

Psalm at Work: Success

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[0 : 00] How do you react when things go wrong at work? Is it a, yeah, it's good, I like it when things go wrong, or do you kind of panic and then go into survival mode when a job you were supposed to do well is done, let's say, not so well, and your boss comes into your office and says, right, what happened?

Do you stand there and go, yes, it was completely my fault, I did everything wrong, it was no one else to blame, or is it a case of Jeff over there, it's all his fault, he wore the wrong shoes to work, and that just threw the whole system off, and things along those lines.

Now, that is what we call a scapegoat principle. Now, often in the team context, when something goes wrong, the team looks at the one person who's the easiest person to put the blame on, often the scapegoat, all you need to do is not be aware of it and not be ready to take it.

That's the main requirements for a scapegoat. And the worst part for the poor scapegoat guy is when things go well, then the whole team takes the credit and leaves him out there.

Now, for some of you who might be sitting there saying, this is a little bit abstract, but I think sometimes we do this in our relationship with God as well. When things are going wrong, we're praying, saying, Lord, how come things are going like this?

[1 : 26] Why are you putting me in these situations? And when things go well, it's a case of God who? You know, it was all me, you know, it was all my doing, I am the one who caused it all.

And we take the glory for ourselves. Now, Psalm 65 that we're dealing with today deals with a very similar thing, and it shows us the right way we should actually respond in these situations.

Now, if you don't know what Psalm 65 is, it's, well, a psalm in the Bible, firstly. But mainly, it's a psalm that was written by David. And it is a psalm that reflects an agricultural lifestyle.

Now, this wasn't a time where you had your insurance brokers and your accountants and your human resources departments, but this was a time where you worked in a field, and if you had a good day at work, you ate.

There was no job security. It wasn't a case of, oh, you know, the harvest didn't grow, but it's cool, you know, I've got my job tomorrow, and then that's fine. If things didn't work out, you starved.

[2 : 26] And this is a psalm that would be sung at the beginning of a fruitful harvest, when things are going well. And it's sung by a group of people who understand that without God, they're stuffed.

They knew they needed God. Now, so far, we've been dealing with a series called Psalms at Work. In the beginning, we dealt with the proper attitude to work. Then we dealt with what happens when evil people succeed.

Then last week, we dealt with the struggle of trying to find rest. And today, we're dealing with success. Now, there are three things that we're going to be looking at today when it comes to success, and three things we need to remember.

Simply, if you're taking notes, you can put this down. God should be praised because of his pardon, because of his provision, and because of his providence.

So, you can have a look with me in your Bibles at Psalm 65. Psalm 65, and I'm going to read the first two verses. Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion.

[3 : 32] To you, our vows will be fulfilled. O you who hears our prayers, to you, all men will come. Now, this is quite unusual because we have a psalm that's set in the time of a good harvest, and it begins with pardoning.

But something that tells us is that God should be praised for his mercy, for his pardoning, regardless of when things are going well or when things are going terribly. And the first thing we learn in this passage is that praise, that God hears his people, says in verse 2, O you who hear our prayers, to you, all men will come.

Now, this doesn't initially seem like a big issue if I say, yeah, God hears his people, you say, okay, that's cool. But let's consider who these people are. He hears his people that are sinners, that have rejected his laws and disobey him.

He has no obligation to them. He has no reason to listen to them. But yet he still does. He is accessible for them to speak to.

Verse 2 ends with the phrase, to you, all men will come. This verse simply means that humans rely on God for everything. This is a God who we are fully dependent on, and yet somehow, with all humanity relying on him, and all of creation relying on him, he still has time to hear people.

[5 : 09] He still has time to listen to his people. Now, this is something we can't get right as humans. When everybody's relying on you, it's very difficult to kind of hear what they're all saying.

You see, dependence for us often results in the relationship becoming less intimate. If you've got a big group of people, you can't listen to each one and say, what's going on here?

What's going on there? Because we don't have the time, and very soon that close relationship disappears. Think about it like this. If you had 12 people staying in your garage, and they were dependent on you for everything.

You had to put air into the room. You had to make sure there was food. You had to make sure there was water. You had to make sure there was electricity. And these people fully relied on you, and they each want to speak to you. And then they go and disobey your instructions you give them.

Are you really going to be that inclined to listen to them? I don't think so. Because, you see, it doesn't make sense for us. And that just shows how amazing it is that a God who is so mighty and just still hears his people.

[6 : 16] You see, he doesn't only hear his people. He also forgives our sins. Verse 3 of Psalm 65 says, When we were overwhelmed by sin, you forgave our transgressions.

You see, God in his mercy and kindness forgave the sins of man. Now, back during the time of David, the process for your sins to be forgiven was a lengthy process.

The high priest would have to go and make a sacrifice in the tabernacle for the sins of Israel. The blood of an animal would have to be shed for the sins to be forgiven.

But the problem was, it was a continual activity. It wasn't a case of he had to sacrifice one animal. But it would have to happen over and over and over again. But today, thanks to Jesus, things are very different.

