



WE WILL TELL OF GOD'S GREATNESS

Pastor Al Detter Psalm 145:3-6

9:30 & 11:00am Grace Church October 28/29 2006

Introduction:

1. Preaching staff met in September to map out sermons for our "We Will Tell" series. I said, "Give me the sermon on the greatness of God!!!"
2. A week ago Saturday morning, woke up at 4:00am. I'm not a morning person and I never get up then. But I was wide awake.
3. What am I thinking about? THE GREATNESS OF GOD AND THIS SERMON I'M GOING TO PREACH. Fearful that I'd fall back asleep and I'll forget the flood of thoughts, I got up and went to the dining room table. I filled a sheet of paper. So that's the genesis of this sermon.
4. I get to talk about the greatness of God today! Here's our text—PSALM 145:3-6. READ. So many texts on the greatness of God. I was excited to find this Psalm. So tied to our campaign theme!
5. Incredible Psalm of praise. It's an alphabetical Psalm of praise. Each line begins with a letter of the Hebrew language in alphabetical order. Today we'll look at the English equivalent: C-vs. 3, D-vs. 4, E-vs. 5, and F-vs. 6.

Using these verses, I want to ask and answer 3 strategic questions about God's greatness today:

QUESTION #1— HOW GREAT IS GOD?

1) Where do I begin to speak of God's greatness? I feel so inadequate to speak.

2) We know it in 3 ways:

1} Creation. Creation tells us how powerful and wise God is. Creation is designed to be a demonstration of God's greatness. We have mapped 100,000 galaxies in the region surrounding the Milky Way. These galaxies measure millions of light years across. These 100,000 galaxies cover 5% of the sky. How great is our God! What a mistake to limit God the hand of God in creation!

2} Revelation. The Bible. God tells us things about Himself we'd never know in any other fashion. The things God tells us about Himself are absolutely incredible and astounding. The Bible drips with the greatness of God on every page.

3} Intervention. God actually enters into our world and does great things. The Bible is filled with God's involvement with human beings. So is our experience!!

3) When we consider these three aspects of God's greatness, if we let it, we should be completely overwhelmed—shaken to the core. The magnitude of God's greatness is beyond what we as finite creatures can take in.

4) But look at verse 3—"His greatness is unsearchable." That doesn't mean that we can't search things out about God. We can. It means that we can barely scratch the surface of God's greatness with human minds.

5) **Walk into my office, go into a seminary library.** Read all the books about God. Put all the best minds of every generation in history together—the sum of all their thinking about God—they would not be able to get close to understanding God’s greatness.

6) The word “unsearchable” means “unfathomable, unable to be found out.” My advice to people who keep trying to figure out God and put Him in limited boxes is—chill. We don’t have to understand the greatness of God. We can’t. Let’s stop trying to make Him un-great in all His ways from creation to what the Bible says to miracles.

7) **Let’s praise God that the greatness we already know about Him is beyond comprehension and what we don’t know about His greatness is even more phenomenal.** What a surprise Heaven will be. That’s why all people can do when they get there is to fall down and say, “I had no idea!!!”

QUESTION #2—HOW IS GOD GREAT TO US?

1. I believe God is great to His creatures in different ways. I think His greatness is different to the Heavenly beings than to us. They have a front row seat and they worship and glorify Him in entirely different ways.

2. God is great to us in ways the angels will never know. They have no real understanding as to what salvation is. They’ve never been lost. God’s greatness means some-thing different to us because we experience forgiveness and angels never do.

3. So how is God great to human beings? God is great in many ways to us. He’s the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the world we know. He’s the only one true God. All other gods are false gods and offer us nothing. He pours out His grace on the just and the unjust.

4. But I want to look at the **2 WAYS God is great to us** in these verses:

1) **God’s glorious splendor (vs. 5a.).**

God is an incredible Being. Everything about Him is superlative. We live in a world that’s captivated by celebrities. We’re drawn to people that have charisma and good looks and great talent.

God is infinitely amazing in every respect. In our humanity, we can’t look at Him and live. And He’s perfection of character. He’s everything we’d ever want in a relationship to the endth degree.

We must be careful of minimizing and marginalizing God. He’s power, majesty, splendor, wisdom, beauty, glory, wealth, knowledge, royalty, and magnificence to an infinite degree. He’s the most impressive entity in the universe.

What impresses us? Often LESSER THINGS. People. Places. Material things. Abilities. Accomplishments. But there’s no created thing that can compare with the majesty of God’s splendor.

