**March 26, 2023 Psalm 145:1-21**

***Faithful***

**Scripture:** *Psalms 145:1-21 NRSV*

*(1)I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. (2)Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever. (3)Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. (4)One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. (5)On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. (6)The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness. (7)They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness, and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. (8)The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (9)The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. (10)All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you. (11)They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, (12)to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. (13)Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds. (14)The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. (15)The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. (16)You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. (17)The LORD is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. (18)The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. (19)He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them. (20)The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. (21)My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.*

**Notes:**

1. It is important to understand who God is and His ***faithfulness***.
   1. We are able to confront sin with ***honesty***.
   2. We’re able to fast because we trust that God is a ***faithful***.
   3. We are able to ***repent***.
2. Psalm145 reminds of the ***greatness*** and ***goodness*** of God,
   1. The overarching theme of this psalm is ***praise***.
   2. Words translated “praise” point toward ***glorifying*** God.
   3. The psalm emphasizes that God is “worthy of ***praise***,”
3. Former ***generations*** tell the current ***generation*** of God’s acts.
   1. They tell of God’s splendor, goodness and ***righteousness***.
   2. We ***recall*** our great stories of the past to ***remind*** ourselves of God’s goodness and faithfulness.
4. So what are the ***Qualities*** of God
   1. The Lord is ***trustworthy*** and ***faithful***.
   2. God cares for the downtrodden and ***hungry***.
   3. The Lord is ***righteous***.
5. We are invited to have ***intimacy*** with God
   1. God hears, draws near, and watches over who ***love*** Him.
   2. God is faithful and has ***proved*** faithful many times.
   3. God is good, loving, and longs to ***connect*** with creation.
6. God has a history of ***providing*** for those who need.
   1. God’s qualities are to be demonstrated ***through*** and ***by*** the people of God.
   2. **Remember** the stories of God’s faithfulness.
   3. Be reminded of who God is and who we are ***called*** to be.
   4. ***Worship*** a God who is faithful and worthy of praise.

**Script:**

Jan and I were speaking this past week; Jan suggested a way to celebrate our 30th anniversary next year. And it made me start to think. That for more than thirty years Jan has been by my side ever faithful. We have rarely spent more than a few days apart at any one time and even when we were apart, we would always touch base with each other by telephone before bed. Now that is what a true relationship is all about; faithfulness. So, I felt I needed to look up the definition of faithful and this is what it said; being loyal to your spouse, or being loyal to somebody in which you have a close relationship, is characterized by steadfast affection and allegiance, a commitment.

We all have relationships here in this place; some to our spouses, some to our families, some to our friends. We all share an intimacy with somebody else and in that intimacy, there is a certain level of faithfulness; affection, allegiance, and commitment

But my hope is we all have a relationship with Jesus this morning. A relationship that will span all time and lead us into his presence when life here on this earth is through. Today in our passage we look to the psalms and we read of a relationship, a relationship between the writer and his creator, a relationship between the creator and his creation, and in this psalm we read words that speak of our God’s faithfulness to each of us. Join me in the reading of our passage found in Psalm 145

*Psalms 145:1-21 NRSV (1)I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. (2)Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever. (3)Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. (4)One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. (5)On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. (6)The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness. (7)They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness, and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. (8)The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (9)The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. (10)All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you. (11)They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, (12)to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. (13)Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds. (14)The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. (15)The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. (16)You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. (17)The LORD is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. (18)The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. (19)He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them. (20)The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. (21)My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.*

Today’s text almost feels odd. After weeks of confronting our sin, how do we approach a psalm that is loaded with words of exultation, praise, and worship? How do we interact in the fifth week of Lent with something that sounds so upbeat and joyful?

Despite the focus of so much of Lent being on somber topics, it is still important to understand who God is and the faithfulness of God in the midst of it all. We are able to confront sin with honesty precisely because we know God is faithful and merciful, so even the worst of sins don’t need to be hidden. We are able to fast because we trust that God is a faithful provider. We are able to repent, but we must remember that repentance isn’t just about what we are turning away from but also whom we are turning toward: a God who loves us.

When we remember that, Psalm145 becomes an important text for us as we near the end of Lent. It serves as a reminder of the greatness and goodness of God, even here in the midst of our confessions, in the midst of our laments, in the midst of our repentance.

