



Psalm 123 - Your Theology will determine your Doxology

I had a conversation with David my 4 year old this past week about super heroes like Hulk and Spiderman. He paused in his thoughts and asked me if Jesus could lift a house. I told him, Jesus can create a house with just his words, so lifting a house is no difficulty to him what-so-ever. David replied, "Jesus is strong."

That conversation is the beginning of David's development of his theology, David is beginning to understand how big God is.

INTRODUCTION:

THE PSALMS are loved because they connect with our EMOTIONS, OUR FEELINGS they connect with our soul. The psalms connect with our pathos. We can empathize with the psalter and FEEL WHAT HE FELT as he wrote.

THE PSALMS ARE SONGS, they are prayers and they are THE WORD OF GOD. Sometimes we may be tempted to view the Psalms as "add-ons" to the word of God. We love the parables of Jesus, the doctrine of Paul and the excitement in the stories of our Old Testament heroes. But

the Psalms we limit as being great encouraging songs. We think of them as on Old Testament Hymnal and forget that they are not any lesser inspired than the rest of the Bible.

In fact only Isaiah is quoted more times in the New Testament than the Psalms. The Psalms are great for encouragement and devotion, but they also teach US DOCTRINE AND THEOLOGY. The BIBLE SAYS in 2 Timothy 3:16, “ALL SCRIPTURE is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” That includes the Psalms.

Psalm 123 is very short only 4 verse long. But in these four verses is found great emotion and GREAT THEOLOGY. It is a song, it is also a prayer. A prayer to the sovereign God.

It is part of a group of psalms we have been looking at in this series called the Psalms of Ascent. The songs sang by pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem to worship the Lord God. We too are Pilgrims traveling through this life on our way to the New Jerusalem to worship our Lord and Savior, the Lord our God.

Psalm 123 is the 4th Psalm of Ascent.

Psalm 120 – is declarative in that announces that our help comes from the Lord.

Psalm 121 – Looks to the Hills from far away, it looks to the hills where Jerusalem is located, pleading to God for Help

Psalm 122 – Looks to Jerusalem where the presence of God is, while still far off.

Psalm 123 – Looks to Heaven, Looks to God much closer and in the presence of God.

This Psalm is broken into 3 parts with Verse 4 establishing the setting or the occurrence for which the Psalm is written.

V1. – Lifted eyes to God

V2. – Dependence upon God

V3- Crying for mercy

V4. The Setting.

Luther said that this Psalm in its brevity demonstrates that Prayer does not have to be long-winded to be heard or to be meaningful. It only needs to be fervent. This prayer is honest and to the point.

We have been going through this series in the Psalms of Ascent and we have been focusing on CULTIVATING A HEART OF WORSHIP. The only way we can properly worship God is with a proper theology.

Let's look at the the Text:

Psalm 123

Subtitle: Song of Ascent

To you I lift up my eyes,
O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

Behold, as the eyes of servants
look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maidservant
to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
till he has mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us,
for we have had more than enough of contempt.

Our soul has had more than enough
of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the contempt of the proud.

The setting for this Psalm is suffering from Contempt of the proud and the scoffing of those who are at ease, **THOSE WHO LIVE LIVE IN COMFORT..** This contempt is the occasion for which the Psalm is written.

The Psalmist says We ARE **GREATLY** FILLED WITH CONTEMPT. The Psalmist is so **TIRED** of the CONTEMPT from the people around him.

1. Contempt is the feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving scorn.
2. Scoffing is to speak to someone or about something in a scornfully derisive or mocking way.
Synonyms: mock, deride, ridicule, sneer at, taunt, make fun of, poke fun at, laugh at, scorn, dismiss, make light of OR belittle

The Psalmist writes:

Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us,
for we have had more than enough of contempt.

Our soul has had more than enough
of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the contempt of the proud.

I think I can safely say that I we are all familiar with contempt and scoffing.

AND It is something we should expect, 2 Peter 1:2-4 says, “you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

But really the world has always hated God’s people, because it hates God.

We are not sure who the author of this Psalm is, but we know he wrote this Psalm while suffering from the contempt of others. Perhaps it was written during the time of Nehemiah when Israel's neighbors scoffed and mocked the builders as they re-built the walls of Jerusalem.

