

The Dynamic Range of Praise, Worship and Lament (Part 2) Psalm 145:1-10; Psalm 95:6; Psalm 13:1-2

THIS MORNING we're taking a second 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.

LAST WEEK we learned that **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*

In **Psalm 145** the Holy Spirit only not inspired David to write this song of declaration and exaltation. He inspired David to inform the people of God and direct the people of God in the way they can EXPRESS their hearts in 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).

I want to encourage you to get the resources from last weeks study.

This morning we are going to look at another way we express the response of our hearts to who God is and what He does: **WORSHIP**

Let's start with this: Praise and Worship have much in common. In both — we're the **givers**, God's the **receiver**. Both are the response of my spirit, mind, will, emotions and body to who God is and what He does.

But there is a difference. And it's not what many in today's Christian culture think it to be.

As we saw last week concerning praise — we have the tendency to interpret this word “Worship” in light of church culture: Most Christians read the word *worship* in their English Bible and think: *slow, serious, contemplative song*.

That is not the dynamic expression the divinely inspired poets and songwriters had in mind — and it's not what the original readers thought when they read it.

They understood it to be about the **manner** of **EXPRESSION** that **reflects** an **ATTITUDE** of heart.

Psalm 95:6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

worship = *shachah* /shaw·**khaw**/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 2360; GK 8817; 172 occurrences; AV translates as “worship” 99 times, “bow” 31 times, “bow down” 18 times, “obedience” nine times, “reverence” five times, “fall down” three times
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Notice the human posture here. The posture is an EXPRESSION of reverence.

Out of reverence — out of wonder and awe over who God is — I'm going to bow down before Him; I'm going to fall flat — I will crouch before Him.

Psalm 22:27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you..

There's our Hebrew word — *“All of the families of the nations shall worship before you.. be prostrate in homage before God, they'll bow down and fall flat before, and do reverence, and worship before Thee.”*

¹ Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Psalm 29:2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; **worship** the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

Psalm 29:2 (CSB) ²Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of **his holiness**.

Whether it is worshipping God in the splendor of the holiness that belongs to us in Jesus (Yesterdays Bible reading)

Ephesians 1:4 (CSB) ⁴For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.

Or if it means worshipping the Lord in the splendor of **HIS** holiness

THE BIG IDEA IS THIS — WORSHIP is the **EXPRESSION** of the heart that says *I'm not worthy to STAND* before you God."

QUESTION — Has that ever been your experience of God? Have you ever been before the Lord EXPRESSING to Him your love and adoration — and perhaps in the moment God is ministering to you things about who He is — and what He has done for you — and you have been so overwhelmed by His nature, and His beauty, and His attributes that you just feel like you **CAN'T** stand — and that you should be kneeling?

I BELIEVE that God can do that in a moment when we are gathered like this. But I also believe that God wants to reveal Himself to us like that in our quiet times with Him; moments spent with Him that involve the intake of His Word AND time to think on His Word — stopping to meditate on what He has to say about Himself and about His works and His ways

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

When the Lord meets you like that — when we're gathered like this or in your time alone with Him — and you just feel like you **CAN'T** stand — you feel that you should be kneeling — **then kneel!** Because it is a **Biblical form of EXPRESSING**

your **reverence** of God. It's should NEVER be a matter of you saying — *“Hey, check me out, I'm kneeling. I'm so spiritual. I bring my own personal kneeler to church, because I have to bow before God all the time.”*

THIS IS IMPORTANT — Sometimes our experience of God does not lead to this response. And again — *going through the motions of kneeling does not qualify as worship. However* — I do believe that God honors the heart of the person who says, *“I don't feel like bowing before You — But I do know that you are God — and you deserve my worship — So I will kneel before you.”*

When it comes from **that** attitude and **that** heart — that's not being hypocritical — that's being honest with God. You're not denying His nature. You're not denying His person. You're not selling Him short of the worship that he deserves because of what you **don't** feel.

Nehemiah 8:6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

In the New Testament — the Greek word translated *worship* is Proskuneo. To turn and face with the intention of kissing.

We started with the dynamic expression of our hearts to the Lord in praise. Now we come to the opposite end of the dynamic range of expressing our hearts to the Lord.

LAMENTATION

What is a song or prayer of lament? It is pouring out our pain, our doubt and our complaint before God.

