

Have you ever found yourself slipping into a negative mindset or even a sense of depression about the condition of this world? As we read through the Psalms there are a number having the idea of praising God no matter what the circumstances or situation we find ourselves in. **Psalm 65** is written to praise God for His salvation and indeed for His providential working in our lives day by day and moment by moment. There are three divisions we can break this Psalm into.

We can see God in the temple v1-4. David declares to the Lord that praise is waiting in Zion. That is probably code speak for the fact that when his people go into the temple, or in more modern terms into His church e.g. a building, it should be marked by the fact that Christians are keen to praise the Lord. I think it is also important for us to see that David is really trying to bring across the need for daily worship rather than just in church on Sunday only. David's great desire is that as he worships the Lord he is consumed by praise and thanks to the God who has done so much for him in His providential care and love.

We also get to see that out of this need for worship that we develop a heart of praise. I wonder if you have thought about what you can praise the Lord for each day as you climb out of bed. Think for example the reason you get out of bed is because God has been faithful in maintaining the universe the way it is with the earth in its existing orbit on its present angle day by day and moment by moment. When we take time to praise God it is amazing what can happen in our lives and our outlook on this world. We can thank the Lord for our families, for every breath we breathe, and on it goes.

We see in Psalm 65:1v4 there is the prayer of confession where David is willing to honestly come before the Lord confessing his sin. David like so many of the biblical writers was so aware of the fact that if he was not right with God then it wasn't possible to praise and worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Of course this prayer of confession first of all requires us to develop honesty with our own heart and attitude and then God is able to reveal His convicting power and bring us back into that right relationship. This then brings us to the joy of forgiveness. In Psalm 32 David declared what was happening to him in his life when he said that his heart had been turned into the drought of summer and that the Lord's hand was heavy upon him. But then he was able to confess his sin and know that he was forgiven and as it were he was able to shout out with joy for being forgiven.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- New orders being placed for the distribution of Challenge newspaper
- Our wonderful volunteers who come to our office and help every month with the Challenge wrap
- The many meetings (x40) organised for promotion of paper throughout South Australia

As we look at this point of God in the temple we see the blessing of fellowship that comes from our confession to God and forgiveness of God for our sin. It is sad to think there could be those who come to church every week being a part of the congregation, but never really becoming part of the fellowship that we enjoy as Christians. One of the main reasons this happens is that they have never understood what it means to pray a prayer of confession and then to experience the joy of forgiveness for their sin. My prayer for those who fit that category is that God will speak to your heart right now and encourage you to get right with Him.

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We see God in the world v5-8. This is what one would call a character study of the Lord in that we see first His RIGHTEOUSNESS in a dark world. A simple test would be to watch the nightly news: it just highlights to me the huge contrast between the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. I am at times amazed at how some television programs can present an incredibly distorted view of what is right and wrong. We seem to live in an age now where the value that we knew to be right, is considered out of style. I am glad to recognise that the Word of God is not open to the trends and vagaries of this world but instead stands firm in declaring the righteousness of God in a dark world.

We see the Psalmist declares his CONFIDENCE in God in a dark world. I am sure there are many things we see and experience that may cause us to question whether God is at work in the world. As I get older I realise that we worship a heavenly Father who is always with us and never leaves us nor forsakes us. Just this morning I was reading through my devotions in the book of Genesis and reading of Joseph's testimony in Egypt where the writer says *and the Lord was with him*. When Joseph was in jail wrongly accused the Lord was with him. When Joseph was in Potiphar's house after being sold off as a slave the Lord was with him. It appears to me that Joseph was one of those people who could keep their focus on the Lord rather than on circumstances.

We can see the POWER AND AUTHORITY of God in a dark world. This is pictured for us as the Psalmist talks about the noise of the sea as the waves crash and that He has established the mountains by His strength and that He is clothed with power and authority. You may be tempted at times to think that God is not aware of your situation or is not listening to your heart cry, but I think it is fair to say that this Psalm should be an encouragement to you to know that God's righteousness, confidence, light, power and authority are present in a dark world. They are present because God uses them to encourage us that He never leaves us or forsakes us even when the opposite seems to be the case.

We see God in the harvest v9-13. God is sovereign in bringing rain for the harvest, providing the harvest and also the abundance of the harvest. I know that in this country right now there are many who are experiencing drought and I am sure they are wondering where God is in the midst of this. Maybe we are experiencing drought because God is trying to get our attention. Sadly it is not until we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place that we get a listening ear for the voice of God. Also I think there are many in this country of Australia who think God is not sovereign in bringing the rain or providing the harvest, but as we are seeing at the moment I think it is fair to say that God is absolutely sovereign and that He alone reigns supreme. If we respond in the right way by seeking God with a genuine heart, then we can truly worship God in spirit and in truth. It is then that we can genuinely praise God for who He is and all that He does.

{ CARL CARMODY
CEO CHALLENGE }

PRAYER needed for:

- The new contacts made while in South Australia. Pray they will take the paper to reach out in their communities
- Next trip for Carl to Victoria (July 12 – July 29) for promotion. Pray for each meeting that the contacts will result in ongoing orders
- Local churches to catch the vision for their local communities and how they will share the gospel with them

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