

## How Great Thou Art Psalms 145

### Slide 1

A man and his ten-year-old son were on a fishing trip miles from home. At the boy's insistence, they decided to attend a Sunday worship service at a small rural church.

The father forgot to bring any cash, so he reached into his pocket and gave his son a dime to drop in the offering plate.

As they walked back to their car after the service, the father complained, *"The service was too long, the sermon was boring, and the singing was off key!"*

Finally, the boy said, *"Dad, I thought it was pretty good for a dime!"*

Today is the second of a four-part series on old hymns. Last week, we looked at God's *Amazing Grace*. This week, we're looking at another famous hymn... *How Great Thou Art*.

Often, we get so caught up in our church responsibilities that we tend to forget why we have church. We even forget to do one of the most important things of all and that is to praise God.

Now don't get me wrong, it's important that people serve. The Bible makes that clear, but serving should never come before our relationship with God or our praise for God.

Burnout comes when you let other things in the church take priority over praising God and building your relationship with Him. One of the many reasons that I like this hymn is because of the chorus:

*"Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!"*

When was the last time you put everything aside and just praised, worshipped, and concentrated on God?

When was the last time that you didn't focus on what you're going through or what responsibilities you have in the church.

When was the last time that you didn't focus on things you need to get done and just focused on praising God because of how great He is?

Now, when I say worship and praise, I don't mean just sitting or standing there reading lyrics and moping through the song. That's not praise or worship. The song says:

*"Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;"*

When was the last time you sang from your soul to God? When was the last time that you poured your heart out to God? That's praise and worship. We serve a God worthy of our praise and worship.

## **Slide 2**

*Psalm 145:1-7, "I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."*

God's worthy of our praise because God's great. Hence the name of the hymn, *How Great Thou Art*.

Psalm 145:3 tells us, *"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom."*

His *“greatness no one can fathom”* means that God’s greatness is past what the human mind can fully comprehend or describe. God’s greater than anything we could ever describe or understand.

A pastor was in his church office when someone came in and asked some questions about God. The pastor kept giving him the same answer to every question, *“I don’t know.”*

The man was perplexed. He could see the pastor’s Degree in Theology hanging on the wall and couldn’t understand why the pastor didn’t know the answer to his questions.

Seeing the confusion in the man’s face, the pastor said, *“Wouldn’t it bother you more if I knew everything about God? Because if I knew everything about God then that would mean that either I’m as big as God or, God is as little as me.”*

God’s greater than what we can explain or understand. To be honest with you, I don’t want to know everything about God. How can you be in awe of something you completely understand? You can’t.

Take this pen for example. I understand everything about this pen, and it means nothing to me. It’s just an ordinary pen with no significance. There’s nothing to it about which to be in awe.

I never want to completely understand God, because I never want to lose the awe that I have for Him. I mean look at some of the things that God’s done.

For starters, He created everything in the universe: humans, animals, reptiles, planets, stars, galaxies, and the list goes on and on and on.

Not only that, but He did it effortlessly. Now, think about the human body; how amazing it is and how perfectly it’s crafted by God.

Verse 1 of our song says:

*“O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works Thy hands have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy pow’r thru-out the universe displayed!”*

God’s greatness is displayed throughout the universe. Think about the sun and how we’re the perfect distance away from it. Any closer we’d burn up and any further we’d freeze to death.

That’s no accident. Our world wasn’t created from some big bang; it was created by a perfect and great God who knew what He was doing. God’s worthy of our praise because God’s great.

### **Slide 3**

Psalm 145:8-9, *“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”*

God’s worthy of our praise because God’s merciful. Mercy can be defined as giving forgiveness or withholding punishment. God’s merciful because God forgives us and withholds our punishment.

We sin, and because we sin what we deserve is hell. Thankfully, God’s merciful. He withholds our punishment even though we’ve already committed the crime. That’s a God of mercy.

Now understand, God doesn’t automatically withhold punishment for everyone. The Bible tells us that only true believers will enter the gates of Heaven, not everyone.

Romans 10:11-13, *“As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Those who believe in Jesus won't be put to shame. Meaning, those who believe in Jesus won't receive what they deserve for their sin... hell.

Those are the ones on whom God will have mercy. Those who believe in Jesus Christ and live their life accordingly.

I say that because the book of James tells us that *“Faith without works is dead.”* Works don't cause salvation, but salvation causes works.

So, in order to have your punishment withheld, you must believe in Jesus Christ. That's God's requirement.

Earlier, I said that mercy was giving forgiveness or withholding punishment. I serve a God that does both. He forgives us and through His forgiveness, our punishment is withheld.

The third verse of *How Great Thou Art* lays out how we got that forgiveness.

*“And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in –  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin!”*

God sent His only Son to die on the cross so through Him, we might have forgiveness.

Jesus died for us so that we could have God's mercy. He willingly laid down His life, suffered, and died for us so that we could enter the Kingdom of Heaven. God's truly great and merciful.

Now tell me, what could we have done to deserve that? Nothing. There's nothing we could ever do or say to deserve the Son of God dying for us.

That's the amazing love and grace of God. The chorus of *Victory in Jesus* emphasizes this:

*"Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior forever  
He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood  
He loved me 'ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him  
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood."*

Through Jesus and Jesus alone we have victory. He plunged us to that victory through His death on the cross and He did it out of love.