Maybe the worst example of contempt in modern history that we can all recognize is the contempt the Nazis had for the Jews. To be contemptuous is to disregard someone to the point they are dehumanized. HOW MUCH CONTEMPT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE YOU TIRED OF IT? We do not suffering physical attack or face starvation like Christian around the world, but we do have to deal with contempt and scoffing. It seems like every movie producer goes out of his way to make Christians look ignorant, hypocritical, and evil. Sometimes I just get tired of hearing it. On social media and in the news, Christians are always reported in a poor light. Meanwhile in much of the world, Christians are killed, robbed, injured and maligned and the media is silent. Our Christian BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST ARE SUFFERING AROUND THE WORLD, and the root of the persecution that they suffer is contempt. They are thought of as worthless, inhuman, and disdained.

Are YOU tired of it?

HOW DO WE HANDLE IT? What do we do with it? How did the Psalmist handle it?

He handled his suffering by seeking mercy from the Lord God. His THEOLOGY LED HIM TO TRUST GOD with his suffering.

HIS THEOLOGY PROVIDED HIM WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING.

PART 1 – LOOK TO GOD

To you I lift up my eyes,
O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

Our God is enthroned in the Heavens, it is to Him that we look. Our God is beyond us. He is greater than us. He is greater than we can imagine or conceive.

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! OUR GOD REIGNS FROM HEAVEN.

Who is like our God???? To whom can God be compared? He is unique, HOLY, separate from all of creation and WORTHY OF ALL OUR PRAISE!

Our praise of god begins not with our mouth, BUT WITH OUR EYES! The Psalter says I lift up my eyes to you. Before he says a word he looks up to the Heavens where God is enthroned. God is omnipresent, he is everywhere that is true. BUT Heaven is where God's glory is centralized, Heaven is where God reigns supreme and His glory is revealed. Our praise begins with our eyes. We look to him in praise. To look up to God is to acknowledge his sovereignty, His authority, His Kingship. We honor Him as LORD.

I want to give you a phrase, CORAM DEO. It is Latin. The beauty of Latin is found in its ability to express big ideas with few words. CORAM DEO.

This phrase literally refers to something that takes place in the presence of, or before the face of, God. To live "Coram Deo" is to live one's entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God. It is to acknowledge his sovereignty.

Living under divine sovereignty involves more than a reluctant submission to sheer sovereignty that is motivated out of a fear of punishment. It involves recognizing that there is no higher goal than offering honor to God. Our lives are to be living sacrifices, offered in a spirit of adoration and gratitude.

CORAM DEO, means that we live in the presence of God all the time.

Christians have bought into the lie that we live two lives: The sacred AND the secular. But that is a LIE! Christians are called to live SACRED lives all the time. Henry and I were talking this past week about the fact that Christians do not have a day off. We don't have our time and God's time. It is all God's time. If you are a school teacher or A STUDENT, if you FLIP BURGERS or FILL CAVITIES, we as Christians are called TO DO EVERYTHING... TO THE GLORY OF GOD. YOUR PROFESSION DOES NOT DETERMINE YOUR CALL TO HOLINESS. The MISSIONARY, the pastor, and the Music minister are no more called to HOLINESS and holy living than the "secular" professions.

The Bible says, "O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.

Look at your neighbor and say “CORAM DEO.”

We are called to acknowledge that we live continually in the presence of God and the Presence of God lives in US.

Many people today tell us that we need more sermons about REAL LIFE, NOT THEOLOGY. People say, we need sermons about how to deal with our families, how to handle the suicide crisis, how to gain financial independence. People care about immigration, and the political crisis. Give us a message about our self-esteem, and how to be the best version of ourselves that we can be.

“You know, we want sermons about “how to have a successful family, a successful business, a successful retirement, How to be healthy, wealthy and happy.” REAL LIFE! That is what WE want hear. Keep your Theology for the seminary students and death bed conversations.

I visited Oneplace.com to checkout some of the latest sermon titles, here is some from the list.

Loyalty in Friendship, Confronting conflict, Overcoming differences in a blended family, Step Grand-parenting, God’s RV?, Prime time occult Invasion, God thinks like we do, Your faith has made you well, Culture shock, Doing life with Deb, Single parenting, Freedom from Negativity, How Great is your reward, an encouraging word about finances.

It seems like many of the people preaching sermons these days agree with this statement. BUT I SAY THAT THEOLOGY IS REAL LIFE. YOUR THEOLOGY will determine every aspect of YOUR.... LIFE.

