

Podcast 258 Bless His Name

Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme!

The context of the third chapter of James discussed the power of the tongue. This little piece of our body is like a rudder of a ship, a bit that can control a horse, and it has great potential. “With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.” (James 3:9–10)

Normally, when I read that verse, I think, “Wow, I need to be careful and cautious about what I say to people, because I don’t want to curse them; for they’re made in the image of God.” I usually miss the first part, which says, “With it we bless our Lord and Father.” As believers we have a wonderful opportunity to bless God. One of our greatest privileges and opportunities is to “Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow.” We can bless God. We can praise His name.

Three times in the Psalms, David says that when we die, we lose that opportunity. “In death there is no remembrance of You; in Sheol who will give You praise?” (Psalm 6:5)

“What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it tell of Your faithfulness?” (Psalm 30:9)

“The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 115:17–18)

I like to think that we have this opportunity and privilege while we’re alive to praise God. Let’s pray that God will help us to open our eyes to the potential of our tongues and our hearts to offer praise to God.

Father, thank You for this truth, this amazing privilege and opportunity. And I don’t know how to gauge it, I don’t know how to measure the impact of it, but I do want to be a participant in it. I want to be one of those who praises Your name while I have breath, while I’m on this earth, while I’m alive. I want to not be thinking so much of what You can give me, but that I can praise and bless Your name. Help us to do that. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Psalm 69 says, “I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.” These are two techniques, you might say. We can sing and offer Him thanksgiving.

I’m enjoying Hymns for Family Worship more and more. I don’t think I’ve ever systematically gone through it before, but I have it open on my computer, and in the morning I read the history and then sing one hymn, obviously to myself because my wife and son are still sleeping.

This morning I read one the background to “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us.” which was sung at our wedding. As I read the history of the song, I found out that it

was originally a Sunday school song. In fact, a lot of the hymns we sing today as adults were originally written as Sunday school songs. The first verse is, "Savior, like a shepherd lead us; much we need Thy tender care." Beautiful. It is good to sing praises to God.

The second way that is mentioned in the Psalm is to magnify Him with thanksgiving. Isaiah 25:1 says, "O LORD, You are my God; I will exalt You; I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure."

Hebrews 13:15 declares, "Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name." Then there's this special passage in 1 Chronicles 29:11-13. "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all. In Your hand are power and might, and in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank You, our LORD, and praise Your glorious name."

Up to this point, I have been encouraging myself and our listeners to bless God and use our opportunity while we have breath to praise God's name. "I will extol you, my God and King, and bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable." (Psalm 145:1-3) What an ambition to bless God every day.

You and I often go out to St. Louis and meet with a bunch of kindred spirits in the winter, and many of us have thought of ourselves as "Malachi Men," because God has turned our hearts toward our families. Notice what it says in the last couple verses of Malachi, "I'll turn the hearts of fathers to their children."

There's another group of people mentioned in this book. Perhaps we should classify them the "Malachi People." They did something that was so wonderful that God took note, and He had their names written down in a book. Here it is, Malachi 3:16: "Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed His name."

I think that it's enough for us just to want to praise God for Who He is. We're going to spend eternity doing just that. This activity will not be boring, for we're going to continue to see new aspects of God's character and new things that He's done. We're going to see things we've never seen before, and we won't run out of things to give thanks and to praise to God. But wouldn't it be cool to be a part of that book, people who were known for fearing God and esteeming His name? And this is open to all of us. We all can join this club. We can be "Malachi People." We can be

esteemers of God's name. And we can follow the example of the Psalmist in Psalm 145, who said, "Every day I will bless You and praise Your name."

I'm aspiring to this. I would like to make sure that every day I praise God and bless His name. Let's just not talk about it, let's do it. Here is the rest of Psalm 145 beginning with the 4th verse: "One generation shall commend Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of Your awesome deeds, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of Your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made. All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD, and all Your saints shall bless You! They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and tell of Your power, to make known to the children of man Your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations."

[The LORD is faithful in all His words and kind in all His works.] The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him; He also hears their cry and saves them. The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked You will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever."

Let's take note of the character quality of God in these verses.

Scott: Mercy, I got lost just enjoying that.

Steve: Okay, that's a good one! Mercy is one.

Scott: It seems like there was almost one or two in every verse.

Steve: I know, this Psalm is packed.

Scott: "One generation will commend Your works to another and tell of Your mighty acts." His mightiness. His might.

Steve: His might. Very good. "They shall pour forth the fame of Your abundant goodness." So He's abundantly good.

Scott: Glorious splendor of Your majesty.

Steve: Gracious.

Scott: Righteousness.

Steve: Merciful.

Scott: Compassionate.

Steve: He's good to all.

Scott: Slow to anger and rich in love.

Steve: He's faithful in all His words.

Scott: Glorious.

Steve: He's kind. Twice that word is used here. Kind in all His works.

Scott: Trustworthy.

Steve: "He upholds all who are falling." Well, I'll continue - "and raises up all who are bowed down." So He takes care of us when we fall and are overwhelmed.

Scott: He provides. It says, "You give them food in their proper time."

Steve: Amen. He satisfies the desire of every living thing.

Scott: Righteous in all His ways. Faithful in all He does.

Steve: He's near to all who call on Him.

Scott: He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him. He hears their cry and saves them. So He hears us and saves us.

Steve: He preserves all who love Him.

Each one of these is worthy of our contemplation. If I had one attribute that has been the result of coming into His presence in the last couple years, I would say kind, which is not what I would have thought before. I would have thought that He's majestic, and He's omnipotent, and He's a Savior and a Redeemer, and all these kind of things, all of which are valid. But in coming into His presence and sensing His presence, I keep finding out how patient and kind He is, and that was unexpected, but it's wonderful, and that's one of the reasons I like the Psalm, is because twice it says He is kind. And He is.

Scott: I get the feeling that people who hung out with Jesus felt that he was kind.

Steve: Yes, and that, I think that those people who had the opportunity to be with Him knew Him in a way that made them know they were loved. Jesus said some strong things to Peter, and some of the other Apostles and they weren't offended because they knew Him, and how kind He was. They also knew He was good, and fair.

Scott: I have a little challenge. I was just thinking that I spend way too much time just scrolling through my phone on social media, which stresses me out most of the time. I'm thinking I should just replace that time with reading a Psalm and see how it would change my perspective.

Steve: I'll give you two for a good place to begin. Psalm 145 and Psalm 103. I find God's goodness and His attributes sprinkled through those like no other Psalms, and they do bless me. You are correct that the more we look around us, the more we're stirred up and stressed. Yet the more we look at Him, the more we're calmed, because He is God, and He is in control, and He is good, and He doesn't sleep, and He doesn't slumber. He's not overwhelmed with what's happening, which is a much different perspective. Amen.

Father, help us to take this to heart. Thank You for the opportunity, thank You for lips, thank You for hearts, thank You for revealing Yourself to us more today than even yesterday. And I pray that these words which we heard this morning, You'll write them on our hearts and remind us to praise You and remind us to look to You when everything around us is getting tough to look at. I thank You for You that don't change, and You're good, and You're kind in all Your works. In Jesus' name, Amen.