A Psalm of Praise The overarching theme of this psalm is praise, a word used frequently throughout the psalm. Some of the words translated as “praise” can also mean “worship” or “bless,” but they all point toward the same idea: glorifying God.

Repeatedly we see the psalm emphasizing that God is “worthy of praise,” followed by elaborations on what that means. Former generations tell the current generation of the praiseworthy acts of the past Acts that illustrate God’s splendor and majesty, they tell of God’s power and great deeds, and testify to God’s abundant goodness and righteousness. Recalling the mighty acts of God in the past should bring to mind for listeners those around them who continue to declare the faithfulness of God. Because we no longer live in an oral tradition, we sometimes miss the power of declarations like this. We can think of it like family lore. Most families have legendary stories they pass down through the generations, and even though younger generations weren’t there for those stories or can’t remember them happening, they know the stories by heart because of how many times they’ve heard them. The same is true for faith traditions. We recall our great stories of the past So we may remind ourselves of God’s goodness and faithfulness to God’s people.

The psalmist then goes on to describe qualities of God and how creation declares the greatness of God. This is a theme throughout Scripture that extends into the New Testament and beyond, into church history. In Luke 19:40 Jesus declares that even “the stones will cry out.” Paul writes in Romans 1:20 that creation reveals the qualities of God. We sing hymns like “All Creatures of our God and King” and “How Great Thou Art.” Church fathers and mothers have talked about the importance of creation pointing toward God. The faithful people of God declare the glory of God not just in the past but also in the present.

So what are the Qualities of God

* The Lord is trustworthy and faithful (vv. 13, 17): God does not fail us, and God will not act outside of God’s character.
* God cares for the downtrodden and hungry (vv. 14–16): God cares in particular for the oppressed and needy. God feeds the hungry and uplifts those who are brought low. The prophets and Jesus all repeatedly speak of and demonstrate God’s care for the poor.
* The Lord is righteous (vv. 7, 17): This doesn’t mean self-righteous but doing the right things with the right motives. The way God acts toward creation is always right.
* The Lord is near, the Lord hears, and the Lord watches over those who love and fear God (vv. 18–20): Like with the downtrodden, God is close to the brokenhearted and those who have needs, which can also remind us of a just and righteous God who cares deeply for those who have been wronged and for the people of God.

We are invited to have intimacy with God. The reason we can confess, repent, and fast during Lent is due to these qualities of God! It would be pointless for us to confess and repent before a God who doesn’t hear us. But this psalm testifies that God hears, God draws near, and God watches over those who love God. It is pointless for us to confess and repent before a God who never follows through. But this psalm testifies that God is faithful and has proved faithfulness many times over. It would be pointless for us to pursue a relationship with God if God wanted nothing to do with us. But this psalm repeatedly testifies that God is good, God is loving, and God longs to connect with creation. We are able to go before God in confidence that God is worthy of praise and honor.

Fasting during Lent illustrates again that God is faithful, we can trust we will be cared for because God has a history of providing for those who need. Historically, the money saved by fasting was given to the poor, which demonstrates two things: God and God’s kingdom are just, and God seeks to work in the world *through* God’s people.

The qualities of God are supposed to be demonstrated in the world Demonstrated through and by the people of God. When we reflect the characteristics of God to the world, we reflect God to the world: faithfulness, justice, righteousness, listening, seeing needs, meeting needs, watching out for others. Fasting, confession, and repentance are all ways that we draw closer to God in order to be formed more like Christ.

Psalm 145 is a reminder that there is deep praise and worship in the midst of a somber and reflective and repentant season. God is faithful, even when we aren’t. God hears us when we cry out, God draws near to us in our deepest needs, and God sees us where we are. God is a God of compassion, justice, and righteousness. Even in the midst of our brokenness and sin, we are reminded of a God who is good and worthy of praise. We are reminded of a creation that tells of the glory of God. We remember the stories of God’s faithfulness throughout the generations and trust that God is faithful to us even now.

We take time, in the sackcloth-and-ashes season, to be reminded of who God is and who we are being called to be. These acts of repentance and fasting aren’t in vain; instead, they help form us to reflect God more. We celebrate, we sing, we are upbeat because we don’t mourn, confess, lament, or repent as those without hope but as those who serve a God of wonder and love. We worship a God who is faithful and worthy of praise.