he directed. It was all to point to his greatness. In the church where the ceremony was performed, they laid his body out in a golden coffin. You can imagine what that cost. Then to dramatize his greatness, orders were given that in the church that day all the candles were to be lowered and only one big candle was to burn in the center brightly over his golden coffin to accentuate his greatness. Thousands of people filled the cathedral that day and out on the streets. They were all waiting in silence for the bishop who was gonna come and give the funeral sermon. You talk about guts. Bishop Massillon walked into the pulpit and began to speak then he came around from the side and reached down to that candle over the coffin and he snuffed it out. He looked up and he said, "Only God is great."

Truth. He didn't care what people thought. He didn't care what they were gonna do to him. He didn't care what they said. "Only God is great." He wasn't gonna let Louie steal God's glory in the end. Only God is great. He always has been. He always will be. He's unchanging.

That's what David was declaring. Psalm 145 declares the unchanging greatness of God's person and God's work. God's person is great. David said in verse 1:

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.

² Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

³ Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

Do you know, today there people that are saying that even the praise of God shows God's weakness? They're saying that people need to praise God because God's narcissistic, and He's insecure. Julia Sweeney, an actress and writer best known for her four year run on *Saturday Night Live*, a show to my knowledge I've never seen. She also has some solo shows apparently. She was doing an interview on *National Public Radio* where she talked about letting go of God. She's an atheist. She was raising an issue that apparently is becoming very popular among atheists. She asked the question, "Why does God want or even seem to need our praise?" She went on to say:

I'm living my life as a person who accepts the natural world. The whole idea that there's a God who cares whether people believe in Him or not, like, why would God care if people believe in Him or not? That was one of the many things I found so shocking reading the Bible. First of all, how insecure God is. I mean, God is so insecure He needs everyone to say, 'You're number one. You're number one over all the other gods. You're the top God.' It's, like, is he the most insecure character?

People, let me say this: God doesn't need our praise. God doesn't need our praise. God doesn't need anything. The praise of God's person is not for His benefit, it's for ours. God is great and unchanging and worthy of praise whether we ever utter a word of praise or not. Our praise doesn't change God. He is eternal as He is as God. But when we praise Him we are reminded of how great He is and how much we need Him and that He is God and we are not. Because when the praise of God stops, life begins to fall apart.

You see, if God the one true God is not on the throne of your life, someone or something else will be. The number one choice is me. I want to be God of my own life. I'll tell you, man, when people put themselves as God of their own life, things really come unglued. You get so self-focused things like fear and stress and worry and greed and pride and self-reliance and hopelessness and despair they start creeping in. You know what else happens? You actually start believing, I'm responsible for my life. I'm in charge. I'm directing this thing. So you start taking on responsibilities God never intended you to take, and you're burning yourself out with

what only God can do. You can't control the future, but you think you can. You see, it's the lie that Satan told in the garden that's still being believed. "You can be as God."

But praise for God's person shatters that because when you take God at His word and use this word to praise Him for who He is you cannot stand there and praise God for His glory and think in any way, "I can do that." You can't. God is God, and He needs to be praised to keep Him in His right perspective.

It's why David as King of Israel praised God. The King of Israel, the number one dog of the state, the guy who everybody was bowing down to. His word was law. What did David say, "Man, I need to praise God. I can't afford to ever think I'm really in charge," so David said:

¹ I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.

² Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

³ Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

David was praising God not just for his person, he was praising God for His works. He said in verse 4:

⁴ One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.

⁵ They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

⁶ They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.

⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

¹⁰ All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.

¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,

¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

God's works in creation are great. God's works in salvation are great. God's work in you and me to mold us into the image of Christ is great. In fact, when God does so many great things so many times in us and through us so faithfully, if we don't praise Him, we can start to think we've actually got a hand in these things that are happening. People, it's a very short step from "I think I've got a hand in this" to "I don't really need God because I can do it without Him." And it's a really short step from "I don't think I need God" to "I don't think God exists."

Eternal praise of God for all He is and all He does keeps us focused on His abundant goodness even in the trials. We are dependent on Him for life and breath and everything else. He treats us in His never ending, never wavering righteousness. Even in our trials when we praise God, we realize there's purpose in it: that God is always good and He's always right. So we celebrate in this praise the joy of knowing that we have a King and a Lord that will never change and a kingdom that lasts forever. That's why David said in verse 7:

⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Why he said in verse 10:

¹⁰ All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.