“Lament is the voice of that pain, whether for oneself, for one's people, or simply for the mountain of suffering of humanity and creation itself. Lament is

the voice of faith struggling to live with unanswered questions and unexplained suffering.”²

QUESTION — Is it wrong to do this? Is it something that real believers shouldn't do? When I read the Bible, I find that God allows a whole lot of doubt, pain and even anger to be expressed.

In his book, *The God I Do Not Understand* Christopher Wright makes this observation

“In the Bible, which we believe is God’s Word, such that what we find in it is what God wished to be there, there is plenty of lament, protest, anger, and baffled questions. The point we should notice (possibly to our surprise) is that it is all hurled at God, not by his enemies but by those who loved and trusted him most.”³

Wright adds —

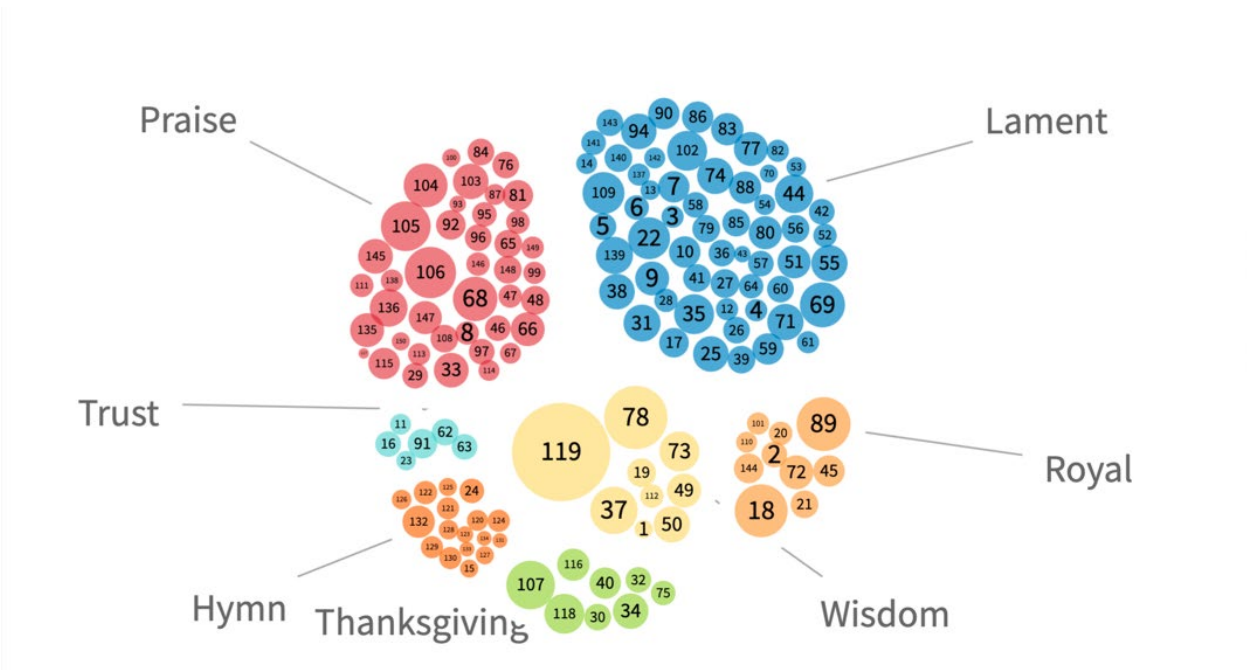
“It seems, indeed, that it is precisely those who have the closest relationship with God who feel most at liberty to pour out their pain and protest to God – without fear of reproach. Lament is not only allowed in the Bible; it is modeled for us in abundance.”⁴

This expression of heart before the Lord occupies a massive chunk of the real estate in the book of Psalms. If you break down the collection of psalms by genres we can see how many of the psalms are, in the~~the~~ir entirety or in part-~~of~~, songs and prayers of **lament. (BLUE)**