I was at a meeting in May. The speaker was one of the most impressive people I’ve ever met. Author, pastor, captivating speaker, composer, arranger, vocalist, pianist, pilot, and a whole lot more. I felt so insignificant next to him.

But God is everything that can possibly be to an infinite degree. You name it. God is the Master of it. OH, BE AMAZED BY THE GREAT-NESS OF HIS BEING!!!

Here's the 2nd way God is great to us:

2) God's wonderful works (vss. 4, 5b, 6a).

God does amazing things for human beings. The Bible records hundreds of them. In fact, I've been on an amazing journey through the Bible this time around. I'm writing down every amazing thing God says and does. It's been absolutely astounding! I might add, even life-changing!

But the greatness of God's acts isn't just limited to the Bible. If you read the biographies of Christians past and present, they are stories of God's mighty works.

And God is at work in our lives today. Sometimes it doesn't seem that way. But He's doing mighty things among us at Grace—as individuals and as a church.

One of the ways I keep a record of God's mighty acts is—I write something that He does in my Bible connected to an appropriate verse. What God does often connects to a verse and I write it down.

One of these events happened almost 10 years ago. Jason's accident. Needed a word from God as I went to bed that night. Opened to a verse—the verse we had captured 19 years before—Psalm 113:9. We were unable to have children and when Jason came to us, we used this verse on the announcement cards we sent out.

Now, 19 years later, not knowing if Jason would live or die, I asked God for a word of assurance. I opened the Bible at random to this verse. I was blown away. God reassured me that Jason would live and that Marie would be his joyful mother. That was a mighty act of God in my life!

Some of God's mighty acts are the provision of good things in our lives. Many of us learned that God is a great God for the good things He gives us when we gave grace at meals as kids, "God is great and God is good. And we thank Him for our food."

I'm so grateful for the great works of God in the good things He does. But I want to offer not just an opinion, but a conviction. God's goodness is not so measured by His goodness but by His great acts of deliverance and redemption! God's greatness is not so much about the good things He gives but in His saving intervention.

That's the thrust of the mighty acts that this Psalm is speaking about—God's deliverance from Israel's enemies. From Egypt. In Canaan.

From oppressive nations. From the snare of the trapper. From deadly pestilence. From the terror by night and the arrow that flies by day (Ps. 91).

Think about the greatest thing God has ever done for you. Has it been your marriage, your house, car, your food, your furnishings, your bank account, or your pleasures? Those are great things from God.

But the greatest things God has ever done for us has been our deliverance from sin and death and destruction. That's God's greatest work. It's when God has delivered us from trouble and sickness and danger.

And that's what I want this church to be about. Not about a great God who gives us good things. But a church that sees the mighty acts of God as redeeming more and more people from sin and hell!!! Helping them connect to a God who is in control and helping people in their distress!!!

5. Well, this is how God is great to us—the splendor of His Being and His mighty works towards us. Truly He's a great and awesome God.

6. That leads to the final question:

QUESTION #3—HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO OUR GREAT GOD?

1. Greatness demands a response. My family and I went to the Grand Canyon in 1998. I walked up to the edge and took a look. I was melted with its grandeur and great-ness. Couldn't help it. I bowed down and wept. If that's what the Grand Canyon can do, what should be our response to the God who made it?

2. This Psalm talks about 3 appropriate responses to God who's great in His Being and in His works. The 1st response is:

1) Praise (vss. 3-4). Praise is the inspired proclamation of God's value and worth because of His greatness. The praise the Psalms has in mind is enthusiastic verbal responses that range from prearranged or spontaneous soft prayers to songs to ringing shouts of worship and thanksgiving. The greatness of God should inspire continual praise to the extent that David says in verse 2, "Every day I will bless You!"

One of the dangers we must guard against is losing the wonder of God in our lives. Long-term lack on heartfelt praise to God is a sign of a dying or dead soul. Inspiring praise, worship and thanks-giving should be regular responses by all of us towards the greatness of our God! Don't let worship and praise at church or in private be a detached or distant thing for you. Let the greatness of God grip you as a creature and get in God's face with praise!!!

This Psalm speaks about a living chain of praise—verse 4, "One generation shall praise Your works to another and shall declare Your mighty acts." This is what's going on here. One generation sees the greatness of God and they praise the Lord in front of their children.

The children grow up and they look back and see what God did among their fathers. And they praise the Lord for what God did. But they also see what God is doing in their own generation. And they praise the Lord in front of their children. They want their children to grow up and praise God for what God did for their parents.