God's merciful even when it seems like everything in our life is going wrong. God has a plan for each of us far greater than anything we can understand.

#### **Slide 4**

Psalm 145:10-12, *"All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might."*

God's worthy of our praise because God's powerful. Have you ever stopped to think about how truly powerful God is?

He makes a way when there doesn't seem to be a way. He parted the Red Sea for Moses. He crumbled the walls of Jericho for Joshua. He calmed the raging seas. He walked on water.

He healed the sick. He gave sight to the blind. He made the paralyzed to walk.

He turned water into wine and most of all, He gave Himself up to die for us on a cross so we could have eternal life with Him.

2 Timothy 1:10, *“But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”*

That’s power. Jesus completely defeated death, hell, and the grave. He did it by dying on that cross on Mt. Calvary and then rising from the dead three days later.

Only someone with power could do that. Nobody today could have done that, only God. That’s true power.

1 Chronicles 29:11-13, *“Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.”*

The writer of Chronicles tells us that everything in the heavens and on earth is His. That’s because He created everything on earth and the entire universe in just six days.

He made you. He knows your name. He knows the number of hairs on your head. Think about how amazing that is.

The current world population is about 8 billion people. That’s a lot of people and that’s just right now.

There have been billions of people that have come before us and there's no telling how many will come after us, yet God knows our name and He hears every one of us.

Do you realize how amazing that is? That God loves us enough to know exactly who we are, what we need, and the number of hairs on our head?

The fourth verse of How Great Thou Art says this:

*“When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!”*

Not only is Jesus so powerful that He defeated death, hell, and the grave, but He also plans to come back and take us Home.

One day Jesus will come back to Earth and take every Christian, and every Christian that has already died, back to Heaven with Him. That's power.

The Bible says that after the tribulation, Jesus will set up His millennial reign here on Earth. That's power. We serve a God that can do far more than we could ever imagine.

### **Slide 5**

Psalm 145:13, *“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.”*

God's worthy of our praise because God's eternal. Revelation 22:13, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”*



In the Bible, we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. There's a time difference of 400 years between the ending of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament.

This time period is often referred to as the Intertestamental Period. During this period, the Greeks took over everything. It was a time of Greek influence known as the Hellenistic Era.

The first letter in the Greek alphabet is Alpha and the last letter is Omega. Now, look at Revelation 22:13 again, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."*

Jesus says He is the beginning and also the end. He says that three different times in three different ways all with the same message.

So, if Jesus was there at the beginning and will be there at the end, that also means that He's here in the time between.

Over 35 times in the Bible God promises to be with us. If God promises to do something, He's going to do it. He delivers on His promises.

Proverbs 3:5-8, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones."*

Have you ever wondered why it says to *"lean not on your own understanding"*? If we leaned on our own understanding in the difficult moments of life, we wouldn't believe that God exists.

We'd be more focused on our current situation than God. We'd begin to ask the question *"Why me?"*

But, if we trust in God, with all our heart, the question goes from “*Why me?*” to “*Lord what are You trying to show me?*”

God’s always there. In the good times, God’s there. In the bad times, God’s there. Throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, God promises that He’ll always be with us.

Psalm 145:13 says, “*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.*” God’s kingdom and God’s reign is one that will endure forever.

We serve a God that’s eternal. He’s eternally great, He’s eternally merciful, and He’s eternally powerful. Which leads me to the last point.

## **Slide 6**

### Conclusion

Psalm 145:14-20, “*The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.*”

God’s worthy of our praise because God is eternally kind. This hymn, *How Great Thou Art*, demonstrates this.

Verse 1 talks about God’s creation. God’s kind for creating the universe because, without the universe being created, we wouldn’t be here.

Verse 3 talks about God sending Jesus to die for us. Through God’s mercy, He gave His only Son to save all of humanity.

Verse 4 talks about Christ returning to take us home. God's kind for coming back for us even when we killed His Son.

So, in those verses, we have the message that God created everything, God saved everything, and God's coming back for everything.

Because of that message, my soul will sing about how great God is.

*"Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!"*

We can sing from our soul about the greatness of God because of God's kindness and love. He demonstrated this on the cross. He did it for me and He did it for you. He did it for all of us.

No matter what you've said or done, God still loves you and Jesus still died to save you.

Proverbs 21:21 tells us that, *"Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor."*

Righteousness can be described as being right in the eyes of God. So, those who pursue being right in the eyes of God and pursue kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.

Yet, in order to pursue kindness and righteousness, you must first pursue God. Earlier we looked at Proverbs 3 where it said in verse 5, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."*

You can't lean on your own understanding and be right in the eyes of God at the same time. You must trust and have faith in God if you want to be right in His eyes.

*Titus 3:4-7, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."*

God chose to save us because of His goodness, love, and kindness. If God waited until we did something worthy of Him saving us, Jesus never would have come to die for us. He did it, not because of our works, but because of His own mercy.

Sometimes life seems unfair, hard, or unbearable, but God has a plan and as long as God still sits on the throne, He's still good, and He's still kind even when nothing in life seems to make sense.

When you sing this hymn, pour out your heart to God and sing from your soul and really praise and worship Him.

Don't focus on or be distracted by whatever you may be going through in life right now. Just focus on God and praise Him.

*"Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!"*