Hebrews chapter 9, verses 26 to 28 says this. It says that unlike the priests in the holy place who had to continually sacrifice with someone else's blood, Christ paid in full for the sins of man.

[7 : 22] With, firstly, his own blood. And secondly, it was once and for all. Not only that, but it gives us comfort in verse 28 of Hebrews chapter 9 by saying that he will return to bring salvation to all who are waiting for him.

Now, you see, when Christ descended to heaven, he said he would return. And you see, when he returns, he's coming to bring mankind into account for their actions. But for those who know him, for those who have that relation with him, they can rest assured knowing that he is coming back for them, for their salvation.

And so, all we need to do today is have that salvation in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. John 3, verse 16 says, For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

And it's amazing to see that not only does Christ take our place, but he also restores our relationship with God. Coming back to Psalm chapter 65, verse 4, it says, Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts.

We are filled with the good things of your house and your temple. Now, I mentioned the whole concept of a scapegoat earlier. And one thing I'd really like you to take away from that is that it's not the best thing to be the scapegoat.

[8 : 52] No one wants to be the scapegoat. Yet Christ did that on our behalf. He took our sin and he took our place on the cross. And it's all because of what Jesus did today, that we can have that salvation.

Do you have that comfort of knowing that your sins are taken away? Do you have that peace of knowing that God is your savior? If not, why not?

You see, the first thing we take away from these first four verses in Psalms is that there is a greater security than your job at the end of the day. We live in a society where, regardless of what happens,

as long as I've got a job, I'm okay.

As long as I've got my position in my states, that's all right. But you're not always going to be able to work. You're not always going to be able to be healthy enough to do what you do now.

You never know. But our comfort in the states we have with God is that regardless of whether I have a job tomorrow, regardless of whether I have a salary at the end of the month, I know that my status is secure through Jesus Christ.

[10:07] That relationship with God is intact. And nothing can take that away. That is a great comfort. Do you see the first reason we should praise God is because of his pardon?

Now, the second reason is for his power. God should be praised because of his power. God is more powerful than we can understand.

In verses 5 of Psalm 65, it says this, You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness. Oh God, our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and the farthest seas.

He formed the mountains by his power. He stilled the roaring seas. He stilled the roaring of their waves and the turmoil of nations. Now, have you ever been outside in a storm?

Have you ever been out camping and a storm front moves in? And it's quite a scary thing when you're standing outside and the wind is almost knocking you off your feet.

[11:14] And you, at that moment, decide, stop, wind. Now, I've tried that before. I'll be honest with you. I was a teenager. I was probably 17 when I did it last.

So, I was a big teenager. But I remember saying, stop, wind. And you know what happened? I fell over because the wind knocked me over. Because I used to do whitewater rafting.

And we'd go out and it would look beautiful. And these waves would come. And I was enjoying it because it was going up and down. And I'd been trained for this. But the people in the group that I was leading, they, on the other hand, were not as excited for it.

And I was thinking, like, I'm sitting here in a boat. I'm being ripped around. And there's absolutely nothing I can do about it. I can't put my hand in the water and be like, let me see what I'm doing.

Bring it down. That doesn't happen. It doesn't work. But we can take such comfort in knowing that we have a God who is in control of all these things. In the chaos of nature, he is in control of it all.

[12:17] He stills the roaring seas. In Cork Bay, there is a whole bunch of restaurants across the harbor there. And there's a place called, I think it's Harbor House.

They've got three-inch reinforced glass windows so people can see the waves. There was a storm last year that almost just popped the windows out. And everything got washed into the harbor.

And we can even bring this back to the context of Israel, where they were very land-based people. They had a fear of the sea. They saw the sea. And they didn't understand it, let alone they saw how rough it gets.

But friends, it just reminds us that God should be praised because of his power. He's in control of the chaos of the seas. He stalls and calms the seas. He makes mountains.

He moves mountains. Now, did you know that there are only certain places in earth where God is in control? Now, before you get upset with me, just before you freak out, have a look with me in your Bibles at verses, So, pretty much the only place that God has control on earth is where the morning dawns and the evening fades.

[13:40] If you can find a place on the earth that doesn't happen, just in case I get into trouble, I'm saying this in a very clever way, but pretty much there is nowhere on this earth where God is not in control.

It's not like under a little rock and like, that's my spot. God, you know, he's not in control of that spot. It doesn't work like that. He's in control everywhere. And the thing is, we must remember, is we can trust God because he's in control of all these things, even when we can't control them.

I think as people, we are control freaks. We like to have our lives like this. We like to be able to say, I can do this. I can do that. Almost like, you know, you get those paint palettes, if you have little children where you do the things.

And some children hate it when the blue gets into the pink and stuff like that. We kind of try and separate our lives like this and control it. This is that spot and this is that spot. But in reality, we really can't control anything.