Your Theology will determine your doxology.

Let me say it again, “Your Theology will determine your doxology.” Theology is your view of God and doxology is your praise of God. So what you believe about God, will be evident in your praise of God.

Today’s message can be distilled down one sentence.

“YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR DOXOLOGY.” Look at your neighbor and say, “Your THEOLOGY....WILL DETERMINE YOU DOXOLOGY.”

Your Theology, is your understanding of God. Everyone has a theology. If you have a high view of God, every aspect of your life will reflect that view. Adversely, if you have a low view of God, that too will be reflected in your life.

Your Theology will determine your philosophy. Your philosophy will be evident in your thoughts, your logos, and your logic. The way you interpret the world around you is by your philosophy.

If you have a high view of God, you will praise God in all that you do. If you have a proper view of God your DOXOLOGY will reveal your love for HIM.

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR ANTHROPOLOGY. Your THEOLOGY will determine your PSYCHOLOGY, YOUR ego, your self-image, your self-value. Your identity will either be Theocentric or anthrocentric. A proper view of God establishes the purpose of your life. YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE how you understand the fallen human condition.

The Westminster Confession, ASKS - What is the chief end of man? **Man's chief end** is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. That is a Theocentric, God-centered view of man, based upon a proper Theology.

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR SOCIOLOGY, Your Theology will determine your ethics and determine how you treat other people. YOUR THEOLOGY is demonstrated by your love for others, or your indifference.

Your THEOLOGY will determine your MORALS your actions, and determine who is Lord of your life.

YOUR THEOLGY will determine your PATHOS that is your feelings and emotions. Your Theology determines your Love for God, which directs your love for others.

Your Theology will determine how you celebrate success. Will you praise yourself or recognize God's activity in your life?

AND YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE HOW YOU HANDLE ADVERSITY.....CONTEMPT AND SCOFFING.

YOUR THEOLGY will determine how you approach the Word of God. Does it have power and authority in your life, or is it a book of helpful hints and subtle inspiration?

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE HOW YOU PRAY.

When we look up to God and pray do we expect the Sovereign God of the Universe to intervene in our lives, to express His Diving authority...or do we just “wish” things into the air?

THEOLOGY IS The Study of God. BUT IT is NOT the Study of Religion. What’s the difference?

THEOLOGY IS GOD CENTERED. It is the study of the nature and attributes of God. It studies how God relates to Man and His Creation. Theology studies what God does and WHO HE IS.

The study of Religion is man centered. It studies how man attempts to please God, though religious activity.

But MOST IMPORTANT YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR DOXOLOGY.

We were created for the purpose of praising God – WE WERE CREATED FOR DOXOLOGY.

Your Theology is not what you say, but YOUR TRUE THEOLOGY... IS REVEALED... IN HOW YOU LIVE.

PART 2 – DEPENDENCE UPON GOD

Behold, as the eyes of servants
look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maidservant
to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
till he has mercy upon us.

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR DEPENDENCE

The American Culture praises independence. The self-made millionaire or now Billionaire, rags to riches, self-reliant Man is our cultural icon. We love stories about Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. We love stories about the independent, self-reliant adventurers of Early American exploration. How they survived the elements and cut a path for others to follow. People like Daniel Boone, Davie Crockett, and Kit Carson. This American spirit of Independence is revealed in — **Ralph Waldo Emerson’s phrase:**

*Do not go where the path may lead;
go instead where there is no path
and leave a trail.*

But instead of independence, we are called to complete dependence upon God. The Psalmist compares us to servants, slaves, dependent upon the hand of the master for every need.

Does it offend you to be called a servant or a slave?

Does dependence offend you?

The American dream is to live in absolute comfort purchased by the work of our own hand, reliant upon no one. But those ideas are contrary to the Word of God.

We were created to serve the ONE TRUE GOD, but when we fail to do so, we are deceived into believing that we serve ourselves or no god at all.

When Eve was tempted to improve her condition, independent of God's law, she may have believed she was serving herself, but she was actually serving the purposes of Satan and lead herself into death.

YOUR THEOLGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR SERVICE, YOUR ATTITUDES AND YOUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

We often think of the healthy, strong, servant meeting the needs of his master. But in this case consider the story of **Mephibosheth**, the son of Jonathan, grandson of King Saul. Mephibosheth was crippled since childhood.

