

## Psalm 111 - Searching God

### 1. Praise God, anyway.

Ps 111:1 Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

In the middle of hard times, we need to step back from the doubts, fears, anxiousness, and uncertainty and do what we must always do: praise the Lord. We have to ask, "When can it be said that we are not in the middle of hard times?"

Job 5:6-7 Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;  
7Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

Job was pointing out that just as corn doesn't appear without first planting a seed in the dust and the ground, affliction is often caused by the seed we plant in our lives. But he also points out, in vs. 7, that man is *born* unto trouble just as surely as the sparks from a fire fly upward...and may I point out that there are seeds of fiery trouble all around us.

Hab 3:17-19 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls:  
18Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
19The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

We are to praise God *anyway*. The last part of the Psalm will explain why later on, but for now, we have to make sure that we don't neglect the foundation of our duty which is to praise God. We cannot be half-hearted about this. We have to unreservedly place our confidence in Him. We must keep Him not only as our primary concern, but our *only* concern. This doesn't mean to ignore the world around us, but to keep it in perspective. Everything that we are witnessing should not be the most important thing.

It should be our joy to assemble together to join in praise to God. When Moses approached Pharaoh, God gave Pharaoh the opportunity to ease into what was to come. Moses did not demand that Israel be able to leave Egypt once and for all.

Exod 5:1-3 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

3And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

They could have praised God without going anywhere, but that is not the point. At the heart of the great work that God would perform in Israel was the simple command to separate from the world and gather to praise God.

Have you overcome sickness? Praise God. Are you sick? Praise God. Did you get a job? Praise God. Did you lose a fortune? Praise God. Did you overcome temptation? Praise God. Did you fall into sin? *Repent* and praise God. Did your candidate win? Praise God. Did your candidate lose? Praise God.

## 2. Search God.

How can we learn to praise God?

Ps 111:2-3 The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

The answer is, "Search God." I don't say, "Search *for* God." God is not far from us. If you *tried* to get away from God, you couldn't do it.

Ps 139:7-11 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.

9*If* I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Psalms 111 reads, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out..." It doesn't say that we are supposed to search *for* the works of God, but that the works are *sought out*. There is a particular way to understand this. It refers to how we examine, as if under a microscope, the

inner workings of God's work to understand thoroughly what He is doing.

The idea that God's ways are searchable provided the Christian influence that formed the foundation of modern science in the west. Before that, the eastern notion of God was that He was capricious; there was no sense in trying to understand nature. Everything that occurred in nature was based on the whims of a the gods who were fickle. If some god felt like blessing one day, he might change his mind the next just for his amusement. This also was reflected in Islam which allowed for a god to change his rules and was not very personal and knowable. It's not that there was absolutely *no* science throughout the history of man, but that the idea of an unchangeable God who was able to be known and understood drove the great scientific discoveries of our modern times. The reasons behind the rules of nature did not change.

Jas 1:16-17 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

This is not to say that we will discover *all* there is about God

Rom 11:33-34 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

However, as we search Him out and examine Him, there will be so much to amaze us. Nature is typically the first place to start. Not only is the Grand Canyon amazing, but chemistry and why the formation of life absolutely had to be from God. Studying God's hand in history is fascinating. Understanding the heart of man according to God's Word is a revelation.

Jer 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Who will find Him? The upright in the congregation. Not everyone who attends church is necessarily in tune with God. His work will be found by those who "have pleasure therein." Those who are the upright find joy in searching out His works. They look forward to the opportunities of knowing Him. Is the return of Christ afar off still? Get to work, and praise God. Is the return of the Lord coming soon? Get to work, and praise God.

Matt 5:6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Some people will not be so impressed with this concept because they are interlopers on the premises, not standing on the promises.

Matt 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Then there are those who are the scoffers.

Rom 3:10-18 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

They are shallow and rebellious. Impressed by their own arrogance, they are spiritually and intellectually blind and deaf. They are self deceived and assume that there is nothing to find. If shown anything, they let their questions and doubts make them proof against God and giddily go on their way, pleased with how they vanquished Him and made mockery of His servants.

As thoroughly as I try to paint this picture, there are always those who feel safe that they are not part of that ungodly crowd, but they might as well be because they are just as unwilling to search out God. Both the ungodly and the casual Christians are to be pitied, because in the day of judgment, and I mean in the difficult days ahead, not the final judgment, there will be so much loss.

Prov 1:24-31 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

An interesting aspect of this Psalm is that is laid out by the Hebrew alphabet. Each half verse begins with one of the letters of the alphabet. You might say that praising God is as easy as ABC. It reminds me of the boy who knelt down to say his prayers and recited the alphabet at the end. When he was asked what he was doing, he expressed his great confidence in God. He knew that he couldn't cover everything but that God could take the letters and form all the other things he might have missed. There are things that we will miss in praising God, but it is our delight to search Him out.

Ps 111:4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

### 3. The works of God.

Ps 111:7-9 The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment; all his commandments *are* sure.

8They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness.

9He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name.

Look at vs. 8, first. God's works stand fast for ever and ever. They are founded on truth and righteousness, not whim and caprice. When we consider the infinitely strong foundation of our faith, we know that is because of our infinitely strong God.

Ps 121:1-8 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence

cometh my help.

2My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

3He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5The LORD *is* thy keeper: the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand.

6The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

7The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

God's works are verity and judgment and His commandments are rock solid (vs. 7). The world makes up its talking points and you can never be quite sure of whether they are sincere or just ways to manipulate. When God speaks, it is in truth and righteousness.

The specific work of God is redemption (vs.9) that will extend to the heathen.

Ps 111:6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

Are you seeking wisdom on how to thrive and not just cope? Praise God and search Him out.

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.

1. Praise God, anyway. Ps 111:1, Job 5:6-7, Hab 3:17-19, Exod 5:1-3
2. Search God. Ps 111:2-3, 139:7-11, Jas 1:16-17, Rom 11:33-34, Jer 29:13, Matt 5:6, 7:21-23, Rom 3:10-18, Prov 1:24-31, Ps 111:4
3. The works of God. Ps 111:7-9, 121:1-8, 111:6, 111:10