

September 10, 2017

Series: Authentic: Living Life through the Psalms

Title: On His Mind

Text: Psalms 115 NKJV

¹Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth. ²**Why should the Gentiles say, “So where is their God?”** ³**But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.** ⁴**Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men’s hands.** ⁵**They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;** ⁶**They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell;** ⁷**They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat.** ⁸**Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.**

⁹O Israel, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. ¹⁰O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield. ¹¹You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

¹²**The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.** ¹³**He will bless those who fear the LORD, Both small and great.**

¹⁴May the LORD give you increase more and more, You and your children. ¹⁵May you be blessed by the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. ¹⁶The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s; But the earth

He has given to the children of men. ¹⁷**The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor any who go down into silence.** ¹⁸**But we will bless the LORD From this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!**

Introduction of Series:

This is part 2 of a 13-part series titled, “Authentic – Living life through the Psalms.” Today, Psalms 115 (Last week we covered Psalm 1 and did a brief introduction on the book of Psalms)!

I. Psalms 115/Introduction/Compare Nehemiah 4, 11-12

- The first major section of this Psalm (after the theme of verse 1) is **verses 2-8**.
- The Psalms goal is to deal with idolatry and talk about the useless of them.
- In reality it seems to be a retort against those who were questioning the Psalmist and the nation of Israel’s trust in the Lord their God.
- (2) “So why should the Gentiles say, so where is their God?”
- It’s akin to “trash talk” in the religious game of things.
- There are a couple thoughts on the writing of this Psalms

1. Given the sharp confrontation of Idols v. the God of Israel, indicates that Psalms 115 was written after the Jews’ return from the Babylonian captivity, where they would have witnessed the Babylonian idol worship firsthand. These verses seem to mock their idol worship in contrast to the God they serve (v.3-8)
2. In fact, **Psalms 115** was likely written and/or sung during Nehemiah’s time after they completed the re-

building the wall, as a song of Praise to God and in response to the opposition they were receiving by those who did not want them to re-build the walls of Jerusalem.

3. Do you remember the opposition and the characters?

Nehemiah 4:1-9NKJV - But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. ² And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish— stones that are burned?" ³ **Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."** ⁴ Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! ⁵ Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked *You* to anger before the builders. ⁶ ***So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.*** ⁷ Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites ***heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry,*** ⁸ and all of them conspired together to come ***and attack Jerusalem and create confusion.*** ⁹ Nevertheless we made our prayer to our

God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

Key Thoughts: v. 2-8; Neh. 4:1-9

- Anytime you commit to following God's plan, you will have opposition. (***v. 2 – Where is your God? Neh. 4:3 – Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up...***)
- People will never understand why you "worship" and the "work" it takes to fulfill His purpose in your life! (***v.3 – "Our God is heaven and He does whatever He pleases." Neh. 4:4 – 6 – Hear, O' God, for we are despised;... So we built the wall... anyway!"***)
 - To Israel's pagan neighbors, it was incomprehensible to them to worship an invisible God. Even the great Roman general Pompey was baffled and surprised to find nothing in the Most Holy Place of the temple when he looked into it.
 - But there is a profound and important reason for God's forbidding the use of images in his worship, namely, God cannot be represented by anything ... or anyone... because there's ***NO THING and NO ONE*** ... that can be compared to Him.
 - When you attempt to create something to represent God, on earth, it demeans God and misleads you!
- God wants to restore the walls that have been broken and close the gaps that have been breached in our lives.

- You have to set a watch against the enemy that comes to steal, kill and destroy.

II. We Trust & He Blesses – (v. 9-18)

a. The call is to trust in the Lord ... He is their help and their shield (v.9-11)

- The Nation must trust
- The Priest (House of Aaron)
- All who fear God

b. The Lord Remembers/He is mindful/Takes Note (We are on His mind)

¹²The LORD has been mindful of *us*; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. ¹³He will bless those who fear the LORD, *Both* small and great.

Let's Go back to Nehemiah 4

Neh. 4:10-14NKJV - ¹⁰Then Judah said, ***“The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall.”*** ¹¹And our adversaries said, “They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease.” ¹²So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, “From whatever place you turn, *they will be upon us.*” ¹³Therefore I positioned *men* behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. ¹⁴And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders,

and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. **Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.**”

The Lord is mindful (he remembers us) when

1. Times are Tough

Neh. 4:10a - ***“the strength of the laborers is failing”***

- He will never leave us or forsake us.
- I will be with you always

2. Times are Tremendous (OVERWHELMING)

Neh. 4:10b – ***“there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall.”***

- He knows our frame
- He is acquainted with our weakness
- He knows when you're not able

3. Times are Terrifying

Neh. 4:11-14 – ***“And our adversaries said ...”***

- Because of what is being said and the plots
- Because of fear – “I will not fear” – v. 14
- Psalms 115:13 – He will bless those who fear the Lord, Both small and great!
- No one too small or insignificant; No one so great ... Everybody who trusts, gets blessed!

III. Response to the Times: Our Confidence is in the Lord whom we Praise

Every tough, tremendous and terrifying time demands a righteous, God-honoring response.

¹⁴ May the Lord give you increase more and more, You and your children. ¹⁵ May you *be* blessed by the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ ***The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.*** ¹⁷ The dead do not praise the Lord, Nor any who go down into silence. ¹⁸ **But we will bless the Lord From this time forth and forevermore. Praise the Lord!**

16. We are called to steward the places that God has given you.

- *This does not mean that God has abandoned all interest in the earth or decided to keep heaven for himself. He is the maker of heaven and earth and gives us a measure of stewardship in the earth.*

17. No dead response, no dead praises ... We will bless the Lord!

- *There are no praises given to God on earth by dead people. The dead are silent. So, it must be done by living people who understand their God and knows that He does exploits.*

The great theologian and preacher, Charles Spurgeon wrote, ***“Though the DEAD cannot and the WICKED will not and the CARELESS do not praise God, yet we will shout “Hallelujah” for ever and ever.”***

Conclusion/Big Idea/Closing Prayer:

BIG IDEA:

**Dead people can't
Wicked people won't
Careless people don't
BUT WE WILL ... GIVE GLORY TO HIS NAME!**

Because He is mindful of Us!