

The Dynamic Range of Praise, Worship and Lament (Part 1)

Psalm 145:1-10

Let me start with this — There are three things that energize and direct the way we live and breathe as individuals and as a local church:

A PASSION FOR the WORSHIP of God

A PASSION FOR the WORD of God

A PASSION FOR the MISSION of God

When someone looks at this collection of believers, they should be able to see our passion for these things in the time, energy and resources we commit to them. And we trust that by the Lord's enabling we will see maturity and increased fruitfulness in each of them.

THIS MORNING I want us to look at the dynamic range in the expression of our hearts before the Lord and to the Lord when we are gathered and when we are scattered.

I'll start by defining what I mean when I say that at the heart of Metro is a PASSION FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD. Here's what that does not mean: I'm not talking about people being passionate about *worshiping* or being excited about their favorite worship leader, or great musicianship, or great lights and projection, singing their favorite songs. THAT is what moves a lot of people to gather on a Sunday. Take those elements away and there's not so much "passion".

When I say that at the heart of my life — at the heart of this local church — is a PASSION FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD I mean

A passion for God to be worshipped — A passion for men and women to see that Jesus is the God of infinite worth, worthy of pouring out to Him alone all that we are, all that we do, all that we can ever hope to become.

Worship is more than singing songs! Worship is **living** our life — pouring out our hearts **individually** and **corporately** as **continuous** living sacrifices **to the glory of** Jesus.

*Romans 11:36–12:1 “To him be **the glory** forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living **sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**”*

Our PASSION FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD **informs** the way we live and breathe when we are gathered here and when we are scattered outside of these walls. Our PASSION FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD **informs** and **invades** everything we do. It is the WHY for what we do!

Our PASSION FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD invades everywhere we go. It transforms the SECULAR into the SACRED. We could spend a week thinking and talking about just that.

DON'T MISS THIS — Our PASSION FOR THE MISSION OF GOD — to reach the WORLD for God — **flows from** the passion to see God **receive** worship. Turn with me to **Revelation 5:9**

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

We are passionate to see men and women — not just coming to church; not just wanting to be a part of a subculture that holds values they like, or includes people they want to be around — we are passionate to see men and women rescued from idols and **redeemed** to that which they were **created** for: The worship of God.

WE NEED TO SEE that our PASSION FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD of God is inextricably tied to our PASSION FOR THE WORD OF GOD because:

1. The God whom we worship is revealed in the Scriptures. The scriptures declare and reveal His nature, His attributes (omniscience, omnipotence, His mercy, His unfailing redeeming love, His amazing grace) is revealed in the Scriptures. It is in the Scriptures that we discover His infinite worth.

2. The dynamic range of how we **express** our hearts to the Lord and before the Lord is **defined** in His Word. THIS BOOK is NOT about YOU — it is about GOD. THIS BOOK is NOT written TO you. It is written FOR you! I am praying that church culture will be rescued from the anthropocentric view of the Bible that is prevailing today — rescued from seeing the Bible as an encyclopedia of helpful hints for the life they want have

I've been wanting and waiting to talk about and think about the dynamic expression of our hearts to the Lord when we are gathered and when we are scattered.

I don't think we really understand the dynamic range of EXPRESSING our hearts before the Lord as it was understood by the believer in Bible times.

Because of that — the way we express our hearts to the Lord doesn't reflect what the Scriptures say. Those who do know what the Scriptures say about the way men and women expressed their hearts to the Lord are reticent to express their hearts in that way **because** they have **misconceptions** — **fears**. *"Oh, I don't want to get emotional in front of others. "I don't want to get into emotionalism."* NEITHER DO I!

Emotional-ism is emotion for the sake of being emotional. **Emotional-ism** makes an emotional experience the desired outcome!

We should not be seeking a desired emotional outcome when we gather and bring our hearts before the Lord. **But we should** desire the **EXPRESSION** of hearts **to look like** that which is recorded in the Scriptures. We should want to **be EXPRESSING** what is in our hearts for the Lord in a way that is **worthy of Him**.

We should want to **be EXPRESSING** our hearts to the Lord in a way that is **worthy of God**.

PRAISE is one of the ways we express what's in our hearts concerning Jesus.

PRAISE is essentially **declaration** and **exaltation**. It is **declaring** the greatness of God — the goodness of God — the works of God in a way that **exalts** Him — lifts

Him up in our own minds and hearts and in the minds and hearts of others. A great example of this is **Psalm 145**.

Psalm 145 is the last psalm attributed to David in the collection of Psalms.

QUOTE: James Montgomery Boice — *Psalm 145 is indeed a monumental praise psalm, a fit summary of all David had learned about God during a long lifetime of following hard after the Almighty.*

Here's the one verse summary —

Psalm 145:3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

In the whole of the psalm we find David speaking of the greatness of God and then describing the **dynamic range of expression** that revelation of God produces in the believer.

