



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

**Sermon for Pentecost 11**

August 4, 2024

# The Eyes of All

## Psalm 145:10–21

<sup>10</sup> All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! <sup>11</sup> They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, <sup>12</sup> to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. <sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works. <sup>14</sup> The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. <sup>15</sup> The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. <sup>16</sup> You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. <sup>17</sup> The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. <sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. <sup>19</sup> He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. <sup>20</sup> The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

<sup>21</sup> My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Today's Psalm, which you sang a few minutes ago, speaks of giving thanks to God. The practice of singing praises to God has a great history throughout the Old Testament. Moses leads the people in a song of praise after the Lord delivered them from the hand of the Egyptians through the waters of the Red Sea. The Children of Israel sang praises to God when He provided water in the desert (Num. 21). Moses teaches the Children of Israel a song of praise in Deuteronomy 32, as the Lord was getting ready to take him to Himself. Deborah and Barak sang a song of praise to God after a particularly difficult battle against the Canaanites in Judges 5. The Psalms are rife with songs of praise; you could almost say that's what the book of Psalms is: A collection of songs praising God for one thing or another. Simply stated, the pages of Scripture are filled with God's people praising Him for His wonderful works.

Of course, not all people praise God, do they. Not even all the Children of Israel joined in the praises of their people. The whole congregation of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in today's Old Testament. Dathan, Korah, Abiram, and others rose up against them in Numbers 16. Even Aaron, Moses' own brother and partner in God's work of delivery, joined their sister Miriam in rebellion in Numbers 12.

Over and over again throughout the history of God's people, many rebelled, going their own way, sometimes even killing the prophets God had sent to them. And look what they



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did to God's own Son. It wasn't the Romans who spearheaded that effort. Remember, Pilate wanted to spare Jesus, but the religious leaders wouldn't hear of it; they demanded that Jesus be put to death by crucifixion.

So, who *does* give thanks to the Lord? David, our psalmist, expresses this two ways. First, he says, "All your *works* shall give thanks to you, O LORD." Now, how does a *work* give thanks to God? Well, what are the *works* of God? Things He does, things He makes. Like what? Trees, mountains, and so on. Have you ever seen trees kneeling down in thanks to God? No . . . and yet, Isaiah informs us that the trees of the field "clap their hands." Have you ever heard a mountain or a hill breaking into song? Yet the prophet says that they do. Some have insisted that this is nothing more than an anthropomorphism – assigning human qualities or behaviors to inanimate objects – but I think it's more likely a problem with our perception. Just because we don't see or hear something doesn't mean it doesn't happen. It may be happening in ways that are beyond our ability to perceive.

David also says that the *saints of God* bless Him. Now, saints, too, are works of God, are they not? And these saints are works of God in two ways: First of all, they have been created by Him. You would never exist if God hadn't used human biology in His work of procreation. But, as a *saint*, you are a work of God, because, by the power of His Spirit, He has gifted you with redeeming faith, faith that trusts in Jesus, clinging to His work of salvation at the cross and the empty tomb.

So, understanding this – that the very trees and mountains praise God, as do also those who have been saved by His mercy and grace – we can agree with the words of Psalm 69, that the heavens and the earth, the seas, and everything in them, give praise to God.

Mind you, it doesn't say that you *must* speak praises; it says you *will*, and indeed you do.

But, to whom? To whom do the saints of God speak the praises of God? "They make known to the children of man your mighty deeds," David says. So, who are the children of man? You are, so the saints of God speak the praises of God, first of all, to each other. When do we do this? Well, you're doing it now, in the divine service. That's part of the point of being here, to be together in the house of God to declare together the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

Of course, this isn't the only place we do this. Presumably, most of you reside among other people, so they, whether members of your family, or co-residents where you live, are also those to whom you speak the praises of God. How much better would our family time be if we spent more time praising God than criticizing one another? It's appalling sometimes to hear how believing Christians, who are called to love their Lord and one another, speak to each other. "From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My



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brothers,” writes St. James, “these things ought not to be so” (Jam. 3:10). No, you are called to give thanks to God before your neighbor, not to curse your neighbor before God.

But, what are you giving thanks to God for? David says, “For your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.”

What’s so great about God’s kingdom? David calls it an everlasting kingdom, that, “[his] dominion endures throughout all generations.” This world has known many powerful kingdoms, but they all eventually pass away. The Children of Israel were captured by the Assyrians, but the Assyrians fell to the Babylonians, who fell to the Persians. The dynasties of China gave way one to another. The same could be said of the history of South and Central America, of Europe and Russia. What became of Alexander the Great and Napoleon and the great houses of England? They have all been temporary.

How patient Nature smiles at Fame!  
The weeds, that strewed the victor's way,  
Feed on his dust to shroud his name,  
Green where his proudest towers decay.  
(From "A Roman Aqueduct" by Oliver Wendell Holmes)

Even the great Roman Empire has been outlived by its own public works. Only the kingdom of God lasts and will outlast every other kingdom that human beings could invent.

Why is the kingdom of God so enduring? Because its King is enduring. He is everlasting. His dominion endures forever because *He* endures forever. And it’s a good thing He does, because of the other things He is. He is eternal, this is true. But, remember, David doesn’t just commend God for His longevity. He’s not just great because of His staying power. He is also faithful and kind in all His words and works. What good would an eternal despot be? You see, our joy is not just based on the reality that God goes on forever. If He were forever wicked or harsh or deceitful, what good would that be? If He were eternally unfaithful, uncaring, focused on His own interests to the exclusion of everyone else’s – in other words, if He were eternally like us, why would we ever praise Him? But He is not like us, He is faithful and caring and loving and giving – everything that we may be for a moment, but then that moment passes. God is good, all the time. He is faithful and dependable all the time. He upholds those who are falling, He raises up those bowed down. He satisfies the needs of every living thing, righteous in all His words and works. And He’s not far away, as popular sentiment suggests; He is near. When you call on Him, He hears you. When you love Him and obey Him, He fulfills your desire, rescues you, and preserves you, for He loves you, and He wants what’s best for you, at His own expense.

Of course, He doesn’t merely give you everything you ask for; He does what’s best for you. He’s not a vending machine. Like the good Father He is, sometimes He has to tell



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you no, even though you hate Him for it. And be glad He does. This not only protects you from yourself, it protects you from others. Let's face it, there are wicked people in the world who want wicked things. God's not going to it to them. In fact, because they reject Him, because they despise His love and compassion, they will be judged and destroyed. So don't. Don't reject Him. Don't despise His love and compassion. It's not about how religious a person is; it's about honoring God in truth, the true God, the only God, the God who loves, the God who sent His Son to suffer and die and pay the penalty for your rebellion. And mine.

And so, finally, who gives thanks to God? Well, I do. My mouth will speak the praise of Christ, my Savior. And may all flesh join me. May all you know join you. May the eyes of all look to Him, who gives them their food in due season, who opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing, for He is the very Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Him shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Him shall never thirst. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen