

A Prayer to Enlarge Christ's Kingdom

Reading of the Word

Psalm 67

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

67 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah² that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! ⁶ The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. ⁷ God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Prayer

Father,

Give us all, knowledge of your goodness, that we might be over-awed by your greatness.

In Jesus Name, Amen

VOV pg 194

Warm Up

Good morning. My name is Eric Mattie. I serve as one of the elders. I'm not the normal preacher here. Our Pastor, Ryan Perry is on Sabbatical. We continue today in the book of Psalms.

Song writer Michael Card talks about the spiritual connection the Psalms give us with God.

He said this:

"The psalms are a connection for us. When I'm lamenting, I may feel disconnected from God. The psalms express that experience. When I'm joyful, the psalms give me language to connect to that joy and remember that it comes from God. He never sleeps, He never slumbers."

But then Card says this:

“In the end, the psalms provide for every need, all those misconceptions, all the things we are hungry for, all the correctives we need to remind us that life isn’t about us, but is really all about him. The Psalms are a bottomless resource for all things we need”

There are times when we pray the Psalms, we need to pray contrary to what our hearts are feeling. You may not feel the emotions or passions that the psalmist is expressing

But that is the point.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said:

“The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart.”

{Slowly...}

Sometimes that lost connection to the Lord, is because we are too focused on the poverty and shallowness of our hearts condition and feelings. We need to have our hearts enlarged by God, His purposes, and His Kingdom

This Psalm is a daring prayer. Puritan Matthew Henry’s comments, helped me to title this message. He said, this Psalm 67 is **A Prayer to Enlarge Christ’s Kingdom.**

This prayer in Psalm 67, may find many of us lost in its outpouring of praise to God. We don’t understand it. Yet, we should express it.

There are times we need to sit and learn to find connection with the Lord. I’m inviting us today to see this Psalm, as (using Michael Cards words) the corrective, we need to be reminded of that life is not about us, but is really all about him.

Introduction

Psalm 67 is only one of a handful of psalms that are unclear in its genre. Its content itself is a mixture between prayer to God and community of believers blessings most likely at the end of Israel’s temple worship time.

Many preachers have called this it a missional psalm.

Let me give you the **:10 second context** about this prayer and it is courtesy of J.J. Stewart Perowne, who summarizes Psalm 67 as

“The outpouring of a heart which longs to see the God and King of Israel acknowledge and worshiped as the God and King of the world.”

So that is the heart of this prayer.

Pause

We ask ourselves do we want our God and king to be the God and King to our lost family, neighbors, co workers?

We can like what this church give us. We can like what we want from it in this service, in our ministries and in our identity.

But as Christ's church, we stand as a witness and manifestation of the larger kingdom of God. That kingdom includes the greater mission of God. To the people of God, the mission of God matters. What is the mission of God? That He would be known and worshipped.

The prayer starts with the request

1. For God's Renown to Be Spread to the Nations

Look at what it prays here:

***May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us, Selah***

***that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.***

***Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!***

- This petition of course sounds familiar as it is the high priestly blessing of Aaron found in Numbers 6:24-26.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

- 3 elements of the Aaronic blessing are made into a prayer asking God to 1) be gracious, 2) bless and 3) make his face shine
- This third element of God's shining face conveys a vividly picture of a warm, personal relationship. A shining face also holds the concept of favor, acceptance and love. It is the opposite face that is angry or scowling.

But this request for blessing and unmerited favor is asked for a reason.

After verse 1, there is this “Selah” pause in the song, not a period. The concept keeps going because there is an incomplete thought expressed here.

God blesses his people, for the sake of his praise among all the peoples. He blesses so that his saving power might be made known among all the nations. And they rejoice in that and thus give God Glory

This theme of God blessing and then being known and praised by all the nations is found throughout the Bible.

Examples:

God chose Abraham and said:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Genesis 12:1-3

To Isaac, Abrahams son he said

17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Genesis 22:17,18

When God gave the law to Israel, through Moses,he said:

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

6 Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’

7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? 8 And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

- In other words The giving of the law will prompt a jealousy in other nations that gives rise to nations to come and know him and praise him.

At Jericho

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven day.

Hebrews 11:30

Jericho's wall coming down through shouting showed the glory of God's power, not the might of the Israelites. He will bless so that His saving power will be known

Queen Sheba in King Solomon's presence

- Her compliment is about God not Solomon

Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. ...3 And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her...

9 "Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."

1 King 10:1,3,9

In the fiery furnace

- Shadrach Meshach and Abednego's deliverance out of the fiery furnace cause king Nebuchadnezzar to state:

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."

Daniel 3:28

Isaiah 43:7 clearly states his people are created for his glory,

“everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory,

whom I formed and made.”

Jesus

- Jesus says in the great commission to make disciples in His name and to the **glory of his name** the disciples were to preach repentance and forgiveness.

Paul

- Paul said he was saved to preach the good news of Christ **to the Gentiles**
- They were to be included in to the kingdom.

Revelation

9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb”

Revelation 7:9,10

- A great multitude to include every race, tribe and nation. To include every neighbor, acquaintance and friends

This life altering text Psalm 67:1,2 points that we are blessed SO THAT his ways maybe known and his saving power known to people: And the way this is known is by it spreading through us, his people. Right here is this room

As God’s chosen people today the danger we have is that we are prone to disconnect God’s blessing in our lives from God’s purposes for our lives.

We are redeemed so that we may reach, so that more rejoicing of God can happen.

We should care that God would be know and thus worshipped.

That's why we are to pray for blessing, "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us.

When we understand it like that, it's a dangerous prayer. Because we are now held accountable and can no longer just view it as a blessing prayer for ourselves our luxuries and comforts and bank accounts.

From the spiritual blessings of grace mercy and love a testimony to share, to the material blessings of talent, intellect giftedness and financial gain to provide help to the needy, we dangerously think that they are for us to hoard and enjoy.

And that is a challenge. We can be selfish. We are called to love what God loves, seek what he seeks, pray for what he prays for.

Did Jesus say seek first the things you are worried about? No. But many live like this. Many live for this.

Rather He said:

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:33

The corrective attitude in this prayer starts with our motives in what we live for.

- To enlarge our concerns beyond ourselves. That's loving our neighbor locally and nationally as ourselves.
- To put our minds on things above not on earthly things. That's loving God over everything else.

We need to pivot our hearts passion toward the passions of our God Lord and Savior.

Pause...

To the people of God, the mission of God matters.

Evangelism happens, so exaltation of our God and king will happen.

v.3

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

- Note the plural Peoples- that is nations.
- This verse and its double in verse 5, are not simply a call to individual people to sing with all their heart.

- This second line in Hebrew gives joyful emphasis that to English ear would say us: Let the peoples praise you, ***ALL OF THEM!***

Slow emphasis...

The purpose of Redemption is for people to rejoice reflect resemble and represent our Creator.

- We are made in the image of God. An image simple reflects or resembles or something greater.
- This first prayer for God's renown to spread to the nations mean we value that God name and fame to be known, influential and significant among the peoples.

That God, his ways and saving power, may be personally acknowledge and experience through Christ as our Father and gives us the spirit of adoption.

- The saving power of God is found in what Christ accomplished.
- His life, death and resurrection are the redeeming works for fallen mankind to place faith in so that they receive the gracious gift of being saved from their penalty of sin and brought in to the family of God to experience peace and fullness of life in Christ.

From there a redeemed church truly rejoicing in the blessing of God through salvation, desire.. a redeemed church desires... others to know this salvation and to join with them in Praising God.

This prayer goes on in verse 4 praying

2. For God's Rule to Bring Joy and Gladness to the Nations

**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth. *Selah***

**Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!**

Ps.67:4,5

- This request for the nations to be glad and to sing for joy is not forcing through prayer the nations to obey and submit to the Lord.
- There is a tone of glad submission from men and women being converted all over the world. This request for the nations to be glad is a prayer of God's sanctifying work in our brothers and sisters in Christ as they mature.
- This should be our prayer for our selves as well to find gladness and joy under the rule and reign of God.

Now we know that all the nations have not yet been revealed that Jesus is currently ruling over the affairs of the world today. There will be a day, where the veil will drop and earthly rulers will be dismissed, and Christ's return will be as King.

This section of the prayer helps us to pray outside of ourselves in the here and now and to pray for that future.

We are anticipating our praying here-

Anticipating the day Christ's church is complete

and Christ return will usher in the eternal reign

where strength and tenderness, joy and gladness

will be experience by his followers in every nation, as
children of His kingdom

now simply categorize.

If you have ever worried that the reign of Christ would resemble the dictatorships or monarchies of our sinful age, think deeply on verse 4. Let me give you a seed idea to consider.

Verse 4 says:

**for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth**

***The nature of God's rule in creation and history
unveils his wonderful character.***

A. **Christ will judge the people in equity**- judge here is not passing judgement. Rather it is the act putting everything right- as a good king would do. He will put things right religiously, socially, economically, judiciously. He will govern on level ground in complete fairness

- Isaiah gives us insight to the type of King we will gladly submit to.

Isaiah 11:1–9

[1] **There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.**

[2] **And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.**

[3] **And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,**

[4] **but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.**

[5] **Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.**

Isaiah 11:1–5

This of course is referring the Coming Messiah King- Jesus. Whose character and spirit we saw last week, in Exodus 34:6–7 is

[6] **The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, [7] keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”**

Exodus 34:6-7

- Who would cry foul with such a ruler?

King Jesus- Whose wisdom and understanding is not stain by sin or stupidity. We will be like the Queen of Sheba, in awe and speechless of His wisdom.

- That scene with Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is a shadow of what we will experience which means it will be infinitely better, For us.

The wonderful character of our God King will rule in equity.

The wonderful character effects the hearts of men and woman to gladly submit. But then look at verse 6-9

- [6] The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.**
- [7] The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.**
- [8] The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.**
- [9] They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.**

- The sovereign rule of God sets everything right for not only humanity but even for the creatures of his creation.

The second seed idea to consider about How Christ as king will be completely unique to the kings of the earth is that

B. Christ will guide the nations upon the earth.-to guide has a shepherding overtone

- To guide has a Psalm 23 "The Lord is my shepherd" overtone to its meaning. David rejoiced in this blessed governance.
- This gentle verb "guide" is seen in verses that include Psalm 23:3

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

Psalm 23:3

- (NIV says guides me)

When we walk in God's way, we have no want. We lie down in green pastures and graze besides still waters. Those who submit to the rule and guidance of God will be blessed with a godly fulfilled life that lead them to heaven.

Look at this OT description again about Jesus:

**Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.**

**² He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;**

**³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.**

**⁴ He will not grow faint or be discouraged^[a]
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.**

Isaiah 42:1-4

- There is this word picture of a bruised reeds or faintly burning wick, which describes us. Frail, weak, dependent people.
- In a kingdom and society, many could say ignore them. They are a burden. A Bruised reeds are pulled from the field because they are done with. Burning wicks at the end of a candle about to turn to smoke, should be snuffed out. and thrown away. Their use is over.
- But that is not how Jesus governs. Not now and not in the future.
- He will not break, he will not quench. He will faithfully guide like a shepherd.
- He does not govern under a fainting strength and mental incoherency, that will drain his patience and power
- He does not rule under a cloud of discouragement and depression

Preach:

Think about the day we are praying for in this psalm

Imagine the joy we will have by being impartially governed. Guided from a Shepherd like heart in paths of righteousness

These two qualities partnered together in one perfect person with untainted character that includes being merciful, gracious, holy, abounding in steadfast love and faithful!

Let the nations be glad of such a ruler.

May we as a church prayer forward and look forward to that day.

Finally this prayer concludes by petitioning

3. For God's Robust Blessings to Produce Reverent Fear in the Nations

The earth has yielded its increase;

God, our God, shall bless us.

⁷ God shall bless us;

let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Psalm 67:6,7

- Many teachers point to this passage and say the context of the psalm is a harvest celebration. Not all agree. Regardless if it is or is not, it points to a future final blessing of God's kind government in Christ.

Slow..

Praying for God's robust blessing to yield a harvest of people into the kingdom, results in the peoples in the world worshipping in gladness and in the reverent fear of the Lord.

Revering God means that we hold him in the deepest respects for his power, holiness wisdom and grace. We will stand in praise and awe of His rule.

May we pray for this increase of blessing in our life not so that it end with us. But that we can be a channel of blessings for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom population and the ultimate enlargement to his praise.

So I ask this today: Does the mission of God matter to you? For God to be known and praised?

Do we as a church long for the peoples of the world, neighborhood and community to join us in praise of our God and King?

Have you prepared yourself to know how to present the gospel biblically?

Maybe today your admitting: "I don't pray this way."

- We now we need to pray this way and should as Christians no better. How do you pray “Jesus enlarge your church, your kingdom” if I don’t have an enlarge heart for it.

Remember the Dietrich Bonhoeffer quote at the beginning

“The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart.”

Praying for our church, praying for our hearts.. we may need some guidance. The elders recognize that. So we are offering this free book for you to take: 5 Things to pray for your church.”

It’ll be in the foyer. 1 per family. If we run out tell an elder

Grab this book and let the time in prayer that it leads you through recalibrate your heart to the larger church and kingdom mission.

Maybe you are already there and the mission is burning in your soul because it does matter. But you find that presenting the gospel is a struggle.

Well this coming fall, we are featuring a class answering the question What is the Gospel?

- This is not Gospel centered Class or Empowered Christianity. It’s a new Class.

It will be designed to equip you to understand the main components of the gospel in order for you to put within your own words what the Gospel is. It is to help you explain and proclaim the gospel to others.

I invite you to attend class starting in September. I hope this room is filled as it is now.

Let’s pray:

God, may you be gracious to us and bless us. And make for face shine on us. Reveal your glory to our hearts through your Word.

Recalibrate our hearts to a larger and more in depth care for your kingdom and connection with your Spirit.

Let the Peoples praise you oh God. Let them be glad and sing for joy Let all the peoples praise you we ask in your name.

Amen