

Selah: Adoration

Job 42:1-3; Psalm 8:1-4, 103:1-5, 148, 150; 2 Corinthians 1:2-4; Galatians 1:3-4; Revelation 4:8-11

Introduction:

In 1 Thessalonians, we're told to pray without ceasing, but what do you say when it feels as though God isn't speaking? What do you talk about when you don't have a request? What happens when your heart feels heavy, but the words won't come? Or when you pray for a few minutes and run out of things to say?

In this series, we will be exploring the different kinds of prayer that we find in the Bible, and what each of these aspects teaches us about how we are to relate to our creator and to others.

Selah:

The specific meaning of *Selah* is a little debated. What we can agree on is that it means a type of pause. This pause comes in a prayer, a lyrical prayer, or psalm and gives a time of reflection such that a person can take a moment to ponder the words or lyrics that they have just participated in.

This is useful with things such as the Psalms, as the lyrics are usually complex and multifaceted and also loaded with history. The reader and listener both need time to reflect on exactly what it is that's being said. So, naturally, if we have a message series that consists of nothing but pondering the lyrics of prayers, we name it Selah.

This week we're going to be taking a Selah on prayers with an aspect of adoration.

Adoration:

The explanation of a prayer of adoration is right there in the name. It involves adoring. To show adoration, you are expressly focused on giving credit and recognition where it is due. It is a verbal or lyrical investment in something or someone that you find the utmost value in. A prayer of adoration is assigning this credit and recognition to God...part of the greater Mosaic of praise and worship.

Let's look at some examples of this that I'd like to include in this morning's message. Read Psalm 148. Did you notice there is a command to praise, starting at the different skies and descending down to the earth? No one is exempt from the need to recognize God. (for more info on Psalm 148 watch [Psalm 148](#).)

It commands the angels and the heights first. It commands the scary monsters of the earth next. They even fear Him.

It finally commands humanity greatest to least. Kings first and children last. Also notice, comically, Kings of the Earth were mentioned immediately following cattle, bugs, and ducks...

Let's do another. Read Psalm 150. This is the last Psalm, essentially saying that the author really means 'praise the Lord.' God really does deserve all the credit, and it is punctuated with a repeated word: "*Hallelu*." This is where we get our word *Hallelujah*.

The definition of *hallelujah*, according to Hebrew College.edu, is an exuberant expression of celebration with a connotation of boasting, bragging, boisterous announcements, shining brightly, shouting madly, or absolute raving about something. And the *Yah* bit is for *Yahweh*. ‘Loose your mind for Yahweh.’

Think of David dancing in front of the Ark of the Covenant type of obsession. (2 Samuel 6:15) This is not a word for a sleepy set of Christmas carolers singing under coercion of their great Aunt. This is, God entered the room and He’s the best thing ever, I’m losing my mind please sign my Vinyl copy kind of adoration.

It’s an imperative command to adore someone MOST deserving.

Punctuation:

Now that we've discussed what adoration is, I'd like to point out some instances of adoration being used as a punctuation. Many of the pastors and teachers that I admire today absolutely insist on beginning every prayer, regardless of the type, with adoration and recognition of God. There are many examples of this punctuation in the Bible, and we’ll be looking at three of them. Real quick.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:2-4 and Galatians 1:3-4. If you hadn't noticed, Paul was a big fan of opening his letters with praise and adoration for God and Jesus. These also comprised his closings on several occasions.

Paul valued putting adoration of God up front. We need to ask why, but first I want to call attention to how this comes into play in our best example of prayer...The Lord's prayer. It begins “Our Father who is in heaven, may your name be recognized as holy.”

Jesus's example to us on how to pray specifically opens with adoration. Albeit brief and compacted. Its placement in the prayer is an example. It was no doubt assumed that should we have a longer prayer, the iteration would be at length.

So why this insistence on adoration upfront? Why such an emphasis on adoration at all? Will answer that in a bit, but first let's look at some misgivings that people may have about adoration.

Push back:

Some people take real issue with being demanded or even requested to praise someone. Part of this has to do with our culture. In virtually any type of media, any king or creature or statue or idol demanding praise is doing it for vanity and domination. We see Nebuchadnezzar and Darius of Babylon Persia demanding praise in order to celebrate themselves and dominate other people. We have also encountered people who are full of themselves and demand credit and praise. So we have this natural pushback against things that demand our adoration, and rightly so.

For some people, this is translated to God. They instinctively believe that God is demanding adoration in order to dominate us or that He’s full of Himself. The thing to keep in mind is that you are more accustomed to dealing with people. People are certainly imperfect and

undeserving. So a person demanding adoration is an obvious red flag. But God is not a person. God hasn't messed up. God is not undeserving. He actually *deserves* it. He actually did it. He actually cares.

This brings us back to the questions and adds one. Why adoration up front? What adoration at all? Why is God deserving?

Why Adoration:

So to make a case for adoring God, let's take a look at a few more scriptural examples. Read Psalm 8:1-4. This is adoration that makes a direct power comparison between God and us. Making a universe is impressive right? And that's just the part that we can see.

Read Job 42:1-3. Once again, this is a direct power comparison.

Read Revelation 4:8-11. So as we can see, and as we often forget, God does indeed deserve adoration because he quite literally and actually created every good thing. Anything that you have ever enjoyed in life has come from Him. If that's not a reason to adore someone with boisterous raving braggadocious comments, I don't know what is. But there is something more.

Read Psalm 103:1-5. Not only is God deserving of adoration because of the power comparison and because He's the source of every good thing, but He is deserving of adoration because His love is so vast and great that He's willing to overlook and deal with our evil just to get to us.

Conclusion:

Dealing with such a powerful being can be really intimidating, not going to lie. Some may ask why does He have to deal with my evil to bring me to Himself? Why can't he just bring me to Himself now?

The thing is, to bring us into eternity as we are now would not be a mercy. Now we fight and quarrel. Now we seek our own desires over others. If God made peace with evil, He would be sentencing us to suffering. If God made total war against evil while we were still living in it, He would be without mercy because that is straight up destroying us.

God is worthy of adoration because He came up with a solution to deal with our evil without having it destroy us. That solution is Jesus. When we accept what Jesus did for us, when we accept that Jesus' life and death was a demonstration of how God did not want to retaliate against us when we personally sinned directly against him, when we accept that gesture and make a decision of wanting to be with God, this changes how we think and who we are such that we are now a consciousness and soul that can move towards him while gradually and eventually losing our own evil.

The end result is you truly you, without your flaws.

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Paul so often began his letters with praise of God before addressing anything else?

- How is God's worthiness different from a human being demanding praise?
- How might beginning your prayers with adoration change your perspective before you bring your requests to God?
- If you spent five uninterrupted minutes in prayer without asking God for anything, what would you say to Him?
- Watch [Stars and Whales singing How Great is Our God \(Chris Tomlin\) - Louie Giglio - 9min version](#). How does this bring Psalm 148 to life for you? Does it influence your desire to praise God?