They extol you, all you are and all you do. Eternal praise for an unchanging God who is Lord and King. Not only that, we give eternal praise to our unchanging God who is love and compassion. He says in verse 8:

⁸ The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

⁹ The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.

Look at verse 14:

¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.

¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.

¹⁶ You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

¹⁷ The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.

¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

¹⁹ He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.

Most of you know I'm not very technologically savvy. I can run a toaster and a microwave. A good friend of mine gave me a iPhone a while ago, a very helpful tool. I destroyed the first one he gave me. I did one update and the phone never worked again. I got so frustrated at Apple they just said, "Take another one." Anyway, I found out that there's a game you can download. It's been popular since 2009 on the iPhone. It's called "Pocket God." You ever hear of it? It's a game you can play. If you go on iTunes and look at the description, here's what it says:

What kind of God would you be, benevolent or vengeful? Play "Pocket God" and discover the answer within yourself. On a remote island you are the all powerful God that rules over the primitive islanders. You can bring new life and then take away just as quickly.

Well, if you look there, you'll see that the game options include throwing islanders into volcanoes, using islanders as shark bait, bowling for islanders with a large rock, creating earthquakes to destroy the islander's villages. Brian Lowry commentating on this said:

Designers seem to think that players will only want to play the role of a vengeful God which might mean that they think that's the only kind of God players could ever really imagine to be real.

You know, that's so true. Many people view God as being only wrath, only justice, only vengeful, the cosmic killjoy sitting there waiting to squash everything we do and punish us for our sin. Well, you know God is a God of wrath and justice – we'll see more of than a moment – but God

is more than wrath and justice. He is a God of love and compassion more than we know. That's what David was praising God for, this great and awesome God is a Lord of grace and compassion and love. That's why he said in verse 8:

⁸ The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

⁹ The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.

The Lord is gracious. In its simplest form, God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve. Amen? He is compassionate. He was fully human. He knows what it's like to live in this world. He understands it. So He is compassionate when we fail. He knows our weakness. We saw last week we don't surprise Him with anything. He comes alongside us with mercy to help us. He is slow to anger. Thank you, God, for that. Thank you, God, you don't have a short fuse. If you did, I'd have been toast years ago. By the way, so would you. God is rich in love, rich in love.

I know just enough Hebrew to be dangerous, but this phrase is really important. It's the idea of this: He's rich in love. God is love. John affirms that. Love is not God, but God is love. In fact, love is so intrinsically tied to the eternal nature of God in His person that it is inexhaustible, meaning no matter what you do you can't drain God of love because He's rich in it. He's rich in it.

David praised God for this because in so many ways David knew if God wasn't full of love and compassion he was toast. Do you remember the plea he made to God after being confronted with the sin when he committed adultery with Bathsheba? When he arranged for the death and murder of her husband and then tried to cover it up? When the prophet Nathan confronted him, do you remember what his appeal to God was? Psalm 51 verse 1:

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

You'll notice he wasn't saying, "Hey, God, I'm the king of Israel. Man, I'm one of your anointed. I'm one of your chosen. Yeah, I blew it but, hey, you're a God of love and compassion so I don't have to worry about this." David's down on his face, "I don't want anything, God. I don't deserve anything. You are just and holy. I'm telling you I need your love. I need your mercy. I need your compassion and without it I'm done. I'm done."

² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

People, some day if you trust Jesus, you're gonna be in the presence of that God in His throne room. I'll tell you, man, when you are there, "God, what am I doing here? There is no way I deserve to be in the midst of holiness like this." Then we're gonna know how gracious God has been. Then we're gonna know how much love He has really poured out on us at the cross. Then we're gonna know what compassion really means: that that God took me, forgave me, and made me his own. Amazing. That's how much He loves us.

