



Sermon, Sunday November 28, 2021

“The Lord’s Power and Grace”

SCRIPTURE: Psalms 147:1-20 ¹ Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting. ² The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. ³ He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds. ⁴ He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. ⁵ Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. ⁶ The LORD lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground. ⁷ Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre. ⁸ He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills. ⁹ He gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry. ¹⁰ His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner; ¹¹ but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love. ¹² Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! ¹³ For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you. ¹⁴ He grants peace^[b] within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat. ¹⁵ He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. ¹⁶ He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. ¹⁷ He hurls down hail like crumbs—who can stand before his cold? ¹⁸ He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow. ¹⁹ He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. ²⁰ He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances. Praise the LORD!

Introduction: The Lord who builds our lives

Today is the first week of Advent. Advent is the season of waiting for the coming of the baby Jesus into the world. There is still a month left in 2021, but a New Year has begun in the church calendar.

My dear brothers and sisters! I hope that 2021 will end well with the beginning of Advent. Also, spend the season of Advent as a time to prepare well for 2022.

We often live our lives thinking that we are the masters of our lives. However, the word of the Lord says that the Lord is the master of our lives. However, please do not misunderstand the meaning of these words to mean that the Lord ignores our free will and independence. It means that the Lord is the one who rules and guides this world. Therefore, I urge you to listen to the words of the Psalm that it is the Lord, not us, who builds our lives. Through today's Word, I hope that we can look back on our lives in this year and gain the wisdom to prepare for the New Year.

Body: The Hallelujah Psalms

Psalm 147 is the second of the five Hallelujah Psalms. The reason this Psalm is called the Hallelujah Psalm is that the beginning of the Psalm says, **“Hallelujah! It begins with 'Praise the Lord'!”** and ends with **“Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!”** (Hallelujah means ‘praise the Lord’ in Hebrew.)

Psalm 147 gives praise for the Lord's help and healing in the process of rebuilding the destroyed Jerusalem city by the Israelites returning from the Babylonian captivity. The Israelites were able to sing these hymns because they clearly knew the power and grace of the Lord. **Then, what was the power and grace of the Lord that the Israelites praise?**



First, we praise the infinite power of the Lord who searches, heals, guides, and protects the hearts of the people of Israel.

Verse 4 of today's text says, "He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names." The Israelites were taken captive by Babylon. The wounded Israelites lament their plight as they look at the stars in the night sky in a distant foreign land. After 80 years of captivity, the Israelites finally returned to their homeland. After they returned home, they thanked the Lord through today's Psalm.

The people of Israel confess that the Lord searches the people of Israel as He searches the stars in the sky. They also confess that the Lord counts the hearts of the people of Israel as He counts the stars in the sky. The people of Israel confess that the Lord will watch over them wherever they are - in Babylon or in their homeland. But the Lord is able to do all these things for the people of Israel because, **as Psalm 147:5 confesses, "Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure."**

Dear brothers and sisters! Our Lord counts the stars in the sky and calls them by name. That is why the Lord knows all our sick hearts, minds, and bodies. The Lord heals our hearts, heals our souls, and heals our bodies. We pray that we all trust in the Lord of infinite power. Then, what were the other powers and graces of the Lord that the Israelites praise?

Second, the people of Israel praise the Lord's grace about those who delight in His godliness rather than worldly authority.

Israel was once a powerful nation. However, such pride was destroyed during the Babylonian captivity. The Creator God, whom the Israelites believed in, was considered too be humble, and Marduk, the creator god of Babylon, was like a mountain that could not be crossed.

The praising ceased from the mouths of the Israelites, and the Israelites just sat down on the banks of the Babylonian River and wept toward Jerusalem.

However, the word of the Lord proclaims to the world. It is said that the Lord is more pleased with those who fear Him than those who rely on horses or soldiers. In fact, it was the Lord's grace, not their own strength that enabled the Israelites to return home from the Babylonian captivity. Therefore, the people of Israel who experienced the grace of the Lord praise the Lord.

Do not forget, dear brothers and sisters. The number one priority in our lives is our reverence to depend on the Lord rather than our ability. May we have such a reverent heart! **Then, what were the other powers and graces of the Lord that the Israelites praise?**

Third, we praise the grace of the Lord for taking responsibility for the past, present, and future of the people of Israel.

Verse 13 of today's text says, "For He strengthens the bars of your gates." This is the word that the Lord keeps His children in safety. It is a promise that the Lord will protect our family, workplace, country, and nation.

Verse 14 goes on to say, "He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat." Verse 14 is a parallel verse to verse 13, and it shows how the blessing of the Lord who strengthens the bars of your gates is accomplished in the lives of His children.

However, there is a very important prerequisite for these blessings. **Let's look at today's text verse 15. "He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly."** This verse says that when we obey the word of the Lord, the blessings of the Lord are abundantly fulfilled in our lives. Therefore, obedience to the Word and walking with the Lord are important in our life of faith. Therefore, our plans should not take precedence over the will and word of the Lord. The Lord has been with us in our past lives, He is with us in the present, and He has clearly promised that He will lead us for good in the future.



Therefore, I hope that we can all overcome the hardships of the present and leave all our worries about the future to the Lord. The Lord is always with us as His children.

Conclusion: Let's become those who enjoy the most precious thing in our lives.

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Our life is like sailing on a huge ocean. We never know where we will encounter typhoons, or where our ships will sink on the reef. So we may be afraid of life and worried about our future.

In fact, we live with these fears and worries because by nature we are all sinners and wounded and fragile beings. However, our merciful Lord is aware of all of our circumstances. The Lord we trust is not only merciful, but infinite in power.

Therefore, what is important in our lives is the humility of living under the grace of the Lord.

This life is like the healing of our wounds through the Lord's love, and the hope of our lives come from the Lord's reign.

The season of Advent, hoping for the coming of the baby Jesus, has begun. We pray that we will strive to help those who suffer a lot around us, be with those who have suffered, and be able to cover the pain and suffering of our neighbors with the love of Christ.

