

Praising God in the Storm

A Sermon on the 25th Anniversary of 9-11

Psalm 138

"My only comfort in life and in death is that I am not my own but belong body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." The Heidelberg Catechism

True worship is a miracle of grace that happens because God allows us to see Him and the hope of the gospel as a greater than all the evil and injury and sorrows that fill our lives. It is a miracle. It's not merely an act of the will.

"I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart..." (vs.1)

"Do not forsake the work of your hands." (vs.8)

Pray to see the hope and the help that Psalm 138 brings

I. God Alone is Worthy of Our Worship and Our Trust (Psalm 138:1-2)

"I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; 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." Psalm 138:1-2 (ESV)

He praises God in the storm because God himself is his most treasured possession. The Lord is the object of His affections, the treasure of His life, the strength of his life, the focus of His faith, the object of His ambition.

Jeremiah similarly sees God alone as worthy of worship and his trust in the midst of deep sorrows and pain:

"Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." Lamentations 3:19-24 (ESV)

"Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:26 (ESV)

Pray that you see that God is the one unchanging good in our lives.

II. God Is Distinguished By His Covenantal Love and Faithfulness. Psalm 138:2-3

"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. On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased." Psalm 138:2-3 (ESV)

This is what distinguishes our God: God moves towards us before we move towards Him. God stays with us even when we struggle. He shows up and stays with us through our deepest struggles.

Lisa Beamer's lost her husband Todd on 9-11. Todd was an account manager for Oracle who was flying on United's flight 93 from Newark to San Francisco. He died helping to keep the airplane fly into the Pentagon that had been high-jacked. She writes:

"If we believe wholeheartedly, each moment, that our destiny rests in the hands of Jesus Christ – the one with ultimate love and ultimate power – what do we have to be concerned about? Of course, our humanity clouds this truth many times but hanging on to glimpses of it keeps everything in perspective."

What Does David See That Makes Him Trust God in Times of Trouble?

- **God's steadfast love (hesed) and absolute faithfulness:**

"I bow down to your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness." (Psalm 138:2)

- **God's long history of keeping His Word and His people:**

"for you have exalted above all things your name and your word." (Ps. 138:2b)

- **God's Sustaining Power and Presence:**

"On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased." (Ps. 138:3)

Wisdom sees that God alone is worthy to be trusted because He alone has can be relied on to keep his promises, to glorify His name and His Word, and to strengthen us in times and place and situations where we thought we could never remain faithful or endure!

Pray to see and remember that!

III. Grace: What Makes God Universally Unique. Psalm 138:4-6

"All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth, and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar." Psalm 138:4-6 (ESV)

It's not our worthiness but His mercy that is our hope. He alone willingly and sacrificially forgives any who humble, repent and take refuge in Him.

"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old." Micah 7:18-20 (ESV)

God allows us to come to the end of ourselves in our circumstances so that we may be humbled and to see our deep and desperate need for Christ. Humble yourself, acknowledge your need, and come to Him.

“It is God’s method to exercise his children with a continual conflict, that, having one foot as it were in the grave, they may flee with alarm to hide themselves under his wings, where they may abide in peace.” John Calvin

Can you see this in your life and will you seek Him in your weakness and in your need?

IV. God's Unfailing Commitment to Perfect His People. Psalm 138:7-8

“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.” Psalm 138:7-8 (ESV)

“God’s sovereignty has been made clear to me. When I am tempted to become angry and ask ‘What if?’ and ‘Why us?’ God says, ‘I knew on September 10, and I could have stopped it, but I have a plan for greater good than you can ever imagine.’ I don’t know God’s plan, and honestly, right now I don’t like it very much. But I trust that he is true to his promise in Romans 8:28: ‘We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.’ My only responsibility is to love God. He’ll work out the rest.” Lisa Beamer

Is your greatest ambition to become like Him in every way possible?

Section I — God Alone Is Worthy of Our Worship and Trust (vv.1–2)

- Where have you recently seen God as your “portion” — the one good that doesn’t change even when everything else does?
- What helps you move from *knowing* God is worthy of trust to actually *resting* in Him during hardship?
- When life feels chaotic, what practical habits help you re-center your heart on God as your greatest treasure?
- How might your worship look different this week if you truly believed God is the one unshakeable good in your life?

Section II — God’s Steadfast Love and Faithfulness (vv.2–3)

- What is one specific moment when you called out to God and He strengthened your soul?
- How does remembering God’s long history of keeping His Word help you face today’s uncertainties?
- Where do you need to slow down and “bow down” — intentionally remembering His steadfast love and faithfulness?
- What would change in your outlook if you believed, like Lisa Beamer said, that your destiny rests fully in the hands of Jesus?

Section III — Grace: What Makes God Universally Unique (vv.4–6)

- Where has God used weakness, limitation, or exhaustion to draw you closer to Him rather than push you away?
- What part of your life right now most needs the reminder that God delights in showing mercy?
- How does knowing that God “regards the lowly” encourage you when you feel overlooked, small, or overwhelmed?
- What step of humility — confession, surrender, or dependence — is God inviting you to take this week?

Section IV — God’s Unfailing Commitment to Perfect His People (vv.7–8)

- Where do you see God preserving your life or faith in ways you didn’t recognize at the time?
- What “greater good” might God be working in a situation you don’t understand or don’t like right now?
- How does the promise “The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me” reshape your fears about the future?
- What is one area where you want to intentionally pursue Christlikeness as your highest ambition?

★ One Closing Group Question

- What would it look like for you to “praise God in the storm” this week — not by pretending the storm isn’t real, but by seeing Him as more real than the storm?