Were there consequences for David's sin? Sure. God doesn't lift all the consequences all the time, but He uses the consequences to teach us. He removes our guilt. He forgives us. He makes us clean. David understood that God's works were not just in regard to His salvation and His mercy and grace over our sin, but that God's works deserve to be praised because He's a God of abundant provision. He takes care of us. Verse 14 said:

The Lord upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
¹⁶ You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

I want you to imagine for a moment if you were God. You're not, but if we were and we were responsible for giving life and breath and everything else, supplying food to all the creatures of the earth including every human being. We had to give them water. We had to sustain them. We had to do everything to keep them alive, which is what God does. Let me ask you this, If you were God and the people treated you the way most people treat God what would you do? Think about that. If you had control over all of those things and could make those decisions and people treated you the way most people treat God, what would you do? Continue to pour out abundance? Continue to give them all that they need? Take those people who curse you to your face and feed them the next day? Who puts air in the lungs of an atheist? God does. Who gives us water and food and sustains those who denounce and defame his name? God does. God is our provider; without Him we have nothing. That's why we need to praise God because when we stop praising God for His love and His compassion as seen in His works of supplying all of our needs, we can actually start thinking that we are the ones responsible for these blessings.

Do you remember that's what Moses was told by God as He was leading the people into the Promised Land? Do you remember that? **"I'm taking your people out of slavery in Egypt. I'm bringing them through a desert where there are no Quik Stops or roads or places to stop. They're gonna be wholly dependent on me, and I will provide for them. I'm gonna test you there. I'm gonna teach you there so in all of these journeys when you get to the Promised Land you won't forget in the midst of abundance that I'm the same God who supplies it all."**

You see, the people weren't in danger in Egypt. They knew in their slavery they needed help. The people weren't all that in danger in the desert. Despite their occasional rebellions, as soon as God removed little bit they were on their faces. "God, we need food. We need water. We need help."

But God said, **"You're really gonna be in danger when you go in the Promised Land because when you go into cities you haven't built, you drink out of wells you haven't dug, you eat out of vines and crops you haven't planted you're gonna forget me."**

Even today, just have people go through a need: get a job loss, lose their house, have a crushing illness come upon them, even atheists have a tendency to turn back to God. I've had atheists come and ask me, "Would you pray for me?"

"Well, who exactly would you like me to talk to?"

When the needs are great, people have a great awareness of God. It's in the midst of abundance we get in danger. That's why God said in Deuteronomy 8 verse 10, He said, **"Moses, you tell the people":**

¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God,

failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

He closed the section in verse 19 with this:

¹⁹ If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

People, that's what's happening in America. How does the richest, most prosperous nation on earth become a debtor nation and in such desperate need? Because God said, **"You forget me it will be the beginning of the end for you."**

It was during the Civil War that Abraham Lincoln's famous prayer was published and, among other things, you know what he said in there? He called a nation to come back to God. Do you know why? He said, "This war is upon us because we have forgotten God."

So how do you keep that from happening? David said, "Continual praise for God's person and God's works so you'll never lose sight of who He is and how much He does for you."

Not only Lord and King and loving compassion, but we give eternal praise to our unchanging God is holy and just. It says in verse 20:

²⁰ The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

²¹ My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Without justice there is only chaos and misery.

Do you remember just three years ago in the NFL 2012 season, the first three weeks there were substitute referees because the owners closed out the regular refs for contract disputes? Do you remember that? If you're a football fan you may remember it well. It was not something you wanna repeat. Now, the guys who came in probably did their best job. Some were college refs, some weren't. But as the season unfolded it was becoming very, very frustrating for the players, for the owners, and for the fans because, as good as these guys were trying to do, they were messing up calls all the time. They were changing the game. Outcomes were different. The players didn't know what to do on the field: one week it was allowed, the next week it wasn't. Fans were getting terribly frustrated, and people were crying out, "There is no justice going on in this game."

Craig Brian Larson, commenting on that in an article that he wrote, said:

Apparently, despite decades of ethical relativism, we still long for justice and fairness even in pro football. There is right and wrong, and the referee's job is to assure that right prevails. If we care that much about judges in sports giving order to our games, how much more should we realize the importance of having some supreme judge who makes the correct call on the actions of people in this world? God has given His law to bring order to relationships, to business, to society. Without His moral law and His judgments that uphold it, life becomes chaos and everyone is miserable.

