

Praying Psalm 96

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(This week's readings from Sunday to Saturday: Psalm 95–101)

Psalm 96 (ESV)

- 1 Oh sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!
- 2 Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
- 4 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
- 6 Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

- 7 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!
- 8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!
- 9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!

- 10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."

- 11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
- 12 let the field exult, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
- 13 before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Adoration

Every single verse in Psalm 96 declares God's glory. God's majesty, his goodness, his faithfulness, his power, and his justice are all on display. Begin by following the instructions of Psalm 96:2. In your own words and in your own voice, "sing to the Lord, [and] bless his name." Adore him, that even his very name is worthy of our praise.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

"Tell of his salvation from day to day," as mentioned in verse 2. Praise God, in your own words, that he delivers his people from captivity, oppression, destruction, and death.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

In the words of verse 3 and verse 4, declare God's glory, out loud and in your own words. For the Lord is great and deserves to be praised. His very character is glorious and worthy of our adoration.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

According to verse 4, the Lord is "to be feared above all gods." Verse 5 recounts that the Lord "made the heavens." Express to God, in your own words, a posture of reverence and awe, that he alone is God and rules over everything else in the universe.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

Psalm 96, verse 6, describes God with words like splendor, majesty, strength, and beauty. He is magnificent and radiant in his glory, stronger and more powerful than any other, and his appearance is breath-taking. Use these ideas to offer your own praises to God.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

We come, Almighty God, and worship you in the splendor of your holiness. As we see your light shining brilliantly into our lives, and as we see your plan purposefully unfolding, we lift our hands in adoration and surrender to you. It is you alone who saves, you alone who heals, and you alone who comforts the broken. Hear our prayers of praise today Lord.

Confession

Verse 5 reminds us that "the gods of the peoples are worthless idols." It is so easy to get caught up with things other than God, things that capture our loyalty, our devotion, or even just our attention. While these idols may appear to carry value, we are warned that they are extremely worthless. Confess out loud to our God for the times that he is not our first love, our first hope,

our first desire, or even our greatest need. Be transparent with him. God knows every part of who you are, so you can't fool Him in any way. Repent for the times when God is not the center of your life.

[Pray for 30 seconds.]

Now let's go deeper. Confess more specific things that you place before God regularly. Tell him how you may rely on pride, lust of your eyes, material comforts, the praise of man, or other selfish behaviors that hurt you and others. Confess these things to your Heavenly Father.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

Lord, we are sorry. You hear each of our prayers, and you alone know what we need. Forgive us for worshiping created things, instead of you, our Creator.¹ Forgive our hidden sins, and reveal to us other idols which have consumed our hearts. We confess our sin completely to you now, oh gracious Lord.

Thanksgiving

In verses 11–13 we see that, with thanksgiving, the heavens are glad, the earth rejoices, seas roar, fields exult, and the trees of the forest sing for joy. Everything in all creation is praising God, exalting his name, pointing to him as he judges the earth. And in his perfect justice he has chosen to save US! Let's lift up shouts of praise and joy and thanksgiving as we are reminded of his majesty and the salvation He alone has given.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

Psalms 96, verse 10, declares among the nations: "The Lord reigns!" He is on the throne. He is in charge of everything. God is actively watching, moving, and responding to our prayers. Offer up thanks as he unfolds his perfect plan as King of kings and Lord of lords.²

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

In verse 10 the Psalmist also tells us that God will judge all peoples with equity. He is perfectly fair, perfectly just, and is the very standard by which all things are measured. He never gets it wrong. His judgment is perfectly balanced, and fair to all. With a loud voice give God thanks for his equity, his righteousness, and his perfect justice.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

¹ Rom 1:25.

² Rev 19:16.

God of all creation, merciful, majestic, and mighty King, you alone have brought salvation to our lives and given us eternal hope through Jesus. You are the cause for all of creation to proclaim thanksgiving as we all witness the work of your amazing hands. We come to you with humble hearts, and we offer up prayers of thanksgiving and gratitude, as we bow in awe of who You are.

Supplication

Verse 13 tells us that the Lord will come to judge the earth. Knowing that God's judgment is surely coming, let's pray urgently for family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and those in our community, that many would come to know and believe in Jesus before it is too late.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

Where do you see injustice or uncertainty in your life or in your community? Where have you been wronged? What worries do you have today? Present those to God, as the Lord declares in his Word, he will bring justice.

[Pray for 25 seconds.]

Lord, your Word says, you judge the peoples with equity.³ We ask that you comfort us with your Spirit and your presence as many of us face hardships that seem unfair and unjust. Lord, we know we don't have to avenge ourselves, because vengeance belongs to you.⁴ Father, please give us the patience and faith to rely on your Word of truth.

Benediction

Lord God, hear our prayers, smile at our praises, accept our confessions, receive our thanksgiving, and hear our requests. Act in accordance with your perfect plan as we humbly submit all of this to you. Now, Lord, fill us with your Spirit that we might be fruitful vessels doing the work you set before our hands, and let us always be ready to give the reason for our hope in Jesus.⁵ Send us, God, and we pray that you find us faithful to your mission, for your glory.

AMEN.

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³ Ps 96:10.

⁴ Rom 12:19.

⁵ 1 Pet 3:15.

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