

Psalm 134.¹⁻³

Praise

Background

This psalm brings the 15 'songs of ascent' to a close – and, of course, to a deliberate climax as well! This is where the life of discipleship, the 'path of life' ([Ps.16.11](#)) will culminate, in a constant, round-the-clock, chorus of praise.

There's a marvelous and very helpful chapter, entitled 'A word about praising', in C S Lewis' book, "[Reflections on the Psalms](#)" (the book is well worth reading in its entirety – it's not that long) which explores the persistent summons throughout Scripture, and particularly through the psalms, to praise God. The following famous quote from that chapter in his book perhaps helps to explain why this is where the 'songs of ascent' conclude.

"I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with. . . . The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."

I think it was Juan Carlos Ortiz in his classic book, 'Disciple' (another book from a generation ago which is well worth reading), who described praise as 'the language of heaven': praise, that is, not born of some sense of duty, but born, rather, of sheer delight, flowing unbridled from an enduring sense of wonder in our hearts at all that God is, all that our Lord and Saviour has done, and all that He continues to do.

There's a certain appropriateness, therefore, about this psalm having been the focus of our study on Palm Sunday: the welcome of the crowds who erupted in song and praise as Jesus entered Jerusalem prefigured the final day, when a crowd far larger still, 'a great multitude that no one could count', will erupt in song, praising and delighting in our King and Saviour with an unrestrained and untiring exuberance (see [Rev.7.9-12](#)).

It's for that reason that as well as looking at the psalm itself, the daily Bible readings focus on Luke's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on 'Palm Sunday'. I suggest that along with **day (1)** you read the whole of the passage in Luke 19.28-44 (it's not that long) and that the other 'days' on which to major in your Community Groups might be '**days' (2)** and **(4)**: as ever there are additional questions for CG discussion in each of these 'days'.

1) Monday 11th April – praise

Read [Psalm 134](#)

“.. Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD ..” (Ps.134.1)

The ‘songs of ascent’ began with repentance (Ps.120) and culminate in sustained praise. You were made for this (‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever’ as the Catechism declares), and praise is the enduring climax in which the path of life issues.

How can you best cultivate a spirit of praise in your heart?

To what extent, and in what ways, does the ‘physical’ (‘lift up your hands’) complement and enhance the ‘spiritual’ when it comes to your praise?

Does your spirit of praise translate into your being and bringing a blessing to others?

As part of our ongoing life as a fellowship of God’s people how might we be invoking and imparting the Lord’s blessing to others?

***Prayer:** How worthy You are, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power! May my life and living today, in all I do and say and think, be a continual sacrifice of praise.*

2) Tuesday 12th April – initiative

Read [Luke 19.28-31](#)

“.. He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem ..” (Lk.19.28)

Jesus will enter the city as the great King ([Ps.48.2](#)) who has come to claim His own. The initiative always lies with Him. He knows what He’s doing, where He’s going and what the outcomes will be. Rest in the knowledge that He goes ahead of you.

Are there people whom Jesus is prompting you to see and speak with today?

Are there some rather mundane tasks the Lord is calling you to do? Go and do them – they’re as much the work of the Lord as anything else!

How do the different tasks which fill your day (many of which may be either mundane or menial or both) serve to see the Kingship of Jesus being made known?

***Prayer:** As You knelt before Your disciples and washed their feet, Lord, grant me that same humility whereby I may serve the practical needs of others today.*

3) Wednesday 13th April – donkeywork

Read [Luke 19.32-35](#)

“.. They replied, “The Lord needs it” ..” (Lk.19.34)

One large part of the grace of the Lord is His readiness to involve others in that work of salvation which is so entirely *His*. His followers are privileged to do some of the 'donkey work' and to give of their resources to Him as He advances the kingdom.

What of yours is the Lord saying He needs?

In what practical ways may you give to the Lord and serve Him today?

Prayer: *Lord, who am I that I should be able to give as I do to You: everything comes from You and I give You only what comes from Your hand* (see [1 Chron.29.14](#))

4) Thursday 14th April – joyful

Read [Luke 19.36-38](#)

".. the whole crowd began joyfully to praise God in loud voices .." (Lk.19.37)

The praise which Jesus evokes is expansive. Cloaks thrown on the ground before Him. A chorus of countless people. Loud voices raised in great joy. Texts of Scripture recalled. Remember the wonderful things He does and rejoice – He's still the same!

What are some of the wonderful things which *you* have seen Jesus do?

What might be the equivalent for yourself of the people 'spreading their cloaks on the road'?

How would you say the praise of the crowd was characterised here (v.37)?

How should this, and how does this (if at all!) find expression in our regular services of worship?

How does this anticipate the life of praise which will characterise eternity (see [Rev.7.9-12](#))?

Prayer: *King of kings, Majesty, God of heaven, living in me, gentle Saviour, closest Friend, strong Deliverer, beginning and end, I can but bow, I lay my all before You now.*

5) Friday 15th April – whole-hearted

Read [Luke 19.39-40](#)

".. He replied, 'If they keep quiet, the stones will cry out' .." (Lk.19.40)

The merely 'religious' are always uncomfortable with anything which smacks of 'excess': moderation is their standard mantra. But Jesus Himself held nothing back as He went to the cross: His creation is primed to respond to Him similarly.

Do you 'tone down' your delight in the Lord to avoid occasioning offence?

Have you lost some of the initial enthusiasm and wonder you had when first you knew the Lord?

Prayer: *Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small,
Lord: Your love is so amazing, so divine, it demands my soul, my life, my all ([I Watts](#))*

6) Saturday 16th April – King

Read [Luke 19.41-44](#)

“.. because you did not recognise the time of God’s coming to you ..” (Lk.19.44)

The apostle urges us to note ‘the kindness and sternness of God’ ([Rom.11.22](#)): this is the character of the King. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was a stark illustration and reminder of both. His heartfelt compassion is matched by His righteous indignation.

When and how were your eyes opened to the truth of the gospel?

The Lord has no pleasure in the death of any ([Ezek.33.11](#)): does the refusal to recognise Jesus on the part of others burden your heart similarly?

Prayer: *Open my eyes, Lord, I want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch Him and say that I love Him: open my ears, Lord, and help me to listen.*

7) Sunday 17th April – victory

Read [Zechariah 9.9-13](#)

“.. See your King comes to you, righteous and victorious ..” (Zech.9.9)

Jesus Christ is risen today! Hallelujah! Rejoice today with the Lord’s people across the globe in celebrating the triumph of your King! He has broken the power of the last enemy, death – and He gives to His people His victory.

What did the prophet see as the results of the coming of the King?

The Lord promises to ‘restore twice as much to you’ (v.12 and see [Job 42.10](#)): what does that mean for believers?

Prayer: *How worthy You are of my love and my praise, Lord Jesus! You were slain and by Your blood You purchased us and made us a kingdom and priests to serve our God!*