Psalm 145:5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

David said — **I will meditate** — He would think intently and at length — he had one thing that occupied his attention. What was that thing that provoked intense, prolonged, singular attention? GOD!

1. He thought intently and at length on **God's glorious splendor**.

kâbôd = weight, weightiness. It is the word used in reference to the visible and tangible expression of God and the perfection of His nature and attributes. The Bible says that this glory — this expression of God — is **so** glorious — that it is unapproachable. We could never survive this glorious splendor in these bodies.

2. He thought intently and at length on **God's steadfast love**.

Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Look at the adjective David used to describe relentless, unending, constantly pursuing covenant love of God.

abounding — It carries the sense of remarkable; out of the ordinary in degree and magnitude of effect.

PRAISE is the way we express our response to God's mighty acts (v.4) — the glorious splendor of His majesty (His Kingship), His awesome deeds and His greatness (v.5) — His abundant goodness (and righteousness (v. 7) — His grace, mercy, patience (v.8) — His faithfulness to His Word (v. 13) — the glory and the splendor of His Kingdom (v.11 and v.13) — His provision (v. 16) — His nearness to those who call on Him in truth (v.18) and how He preserves us (v.20).

HERE'S THE DEAL — **From** all God has **revealed** to David about Himself — David describes (by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) how he responded, and how we should respond to the infinite worth of God. He is careful to describe the dynamic range of our response.

Words Mean Something — In our English translations of the Bible we come across the word *praise* or the word *worship* and we impose our cultural understanding of those words on the dynamic range we give to our expression of praise and worship. "*Praise is an up-tempo song — Worship is a slow, serious song.*" But David used very specific words to describe God and to describe the way we should respond to Him.

¹ **I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.**

Extol = lift up high above. This is not merely done in the form of worship in music! It is the way we live and breathe in every day life. Our lives say that God matters, and compared to Him — nothing else matters. God is extoled, elevated and lifted high in our accomplishments and even the way we respond to failure and setbacks. God, His work, His mission, His story, His glory — His ultimate importance — is behind the way we use our time, talents and treasure.

But like we learned about prayer — worship alone moves to worship together. As worshippers we are not fully ourselves by ourselves. When we do gather as the

local church — we do **extol** God in corporate worship. With lyric and melody, we sing His name, make much of His name, declare His name to be without rival or equal (what a Beautiful name... Yours is the Name above all names).

¹ I will extol you, my God and King, and **ble**ss your name forever and ever.

bless = speak words of excellence about God; bend the knees.

² Every day I will **ble**ss you and **pr**aise your name forever and ever.

praise = **hâlal** — It is used 166 times in 139 verses of the Old Testament. It means to *be clear* (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to *shine*; hence to *make a show*, to *boast*; and thus to *be* (clamorously) *foolish*; to *rave*;... celebrate,¹

When the reader in David’s day read Psalm 145:2 he or she didn’t think “up-tempo tune.” **I will ble**ss you and *I will make a show, boast about; even to the point of being* (clamorously) *foolish in raving about your name*. Think David dancing before the ark.

This is not a “look at me” kind of behavior — because praise is directed God ward. It isn’t a matter of making a show so that people will look at you. **HE** is **the object** of our boasting — we boast **in** the greatness of **His name**. We boast in God.

Psalm 44:8 In God we boast all the day long.

The word *boast* there is **hâlal**. In God we **rave** all the day long. *We will boast in God to the point of being clamorous — we will rave over Him — when we are gathered and wherever we might be.*

⁴ One generation shall **comm**end your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

¹ Strong, J. (2009). *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 33). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Commend = to sing praises. Singing praises about the saving work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit! The truth of the Gospel is communicated by believing men and women as they sing together about the God they know personally — the God who works — the God who has worked in their own lives.

The great hymns did that. The great songs of the church today do that. They center on GOD — His work — His work experienced personally.

⁵ On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

Engaging our minds to think intently on what we are singing

⁶ They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

declare = Count, recount, write (as in taking inventory). When we gather like this, our worship in song should be a time when we personally count, recount and declare our personal inventory of what we know about the greatness of God.

⁷ They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

Pour forth = gush; allow to gush forth; ferment.

Do our lives individually gush forth the fame of God's abundant goodness? Do we, individually, **allow** the fame of His goodness to gush forth? Is the abundant goodness of God like a priceless vintage fermenting in our hearts and our lives?

Like prayer — this *gushing* moves from alone to together. When we gather are we a collection of individuals who **together** gush forth the fame of His abundant goodness? When you are with these men and women do you **allow** the fame of His goodness to gush forth?

and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

sing aloud = produce a song with the voice as a response of joy — **shout** for joy; **sing** for joy.

This cannot be rote or routine. It is a life — it is a joy realized before gathering that finds expression in a collection of lives that are sharing in the same joy.

