

### Uncommon Praise

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father ...*  
James 1:17

We commonly and easily hand out praise. We say that a movie was awesome, or a basketball game was great, or the weather is lovely. But do we really mean that they stack up as being among the greatest, loveliest, most awe-inspiring things we've ever experienced? Is our praise too common?

It is good to enjoy the things God has given us to experience, see, and live through; however, it is best to save our highest praise – our uncommon praise – for the one who gives us all good things, our Heavenly Father. This week, let's study what God has done for us and give him praise for his great love and mercy.

#### Monday – Praising Father God

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”* Ephesians 1:3

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:3-5. Who is the focus of these verses? What do you know about him from these verses?
2. Review Jesus' statements in John 6:44-47, 8:19 and 10:30-33 and describe the relationship between God the Son and God the Father?
3. Suffice it to say, Jesus was enamored with the Father (and conversely, the Father with him – see Mark 1:9-10). Take a few moments and consider the extraordinary relationship between the Father and his son. How would you go about describing it to a new Christian?

**Making it Personal:** Praise God in prayer, expressing your thanks for being able to call him Father.

#### Tuesday – New Birth, Living Hope

*“I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.”* Martin Luther, 16<sup>th</sup> c. German theologian

1. Martin Luther uttered these words upon his conversion, when he realized that righteousness comes only by faith in Jesus Christ. A right standing before God was not something he could secure for himself, but only through Christ. This is what Peter talks about in 1 Peter 1:3. What comes to mind when you hear the words “birth” and “hope”?
2. In Romans 8:18-27, what do we learn about hope in the midst of suffering and decay?
3. Simply put, God is our only hope. What does he do for us that can sustain us through these hard times?

**Digging Deeper:** Read John 3:1-21. What do you learn from John about new birth, Jesus' relationship with God the Father, and the purposes for which Jesus came?

#### Wednesday – Resurrection Power

*“There is no power but of God.”* Romans 13:1

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:3. How would you explain the “great mercy” that led to Jesus' sacrifice?
2. Take a look at Titus 3:3-8. What prompted God's gift of salvation according to verses 4-6? What were we like before (verse 3)? What is our hope and purpose afterwards (verses 7-8)?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. What does the power of Jesus Christ's resurrection lead to?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray that God's people will answer the call to be his faithful ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20) to those who do not yet know God.

#### Thursday – Our Inheritance

*“However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you ...”* Deuteronomy 15:4

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:4. What comes to mind when you think of an inheritance that never loses its value?
2. How did Jesus assure his quarreling friends that he had great things in store for them in Luke 22:24-30?
3. In the next passage, Luke 22:31-35, what does Jesus say about his friend Peter faltering in his relationship with Jesus? How did Jesus then promise to care for Peter's needs anyway?

**Making it Personal:** How has Jesus cared for you even when you have faltered in your relationship with him?

#### Friday – Salvation to Come

*“Salvation is God's way of making us real people.”* Augustine, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. North African theologian

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:5. What does it mean to you to be shielded by God as you go through life?

**Text Insight:** The biblical concept of salvation covers a number of circumstances, including things like the moment a person becomes one of God's children, the ongoing process of becoming more like Jesus the Son of God, and the time when we will experience God's wonderful presence for all eternity.

2. What do Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:3-8 tell you about waiting on God's timing?
3. What should you do while waiting on God's timing according to 2 Peter 3:9-18?

**Making it Personal:** Pray, asking God to deepen your sense of hope, that it might be a living and dynamic force in your life.

**For the Weekend:** Compare Genesis 2:1-25 with Revelation 21:1-8, 21:22-27 and 22:1-6. How does our promised inheritance restore us to the relationship God originally intended us to have with him?