You see, that's why people are so frustrated in our country regardless of your political persuasion. When leaders break laws, our Justice Department does not prosecute and our Congress doesn't hold people accountable. Lawlessness begins to prevail. Where lawlessness prevails, decisions of law become arbitrary and then what happens is the people get frustrated. Then society begins to fall into chaos and people get miserable because the laws that are put in place to be observed by a God who is the God of law are being violated and no one's doing anything about it. You get frustrated. What people want to know is, Isn't there anyone's gonna make this right?

David knew that kind of frustration. He said, "Yeah, there's someone who is gonna make it right. His name is God. He's holy and he's just." He's full of love and compassion, but God sees everything. God sees everything. That's why he said in verse 20:

The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

You see, we saw God's justice meted out at the cross, didn't we? My sin deserved punishment, so did yours. God is just, so He punished that sin at the cross. God watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. You see, all of us are gonna one day stand before the bar of God's justice. All of us. We are either gonna face that justice covered in the blood of Jesus Christ who paid for our sin at the cross and met God's justice in that sacrifice, or we are gonna face God's bar of justice all on our own and will be holy accountable for every sin we've done. You will be destroyed because the wages of sin is death.

So how do you want to approach God's justice? Fully cleansed as a child of God, full of love and compassion standing before a God who knows your price has been paid? Or stand before God all on your own facing Him with the sin that's in all of our lives? You see, God is gonna bring everything to account: all the injustice in the world; all those who reject God; who persecute the church; who attack biblical marriage; who support killing babies in the womb; who flaunt sexual perversion; who murder innocent people; who, as the Bible says, are drunkards, swindlers, liars, slanderers, homosexual offenders. They will all be brought before God's bar of justice. But God is a God who with love and compassion has given us a Savior.

That's why at the end of the book of Revelation it says in Chapter 22, verse 14:

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

You see, David praised God for being an unchanging God of holiness and justice because it brought stability and security and hope to his life to know that no matter what injustices we may have to endure in this world, God will make sure to make it right.

I've had so many people over the years come to me and say things like, "Yeah, I was a Christian, but I don't want to be a Christian anymore" or "I want to go do this bit of immorality, but God won't mind because God's so forgiving and He wants me to be happy."

When people say things like that I say to them, "Look, what expectation did you have of God that He didn't meet that made you so angry at Him?" or "What sin is in your life that you want to perpetuate that you can't do and justify as long as God is a God who never changes and has a moral law? Which is it? Because unless God's let you down somewhere that made you so angry you want to leave or unless you want to perpetuate some sin that you can't justify because of His existence, there's no reason for you, who claimed to one time know God, there's no reason for you to leave. So which is it? You're mad at God or you wanna go sin? Which is it?"

Because so many times when we're mad at God or we don't like the way He does things or the laws He's put down, or we want to go do stuff we know He isn't gonna approve of, people either try to change God or change what He says. That's what our world is doing. The church can never give in to that because, you see, God is unchanging. His word is eternal and in the end those who stand with the Lord will never be disappointed. That's why David said:

- ¹⁰ All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.
¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

As Francis Schaeffer once put it, "Christianity is about worshipping the God who is there. The real God, the God of the Bible, the God who never changes."

David did. He praised this God and will forever because he said, "You are Lord and King. You are love and compassion. You are holy and just." Which is why the whole Psalter ends like this in Psalm 150. The last five Psalms begin and end with "Halleluiah. Praise be to Yahweh, the eternal, unchanging God." Psalm 150:

- ¹ Praise the Lord.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.
² Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.
³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
⁴ praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,
⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

And God's people said, "Praise the Lord!" Eternal praise to our unchanging God. It's why David said in verse 3 of Psalm 145:

- ³ Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

If you're a Christian, I'll guarantee you a billion years from now when you are praising God, you've only just begun. If this unchanging God is gonna receive praise like that a billion years from now, "If we know Him," David says, "why wait?" Let's praise Him now for the God that He is.

Father, I thank you today for this word of truth. In this world of increased relativism and political correctness and cultural dumbing down, I pray, God, that we will not be arrogant, we will not be proud, and we will not be self-sufficient. We will be secure in the hope and the assurance of a relationship with a God who is unchanging, a God who saved us by His loving compassion, a God who is great in His person and His works, and a God who is holy and just and will be forever. Thank you, God, that we can put our hope in such a God and give our eternal praise to our unchanging God. We offer you this song as part of that praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.