Let's carry all of that with us as we look at how the divinely inspired poets and songwriters of the Psalms used words that unpack how dynamic our response should be to Who God is and what God has done.

One of the words that is **used 53 times** in the Old Testament — and is translated into our English language as “PRAISE”, is the Hebrew word, **Yadah**. This Hebrew word means “*to use the hand - to revere or worship.*”

When David used this word he meant it — and his readers understood it — to mean “*Worship and praise God with extended hands.*”

POINT: There is nothing wrong with using your body to express what's in your heart. The scriptures tell us to do that.

Psalm 63:3–4 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. ⁴ Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.

For some — this an uncomfortable dynamic range of expression. Know this — First of all, I can't make you do anything. But I can encourage myself and you to embrace the Biblical dynamic range of expression. Rather than say, “That's just not who I am” we need to consider who the Lord wants us to be — how HE wants us express worship.

Secondly — **it's not my idea** that we raise our hands — it's God's. We just need to see that it's there.

Turn with me to **Psalm 33:2**.

Psalm 33:2 Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

Give thanks = Yadah means *to extend the hand to revere and to worship*. Rather than use the English, **give thanks**, let's read it as they would have understood it in David's day.

"To the accompaniment of music I will give thanks to the Lord with extended hands."

HERE'S THE POINT — You don't have to be singing a song that says, "I will lift my hands," in order to be lifting your hands in praising the Lord.

For the worshipper of David's day, PRAISE was not the singing of an upbeat chorus song. They knew that **Yadah** meant extending their hands in the worship of God.

LET'S REVISIT the word **hâlal** — Like I said, it's is used 166 times in 139 verses of the Old Testament. Look at **Psalm 148**

*Psalm 148:1-5; 11-14 Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! 3 Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars! 4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you
waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he
commanded and they were created.... 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth! 12 Young men and maidens together, old men
and children! 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is
exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.*

Every time you read the word *praise* in this Psalm it's the Hebrew word **hâlal**. Someone was REALLY excited about God when he wrote that psalm!

When I read **Psalm 148 -150** it makes me wonder what kind of music these psalms were written to. It also makes me wonder what David and the psalmists were experiencing with God to have been that ecstatic in the EXPRESSION of their worship.

BIG IDEA — There is a place for boasting in, celebrating and raving over God. But **not** merely for the sake of being clamorous — making a show.

The Holy Spirit is so INFINITELY WISE in His choice of words. The Holy Spirit knew that if we were just left at boasting and being clamorously foolish — raving and celebrating — that we'd go wrong, we'd miss the point.

He chose THIS word because this word also carries the meaning of a profoundly deep sense of intimacy. **Hâlal** also means *to give in marriage*. Marriage is profoundly intimate.

And so we have this blend of the **profound intimacy** with this radical **expression of celebration**.

Some people get off on just the raving — They get off on the decibel level and the production and they think — *“Oh man that was really in the spirit.”* But there was never any intimacy with God. It wasn't something that was born out of intimacy with God.

But — if it's a **sincere response** to who God is and what He has done; if it's **born out of intimacy** with God — that is a divinely ordained, genuine EXPRESSION and POURING OUT unto Him **BECAUSE** God is worth raving about — boasting in — being clamorous.

Nehemiah 12:40–43** So both choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; ⁴¹ and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; ⁴² and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. ⁴³ And they offered great sacrifices that day and **rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

Now, let me ask you this — Have you ever been at a service and had a **hard time hearing** people rejoicing on just the other side of the room?

Some might say — *“Well it is first service. It's kind of a little mellow, a little slow.”*
“You know, we're coming in earlier, we had to get up earlier.”

But that's why it is **CRITICAL** that we do what David did in **Psalm 103**.
We need to get tuned up for worship. NOT *psyched* up – BUT **TUNED** up.

We tune our hearts. *Bless the Lord O my soul... Let all that is within me... Forget not His benefits...* We stir our hearts to think of who He is and what He's done for us.

And **the response** of our hearts to WHO He is and WHAT He has DONE should result in an **EXPRESSION** of worship that engages *ALL that is within me to bless His Holy Name!*

Now can you begin to see that when we read the word PRAISE in our Bibles it does NOT just mean that we're going to have a little time of singing. It is EXPRESSING my praise and love to God in RESPONSE to who He is and what he does. I want to encourage you — you don't have to wait for us to say or sing, "let's lift our hands."

Though we *worship God in spirit* — God has given us arms, and hands, and voices. If they were useless and irrelevant to praise — God would have outfitted us with something else.

May I challenge you in this — When the revelation of God and your experience of Him moves you to rave, have at it! Do it! It's Biblical!

PRAISE is ONE part of the dynamic range of expressing our hearts to the Lord.

NEXT WEEK we will fill out that dynamic range with the elements of WORSHIP and LAMENT.