2 Samuel 4

Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *who was* lame in *his* feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name *was* Mephibosheth.

2 Samuel 9

And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar." Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar. And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I AM YOUR SERVANT." And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always." And he paid homage and said, "What is your SERVANT, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"

David wanted to show kindness to Johnathan's only surviving son because of His LOVE for Jonathan. Mephibosheth had nothing to offer David, Yet David poured blessings upon him.

Our God needs nothing and there is nothing we can contribute to God. But God in HIS LOVE, lavishly pours out blessings upon us.

We are HIS SERVANTS.

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR BLESSINGS

Did you catch that.....YOUR THEOLOGY DETERMINS YOUR SERVICE, YOUR ATTITUDE, AND YOUR DEPENDENCE.

Consequently, we are BLESSED by a right THEOLOGY.

PART 3 – CRY FOR MERCY

Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us,

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR PRAYERS

YOUR THEOLGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR DESTINEY

The Psalmist CRIED out for Mercy. Depending upon your translation you will see the word Mercy or you will see grace. We often make a distinction between the two in English, but in the Hebrew they are the same word. CHEN.

And we need both. We need Mercy and Grace.

Notice the Psalmist did not PRAY AGAINST the proud AND arrogant, AGAINST those in comfort. He only cries out for MERCY.

He cried out LORD SHOW US MERCY or be gracious to us. The fact that these evil people hold the Psalmist in Contempt and scoff HURTS, let's acknowledge the hurt. Let's be real, but the Psalmist knew that God is sovereign and nothing COULD ENTER his life outside the will and permission of God. Ultimately we all need mercy and grace.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The mocking, the scoffing and contempt of the world are of little consequence. We serve a Great God, who has blessed us with every blessing in the heavenly realms. And we are saved by HIS MERCY AND GRACE ALONE.

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR DESTINEY.

We thank God for his grace and mercy, We praise God FOR WHO HE IS.

YOUR THEOLOGY WILL DETERMINE YOUR DOXOLOGY.

Before we close we are going to pray for Mercy together as a church remembering those Christian brothers and sisters who suffer far more contempt than we can imagine. The Bible says that as one member of the body suffers we all suffer. Let us cry out for mercy for them and for ourselves.

Responsive Reading:

Let us Praise the Lord with Song! (Our God is Greater)

BENEDICTION

I don't know your struggle this morning, but is your God BIG ENOUGH to handle it? CAN YOUR JESUS LIFT A HOUSE? IS YOUR JESUS STRONG? IS HE ABLE?

DOES YOUR THEOLOGY give you the understanding that God's goodness and His sovereignty work together to divinely coordinate every event in your life to bring about your good? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?

So many people live their lives praying a little, planning a little, try to manipulate things to work out, but always being afraid that they have missed some blessing from God, missed out on His divine plan, secretly doubting if they are meeting God's expectations. WHAT A TRAGIC WASTE!

DOES YOUR THEOLOGY give you the freedom, the faith and the confidence that God has made himself responsible to govern every aspect of your life to ensure our eternal happiness, and to work out all things for OUR GOOD? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?

I want to pray for you, this congregation, the prayer of Paul for the Ephesians found in Ephesians 3:16-21.

I pray that out of his glorious riches THAT GOD may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how WIDE AND LONG AND HIGH AND DEEP IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR YOU, and to know THIS LOVE THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE—that you may be filled TO WITH THE fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all WE ASK OR IMAGINE, according to HIS POWER that is at work within us, TO HIM be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

Responsive reading.

Reader: Lord we confess that we need your Mercy

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Father God, we remember our brother and sisters who suffer persecution, and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Lord God, we ask you to demonstrate your greatness in the lives of the Christians suffering in Nigeria and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Heavenly Father we humbly approach your throne and we ask you glorify your name in the lives of the suffering church in China and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Lord our God we ask you for your name's sake to strengthen and encourage our brother and sisters in Iraq, Iran and Syria and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Our Father in Heaven we seek you, we look to you and ask that you accomplish your will in the lives of the persecuted church in Kenya and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Lord Jesus our Master and Savior we recognize your love for us and ask that you act on behalf of your church in Sudan and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Father God we ask that you demonstrate your power and authority in Turkey on behalf of your church and we cry out

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us.

Reader: Heavenly Father we pray for those who suffer because of their Christian witness and ask

Congregation: Lord, Have mercy on us. Lord God we thank you for your Mercy