

CLASS 3
PRAISE

Thou that hast giv'n so much to me,
 Give one thing more, a grateful heart...
 Not thankful, when it pleaseth me;
 As if thy blessings had spare days:
 But such a heart, whose pulse may be
 Thy praise.
 –George Herbert, *Gratefulness*

To deny oneself the opportunity of praise – is that not a description of hell itself? Yet the self-worshipping, God-denying atheist has willfully chosen an eternity without any outflow of praise toward his Creator. Such a dammed-up, decaying life is like the Dead Sea, receiving life-giving waters but passing along no life for mammals to drink or fish to swim in. The life without praise is just such a tragedy. –Herbert Lockyer

You can never do the mega-laundry so that you don't have to do laundry again. You can never cook the mega-meal so that you don't have to cook ever again. In the same way, we are never finished with the praise of God. God is always ahead of us. God is always doing some wonderful work that has never been done before. We can never catch up. –Irene Nowell

The five hallelujah psalms with Psalm 145 as a foundation are a cathedral built entirely of praise. No matter how much we suffer, no matter our doubts, no matter how angry we get, no matter how many times we have asked in desperation or doubt, “How long?”, prayer develops finally into praise. Everything finds its way to the doorstep of praise. Praise is the consummating prayer. This is not to say that other prayers are inferior to praise, only that all prayer pursued far enough, becomes praise... This is not a “word of praise” slapped onto whatever mess we are in at the moment. This crafted conclusion for the Psalms tells us that our prayers are going to end in praise, but that it is also going to take a while. Don't rush it. It may take years, even decades, before certain prayers arrive at the hallelujahs, at Psalms 145–150...But prayer, a praying life, finally becomes praise. Prayer is always reaching towards praise and will finally arrive there. If we persist in prayer, laugh and cry, doubt and believe, struggle and dance and then struggle again, we will surely end up at Psalm 150, on our feet, applauding, “Encore! Encore!” –Eugene Peterson