But they also want their children to see the greatness of God for themselves when they grow up. Their children will see it and it becomes a living chain of praise to God from generation to generation.

That's what's happening at Grace. There are a few among us that have seen what God did in their parent's generation. They look back to their move of faith to our present location and they praise the Lord for all He did.

Now it's our turn. God is doing a mighty thing among us to the point we need to move again. So this generation is praising the Lord. We are positioning ourselves for the next generation to look back and praise God for what the Lord's doing through us now. And then our children will expect the greatness of God so that their children can keep the chain going!

Church, if you want to know what true traditional worship is, it's in this verse—one generation after another praising God in ways that are meaningful to them. We keep transmitting the stories of God's greatness through the generations in meaningful ways so it never dies among human beings.

2nd response to God's greatness:

2) Meditation (vs. 5). Meditation is the practice of reflecting or contemplating. The Hebrew word has the idea of a making a low murmuring sound. Let me cut to the chase. Meditating is stepping out of the fast lane and thinking slowly about God's greatness for the benefit of your soul. Our souls needs to be fed and meditation is spiritual feeding.

We're to meditate on the law of God, on His Majesty and splendor, and on His wondrous works. They all take us back to God's greatness.

So in meditation, we slow things down and we think of one thing after another about God in low audible tones. As we do that, we become even more amazed at God and we receive inner strength and joy.

Church, a vital response to God's greatness is meditation. Take some time out on a regular basis to reflect on the greatness of God. It will cure a lot of modern ills.

3rd response to the greatness of God:

3) Telling (vs. 6). When you encounter the greatness of God, you can't keep quiet. You've got to tell others. Remember what the woman at the well did after she met Jesus in John 4? She told the whole village about Him. When God grips your life, you've got to tell somebody!

Well, what do we have to talk about? Our salvation. Our healings. The ways God intersects our lives. If we don't have anything to talk about, we have a problem. We've forgotten our salvation, we're not grateful for all the blessings, or our eyes and ears have become closed.

If you don't have anything to tell others about the greatness of God, then go live in a 3rd world country for a month. Or start talking about what God is doing in other's lives or in our church.

God loves to hear His people tell of His greatness!! And the more we tell of His greatness, the more overwhelmed we become about His greatness.

3. We've just seen 3 great responses to God's greatness—celebration, meditation, conversation.

Conclusion

1. Here's the point. God's greatness demands a response. When God's greatness grips us, we can't be unresponsive!
2. Our text doesn't list all the responses to God's greatness in the Bible. Holiness is a response. Sacrifice is a response. Generosity is a response. These are all things that happen when we get exposed to the greatness of God.
3. We've spent a month talking about God in weekend services and our daily devotional guide. We did the best we know how. We thought that if we'd proclaim what we know about God, you'd respond in all these ways.
4. I hope you know God's up to something in our church. Salvation. Answers to prayer. Healings. Stories! More people need to get in on this. That's why we're moving.
5. It's no secret. We need a financial response from you. Today is action Sunday. We're going to make our faith promises. The way God has funded building programs from Bible times to the present is through the generosity of God's people in response to His greatness.
6. The way I see it, if we really see the greatness of God, we'll respond financially accordingly. Our gifts for this project will be a gauge of the greatness of God in our hearts. Our gifts will be commentaries on how we view the greatness of God.
7. I have been most impacted during this campaign by some widows in our church. These widows were not women of great means. 2 of them died recently. In each case, they expressed their sincere regret that they had nothing to give our building campaign. When they died, their families sent me letters with checks. The letters said that they wanted the church to have all that was left of their estates for the building project. Let me tell you, even though the amounts were not huge, they were enormous in God's eyes!
8. Two widows came to see me recently. They talked with me and then gave me checks and told me more would be coming as God provided. One of them said to me, "Tell the church it's not about the amount, it's about giving our best gifts to the Lord. After all He's done, He deserves our best gifts."
9. These 4 widows gave their best gifts—proportionately probably more than most of us will give. But let them lead the way. Let's respond to God's greatness with this kind of generosity for the sake of the lost and broken around us in our community.
10. I could stand up here and pressure you, use guilt and shame tactics to have you do something very human and token today. I'm not going to do that.
11. I'm going to stand up here today and tell you that the Lord is great and He deserves a great response! Let the greatness of God in your eyes determine your response to the need. Respond appropriately to God's greatness. That's all I'm asking. The greatness of God! WOW!!!