

The Psalms 113-118 are together called the Hallel, they are songs of ascent, used throughout the history of Israel, and even in Jesus' day as people came up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts. Thus, at the time of the Passover, these songs would be sung by those coming to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. They were songs meant to remember what God had done to save Israel from bondage in Egypt. And, at the Passover meal these songs were sung again...
113-114 at the beginning of the meal.
115-118 at the close of the meal.
The reason that they are called "Hallel" Psalms is because four of them end in "Hallel" = Praise the Lord = Halleluia!
They are songs of worship... worship to God for what He has done for His people.

It was during just such a Passover festival some 2,000 years ago that Jesus was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that the people were shouting, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." It is important to note that they did not make this up, these were not their words. They were God's words. This comes right out of Psalm 118. Look there with me.
I want you to read along with me what they were saying to Jesus... **Psalm 118:19-28**
And then the people on the road to Jerusalem were adding to it, "Hosanna" = "Lord save us!"
Do you see now why some of the Pharisees were telling Jesus to rebuke His disciples?
Well, Jesus did not do that.
And, for the reason why we have but to consider lessons from another Psalm that they were singing on that important day. Jesus was and is God Himself come to our world to save us.
Psalm 115 begins with an invitation to glorify God.

I. Give glory to God. He does what He wants. vss. 1-3

And we discover right away at the beginning of the Psalm that this is a victory song. We see this at the end as well. There are two statements in this first section that are among the most well known statements in all the Psalter.
"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory."
Realize that this was originally a response to God's saving work...
when God led His people out of Egypt and through the wilderness.
But, it has been sung by others since in praise to God when he works marvelous salvation for His people.
Now, I am not a big fan of Shakespeare, but my favorite is Henry V. (Boice, Pp. 934-935)

This amazing proclamation of God who brings victory, salvation, faithfulness to His covenant, truth...
is followed by a question and an answer.
The question is a rhetorical one... in other words, we all know the answer... They shouldn't say that. Why?
vs. 3 God does what He wants.
This is an amazing statement... in its brevity and in its comprehensiveness.
Many people, theologians, sociologists, farmers... will ask questions and discuss the question of free will.
Answers are complex and understanding can be elusive. After all, who really has free will?
Are you free to do whatever you want?
But, the bible clearly presents one person who actually has free will. God. God does whatever He wants!
If God decides something, that is what is going to happen. This is not true of you or I. It is true of God.
This is what it means for Him to be God. It is the definition of God. It is why He deserves all glory and our praise.
And, it is in this that He is different from everything else... everything that has been created.

II. Don't glorify idols. They can do nothing. vss. 4-8

It is important to understand just what is in the mind of the Psalmist here... an idol made of wood, metal, or stone...
People make them, people trust them, then people become like them.
Now, we might not have idols around like this today... some do. Probably most of you here do not.
But, we do have idols.
I recall a commercial about a year ago presenting a Volvo as a car that will save your soul.
Two car commercials presently are presenting their vehicles as living beings.
Really? Do you know why they make those commercials? Because they work. People believe them at least a little.
And, have you ever noticed that cars often look kind of idol-like... eyes, mouths...
People do worship their cars. They want the car. They sit in their new car and think, for a minute, I have arrived.
But, they haven't. It's a lie.
People worship money. Do you know what's printed on our money? The same thing that was printed on money 2,000 years ago.
Pictures of our leaders, presidents. On our money... eyes, ears, noses... People even say, "Money talks."
But it doesn't. Do you know what's going to happen to that money? All of it?
The same thing that's going to happen to the car. They're going to burn... just like all the idols.
And the same thing will happen to you if that is what you're living your life for.

The car, the money, and all of the idols we worship... none of them can give you what you really need.
You need a Savior. You need God in whom you can trust forever.

III. Trust in God. He will bless you.

vss. 9-15

Do you notice a repetition vss. 9, 10, and 11? It is not hard to see. You can see it three times.

So, what is the psalmist saying here? What is God saying to us in these verses?

"Trust in the Lord."

Why?

Because "He is our help and our shield."

What is this saying? It is saying that other things cannot really help us in life nor can they protect us. But, God does.

Have you noticed the number of commercials devoted to advertising insurance?

I watched a good bit of basketball when I could over the past month... and I was amazed.

Why is it that there is such a huge demand for insurance... home, car, health, etc?

People obviously are feeling insecure. They want protection and these companies are offering protection and security.

But, can they deliver? Can they protect your house? your car? your health? your life?

No!

They can only offer to replace things when they are wrecked. Things get more complex when it comes to health and life.

Does this mean that you shouldn't get insurance? No. But don't trust in it.

But, God actually can be for you your help and your shield. He can protect you.

Does that mean that things will go as you want? No. Remember who is in charge. Remember vs. 3.

It means that when you trust God, He is mindful of you and gives you what you need.

This means that He will bless you. Look at the next four verses.

Do you see another repetition? Is there a word there that is repeated? It is repeated five times.

What then is the message?

God will bless you. He wants to bless you.

Some people agree that God is in control. They really believe it. But they're worried still.

Why? They don't think that God treats them right. They even fear what God might do.

"If I trust God, He might take away all my money and make me live like a poor person."

"If I trust God, He'll make me marry an ugly guy."

"If I trust God, He'll make me go be a missionary in Indonesia where they will eat me."

"If I trust God, He'll make something terrible happen to me."

But, they only say that because they don't know God.

vs. 13 "He will bless those who fear the Lord. The small together with the great."

vs. 14 "...and your children."

Read **Rom. 8:28**

I think that this is one of the most important truths in the whole Bible. You need to believe it.

Satan will work hard to get you to doubt it. To disbelieve it. Even to hate hearing it.

God wants to bless you.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and you are seeking to trust Him... He wants to bless you.

Do you hear this????

The God who runs the universe, who created everything, who does whatever He wants...

He wants to bless you.

God always gets what He wants. Everything He desires happens.

He wants to bless you. Now the blessing might be not what you expect... but it is the best thing for you for all eternity!

You might not understand it. You might not like it at the moment. You might not know what's going on...

But, God wants to bless you... and He always gets His way.

Therefore, if you trust Him... He is going to bless you. There is no insurance like this! What peace of mind!

All you have to do is trust Him.

God is going to bless you. And, He's interested in your kids as well. He wants to bless them too.

Do you believe this? If not, just start reading your Bible. This is who God is. He loves to bless His people when they trust Him.

IV. Praise the Lord!

vs. 16-18

There is a contrast here in these closing verses... a contrast between the heavenly and the earthly.

The earth God has given to men... for a while... and there are many people who are very earthly minded.

They only live for what they can see and get here on the earth.

They don't praise the Lord... and in the end they are going to go away, in silence, like the idols they worship. The end.

But, not us. Not those who fear God, who trust in God, who praise God... who are blessed by God.

No, no, no... God blesses us... and we are going to bless Him... just like those people on that first Palm Sunday.

We start now and go on forever. Why?

Because we are so grateful to God for His salvation, for His blessing, because we love Him, because He loves us.

It's why He came into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday 2,000 years ago... to save us.

You might have a hard time praising God now. But someday you'll see all of what He's been doing for you.

You'll see clearly all of the blessings and goodness. Praising Him will be no struggle then.