

Sunday Night Message

January 31, 2016

Psalm 111

Series – The Psalms

Text – Psalm 111

## Introduction

This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic psalm, which means that the first letter of every line in the Hebrew begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There are many other acrostic psalms, perhaps the most famous of which is psalm 119. Psalmists may have used the acrostic format as a means to help people memorize the word. We use acrostics and alliteration often in preaching and teaching today.

This psalm is also known as a “Hallelujah Psalm” because it begins with “praise ye the Lord”, as does Psalm 112 & 113. Note Psalms 115 – 117 are also “Hallelujah Psalms” because they end in “praise ye the Lord”. The Hebrew word for praise in these psalms is “halel” and the word for the Lord is “Yahh” – thus halel Yahh, Halellujah.

There are no clues either at the beginning of this psalm or in the context to indicate who the writer was or why it was written. It is believed by some to have been written after the time of the Babylonian captivity and during the time of Haggai and Zechariah when some of the people of God returned to Jerusalem from Persia.

### I A Pledge to Praise (v. 1)

*"Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation." (Psalm 111:1)*

The psalm starts with a praise to the Lord, and then with a pledge by the psalmist to continue to praise the Lord.

#### A Without Reservation – Holding Nothing Back

Notice that he pledges to praise the Lord “with [his] whole heart”.

That phrase is used seven times when it is a man saying it, and only in the psalms - five of those times being in Psalm 119. (The other two are Psalm 9 and 138.)

God stated in Jeremiah regarding this time of the return from the captivity:

*"Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." (Jeremiah 32:41)*

Jesus said:

*"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mark 12:30)*

The idea here is that the psalmist was going to make every effort to praise the Lord regardless of the circumstances that he found himself in.

We cannot always rejoice in our circumstances but we can always rejoice in the Lord:

*"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)*

## **B Within the Congregation**

Notice that it says, *"in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation."*

I wonder if the psalmist was stating the same idea with two different phrases, or was he talking about two different groups of people: the entire congregation and the assembly of the upright. I do believe that every congregation has a group within the group. Within our congregation there is a core of very committed disciples of the Lord. We see each other more often because we assemble together more often than the whole congregation. We serve together and worship together at many different opportunities.

## **II A Portrait of His Power (vs. 2 – 9)**

*"The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." (Psalm 111:2)*

The phrase "sought out" has the idea of studied. As God's people, we seek out God – we study Him.

*"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)*

*"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." (Deuteronomy 4:29)*

*"His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever." (Psalm 111:3)*

*"He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion." (Psalm 111:4)*

*"He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant." (Psalm 111:5)*

Notice that he supplies those that fear Him with food.

*"The secret of the LORD [is] with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."  
(Psalm 25:14)*

*"Behold, the eye of the LORD [is] upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;"  
(Psalm 33:18)*

*"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."  
(Psalm 34:7)*

*"O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for [there is] no want to them that fear him. (Psalm 34:9) Surely his salvation [is] nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land." (Psalm 85:9)*

*"For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him."  
(Psalm 103:11)*

*"Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm 103:13)*

*"But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;" (Psalm 103:17)*

*"The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." (Psalm 147:11)*

*"He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen." (Psalm 111:6)*

*"The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure." (Psalm 111:7)*

*"They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." (Psalm 111:8)*

*"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." (Psalm 111:9)*

Reverend is a title that should only be associated with God. It means to be feared or revered. Notice that he also gives redemption to them that fear him.

### III A Principle that's Practical. (v. 10)

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." (Psalm 111:10)*

When the Scripture says the beginning, it means the foundation. The foundation of godly living is faith – the fear of the Lord. Faith begins wisdom, which leads us to obedience, which yields the blessings of God, which then causes us to praise Him.

Notice that we return to where we started – praise. Hallelujah.