But it's okay because we serve a God who is in control of all of it. He's in control of the chaos of the world, but he's also in control of the chaos of people. Bringing us back to work, when you have that week where the factory is running behind schedule and then the client's on the phone because the

factory runs out of schedule and you were late for work because the roof of your school had been blown off in the wind and all of this is going on and you don't know what to do, it's okay.

[15:05] Because we serve a God who is in control of all of this, at all times and in all places. That is the second reason we should praise God. Because he is so powerful that there is nothing that is not under his control.

Now the third reason we look at praising God is for his provision. Now if you remember, I mentioned this is a psalm that is happening during the time of a great harvest.

And this is dealing with things when things are going well at work. Sometimes you just have that week where everything falls into a place. You sign the contract, you get the new client, you got coffee in bed this morning, your slippers were next to the bed, your car started on the first time, there was no traffic, everything just seems to be going well.

And David teaches us that it's not, we're not the reason things are going well. Look with me at verse 9.

He says, You care for the land and water it. Notice this. He says, You care for the land and water it. He says, You enrich it abundantly.

[16:19] The streams of God are filled with water to provide people with grain. For so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges.

You soften it with showers and bless it with crops. You crown the year with your bounty and your car overflow with it.

Now you see, David recognizes that the success, and this true success, is ultimately due to God. He is the one who causes us to succeed.

And we can't take credit for it. Verse 12 and 13 says, The grass lands and deserts overflow. The hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks.

And the valleys are mantled with grain. They shout for joy and sing. Now as I said, this describes a great harvest. But David shows us that it is God who is the cause of this.

[17:19] The valleys and the meadows that are covered with flocks. They don't sing, Yes man, Go David, Ultimate Farmer Dude. No. They shout and sing for joy to the Lord.

Now, imagine we live the world with that same mentality. Everything else would be different. We'd start and turn on morning live at half past six in the morning when they're dealing with the stock market.

And the analyst would say, And it's just been a blessing. You know, the Lord has made the rand more stable to the pound. And then they go over to weather and says, The Lord has caused it to rain today in the middle of a drought.

You know, that's cool. Or the Lord has called a cold front to move in on the Cape Peninsula. You see, if we're going to say that God is in control of everything, that everything that happens when things are going well, it's a reminder that He is the cause of it.

Now, what about when you're at work? As I mentioned, you sign that new contract. You get that new client in. Do you, at that moment, say, Thank you, Lord, for your provision in my life.

[18:28] Or do you say, or do you say, when your boss comes in and says, You did a good job. You're like, Oh, thank you. You know, I've been working hard. I woke up on, you know, early just so I could get this deal done.

Do you take the credit for yourself? Do you give the credit to the person who it belongs to? I think if we're honest, we get things backwards.

Now, as a musician, this is something that I battle with. I run a studio at home, and often when you're chatting with guys, and they're like, Tom, how long have you been playing? And how did you get so good? And, I have this knee-jerk reaction where I'm like, Well, you know, I just, I'm just, I just practice hard, and I've been playing for so many years, and I was just made really well, and I'm just that cool, and you are lesser than me.

I'm joking a bit there, but sometimes, we do that. We look at all the things that we've been gifted with, and we say, it's all because of my devotion to practice, or it's my natural talent.

And, but I can't take the credit for it. Through my life, there have been people, by God's grace, who have come into my life, and have influenced me as a musician. They've encouraged me, they've pointed me in the right direction.

[19:40] But those are people he brought into my life. All the opportunities that he's given, that I've been received, it's not because of anything I've done, but it's because of him. You see, he is the

source of all things good.

And the question you've got to ask yourself is, when you last succeeded, what did you do? Did you take the credit for it? Or did you acknowledge God in that?

You see, as we close, it's important for us to remember this, because our series has been called, The Psalms at Work. And when things are going well, we should remember these three points.

That God should be praised because of his pardon. He hears his people who are sinners, and through his atonement, he has brought them back to the rightful relationship with God.

He willingly became the scapegoat for us. Paying for our sins fully on the cross. Secondly, that in success, he should be praised because of his power. Because he's in control of all things, whether it's chaotic, or whether it's fantastic.

[20 : 45] And remember, he's in control of all things, everywhere, at every time. And we can trust him to have control over those things that we can't control. And even those things that are going well, we can acknowledge him there.

And that's why he should be praised, because of his provision. When things are going well, we can't take that credit for it. Because like I said, all good things come from God.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we just pray that this is, the series that we've been working through will be something that we truly carry in our hearts, Lord Jesus. That when we succeed, that we give the credit to you, Lord.

That when things are out of control, Lord, we trust you. And Lord Jesus, above all, that we never forget to praise you for salvation we have for you.

Lord Jesus, I pray that we will take these points and use them in our daily lives, Lord Jesus. And we'll continue to seek your word. that we'll continue to live our lives in a way that is good and pleasing.

[21 : 54] I pray this in your wonderful name. at the same time, to administrations, that we'll continue to receive and ■ and prayCore.com.