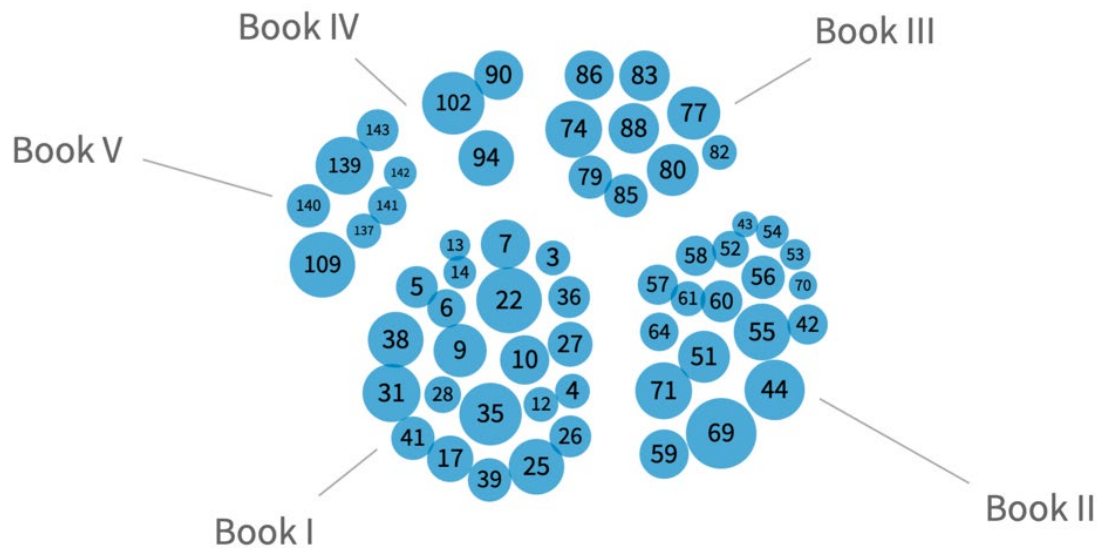
² The God I Don't Understand; Christopher J. H. Wright

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid



The collection of divinely inspired Psalms is divided into five books. Here's another way to graph the amount of real estate lamentation takes up in the psalms. It shows the way songs and prayers of lament are spread out in over the five divisions within the Book of Psalms



Lament is not only allowed in the Bible; it is modeled for us in abundance. Like the songs and prayers of praise and adoration, God invites us to pray and sing the psalms of lament.

QUOTE: Christopher Wright — *God seems to want to give us as many words with which to fill in our complaint forms as to write our thank-you notes. Perhaps this is because whatever amount of lament the world causes us to express is a drop in the ocean compared to the grief in the heart of God himself at the totality of suffering that only God can comprehend.*⁵

Here's what is interesting — or perhaps I should say a bit puzzling, even disconcerting. How is it that the expression of lament and grief can occupy such a significant portion of a book in the Bible devoted to song and prayer but is virtually non-existent in contemporary church culture? How is it that those who had the closest relationship with God in the Old Testament had the most liberty to pour out their pain and protest to God without fear of reproach — while today churches are filled with men and women who profess faith in the same God the

⁵ The God I Don't Understand; Christopher J. H. Wright

psalmists wrote their laments to — and hardly a psalm of lament is sung or prayed.

We live in the same world as the inspired poets and songwriters of the psalms. We encounter the same grief and sorrows that flat out left them confused. Yet the language of lament is seriously neglected in the church. Could it be that Christians feel it can't be right to complain to God in the context of corporate worship? Could it be owing to the fact that a lot of modern church culture thinks that the only way to appeal to the unbelieving world is to try sell a Gospel that only has room for being happy?

Lament is not raising a fist to heaven! Lament is tied to the longing of the psalmist's question: "How long, O Lord, how long?" (Do a search of the phrase "How long" in the psalms!) They were certain that God would do something, but they were consumed with longing that he should do it, sooner rather than later.

Lament is not a stand alone expression of a believer's heart. It's tied to faith and praise and adoration. We have a LIVING HOPE because of the resurrection of Jesus! The resurrection of Jesus guarantees the ultimate victory of God! Evil will be ultimately and finally defeated — death will be swallowed up by life — there will be no more tears — and lamentation will be no more."

CLOSE

I pray that as a result of these today and last Sunday we would really **evaluate the WHY** of **our EXPRESSION** of praise, worship and our lamentation.

I pray that we will allow the Holy Spirit to set these matters of the heart straight so that individually and corporately we will express what is in our heart to the Lord with the dynamic range of expression found in the Word of God.

Ask God to deal with any **personal inhibitions** that have been keeping you from EXPRESSING praise, worship and lamentation in a way defined in Scripture. As **you EXPRESS** praise and worship and even lamentation to God in a Biblical way the men and women around you will see the reality and the beauty of knowing the true and living God.