

Praying Psalm 104

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(This week's readings from Sunday to Saturday: Psalm 102–106, Micah 1–2)

Psalm 104 (ESV)

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD my God, you are very great!
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
- 2 covering yourself with light as with a garment,
stretching out the heavens like a tent.
- 3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters;
he makes the clouds his chariot;
he rides on the wings of the wind;
- 4 he makes his messengers winds,
his ministers a flaming fire.

- 5 He set the earth on its foundations,
so that it should never be moved.
- 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
- 7 At your rebuke they fled;
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.
- 8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down
to the place that you appointed for them.
- 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

- 10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills;
- 11 they give drink to every beast of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- 12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell;
they sing among the branches.
- 13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

- 14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock
and plants for man to cultivate,
that he may bring forth food from the earth
- 15 and wine to gladden the heart of man,

oil to make his face shine
and bread to strengthen man's heart.

- 16** The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- 17** In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has her home in the fir trees.
- 18** The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.
- 19** He made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
- 20** You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the beasts of the forest creep about.
- 21** The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
- 22** When the sun rises, they steal away
and lie down in their dens.
- 23** Man goes out to his work
and to his labor until the evening.
- 24** O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
- 25** Here is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with creatures innumerable,
living things both small and great.
- 26** There go the ships,
and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.
- 27** These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.
- 28** When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
- 29** When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
- 30** When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.
- 31** May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works,
- 32** who looks on the earth and it trembles,

- who touches the mountains and they smoke!
- 33** I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
- 34** May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD.
- 35** Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more!
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!

Adoration

Psalm 104 takes a close look at the entire created world. It begins with the unparalleled majesty of God, our Creator (a majesty that existed before the world was formed!), and it ends with an exhortation directed towards God's final and most personal act of Creation—humankind. The middle of Psalm 104 paints a beautiful picture of God's creative and sustaining power that gives life to everything else that exists.

In verse 1, the psalmist describes God as “very great” and “clothed with splendor and majesty.” In verses 2 and 3, he clothes himself with light and dwells on the water, and in verse 4 he directs wind and fire to do his will.

These words inspire a sense of awe in the writer that colors the rest of the poem. God, the most powerful and most untouchable, has chosen to give life and beauty to a world in which we can experience Him in a personal and powerful way!

What a glorious portrait of God, in both Psalm 104 and in the world around us! Respond to God in your own words, praising him with words of reverence and awe.

[Pray for 25 seconds.]

God, you are greater than the scope of our existence. You are greater than all we can see or imagine. You exist outside of time, and we are in awe of how impossible it is to understand you, apart from the ways you chose to reveal yourself. We praise you because your endless glory deserves endless worship. We bow before you, in awe of your splendor and majestic power that reminds us of how small we are before you. We praise you for giving us life, loving us, and calling us your sons and daughters.

Confession

Psalm 104 finishes with a close look at the relationship between God and humankind—the Creator and his created people. The psalmist speaks with the hopeful heart of someone who has drawn near to God and has found forgiveness, even in the presence of the One who, as

verse 32 says, “looks at the earth and it trembles; [who] touches the mountains, and they smoke.”

This hope is contrasted with the hopeless state of those who have chosen to remain in their sin, as mentioned in verse 35. These sinners ultimately face eternal punishment for their rebellious hearts and will no longer dwell in the presence of God.

Confess any sin in your life that rebels against his reign and hurts your relationship with him.

[Pray for 30 seconds.]

Now thank him for the forgiveness that he has given us through the work of his Son, Jesus.

[Pray for 25 seconds.]

Ask God to bring to mind people who are far from him and pray that they would repent of their sins and be reconciled to him in Christ.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

God, seeing this incredible picture of your fiery power and your rejection of sinners from your presence makes us glad that you have offered forgiveness to us, a sinful people. Thank you for placing our sin on Jesus and gifting us his perfect right standing with you. We desire to understand how you hate sin, and we want nothing to do with the things our rebellious hearts cling to. Please speak to us by your Holy Spirit and uncover the sins we cherish more than holiness. Please help us to be quick to confess and quick to return to living in a way that honors you.

Thanksgiving

In verses 29–30, the psalmist recognizes the finite lifespan of God’s creation and describes the cycle of God bringing animals to life, allowing their time on earth to end, and beginning again with new generations. In verse 31, he contrasts this with the eternal existence of God’s glory, prompting his heart to respond with thanksgiving in verses 33–34 as he realizes the incredible gift of life that God has given him.

Thank God for the life he has given you. Consider it all a gift—your location, your age, your health, everything—and thank him for creating your life with such care!

[Pray for 20 seconds]

By offering us eternal redemption, God has established humankind as far more more valuable than the rest of creation. Thank God out loud that he made you, loves you, and has given you the gift of experiencing his presence forever as part of his chosen people!

[Pray for 30 seconds.]

God, we often get distracted by the many small things in our lives that fight for our attention. We forgot how wonderful it is to be known by you and loved deeply as your children. We thank you for the peace this gives to our hearts, that all our days have been foreseen by you, that you set before us good works that we can walk in, that you are with us every step. We are humbled that you—the perfect Creator of the universe—would chose to begin a relationship with us small, finite beings. We trust that you want good for us and we believe that whatever you lead us through will purify our character and bring glory to your name as you send us to be your witnesses in the world.

Supplication

The middle of Psalm 104 also details all the care God pours into creating and sustaining the world. From deciding where majestic mountains and vast oceans should stand in verses 5–9, to sending streams of life-giving water in verses 10–13, God has carefully shaped the natural world in a way that testifies to Him. In verses 19–28, we see he carefully provides for all living creatures who inhabit the places he has designed for them. Everything that lives is dependent on God’s plans and his provision.

Are you trusting in God’s ability to meet your needs in every aspect of your life? Ask God to help you see his care and provision.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

Do you daily ask God for guidance and wisdom? Are there any areas where you have trouble giving up control? Pray for the Spirit to strengthen your ability to trust God’s plan for your life.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

God, we read of how carefully you designed all of creation, and it reminds us of how much more intimately you are involved in the details of our lives. Please help us to trust your love enough to ask you for help. Please help us submit our needs to Your perfect timing. Please help us rely on your power and wisdom to accomplish what we cannot. We believe you hear us and we believe you respond in amazing ways that we cannot comprehend nor expect. We offer these requests to you with full confidence in your goodness, oh God, our Father, our Creator, our Redeemer.

Benediction

Pray along with me now as we praise God with the words of Psalm 8:

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! ... When [we] look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,” we begin to wonder—“What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” You are infinitely greater than us, and yet we remember—“You have made [us] a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned [us] with glory and honor.” For this, we praise you, oh God, for giving us life and offering us a personal relationship with you, redeeming us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We live in awe of your glory and we declare with great joy, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

AMEN.

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