



**“Honoring Our Past, Embracing Our Present,
and Trusting God for Our Future”**

Psalm 145

Dr. Bill White, Jr.

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¹ I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. ² Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. ³ Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. ⁴ One generation shall extol your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. ⁵ They will recount the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works I will meditate. ⁶ They will proclaim the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. ⁷ They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. ⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹ The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. ¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you. ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, ¹² to make known to all people your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. ¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his deeds. ¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their

food in due season. ¹⁶ You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. ¹⁷ The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings. ¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. ²⁰ The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. ²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

The Book of Psalms is one of my favorite books of the Bible. I love it because it contains all of life's seasons in it and we can often find ourselves in one of those seasons. Dr. Denise Debrowski Hopkins, one of my professors at Wesley Theological Seminary in DC, teaches and writes that there are three primary seasons in the Book of Psalms.

The first season is **Orientation**, when things in life are going fine and just as we planned. Things could not be better. Then there's a season of **disorientation**, when things are chaotic and the bottom of life falls out and we find ourselves in what David calls the **Pit**. A place of despair, hopelessness and loneliness, and we cry out to the Lord from the Pit. Finally, there's a season of **new orientation**, when God hears our cry and answers and delivers us from our place of despair and places us on the mountaintop of victory. It's not just a return to orientation but a new orientation, and life is even better than before and we say, *"O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory."*

In Psalm 145, we find David offering praise unto God for God's greatness and worthiness of all praise forever and ever. Generations will commend God's work to another generation. We honor our past today on Heritage

Sunday, as believers and followers of the Jesus of Scripture, and by doing so, we honor God's faithfulness to us through all generations. We honor our past as a people of the Judeo-Christian faith, as a people of both the Exodus and the Resurrection. The church has a complicated past and our past is far from perfect. There are parts of the past that we should never repeat but redeem it for God's glory.

Yet, we honor the past that is filled with heroes and heroines of the faith, who regardless of race or socio-economic background sought to be ambassadors for Christ and defenders of the faith. It is essential that we never forget our past. It is important that we tell our children the stories of our past. If we do not they will not have an appreciation for the things they have today. They need to hear about the times before iPhones, Snapchat, Tiktok. If we don't tell them about our past, both the good and bad, the joys and the horrors, then those horrors can be repeated because they will not recognize them and what they look like when they see them.

Secondly, we **embrace** our **present**. As important as it is to honor our past, we cannot live in the past. If it's a glorious past, we can't live and stay there, saying those were the good ole days. If it was tragic or horrific, we cannot live and stay there, saying, woe is me and keep reliving the pain. We can only live in the *present*, so it's important for us to **embrace** the present.

¹⁷ The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings. ¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them. ²⁰ The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. ²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

How many of us make the mistake of complaining about everything today and longing for yesterday? Or how many do not appreciate the blessings and opportunities of today, and squander today's blessings by either being anxious or worrying about tomorrow, or by not being content and looking for the next best, new, and big thing? We cannot appreciate what we have now because we want the newest and next model - newest model car, the next phone with the latest upgrades, new house, new relationship.

Finally, **we trust God for our future**. We realize how limited and finite we are when we discover that we can plan and schedule things and they don't turn out the way we think. We must ultimately trust God for our future. Our **faith** in God tells us that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose. Our **faith** in God tells us to **trust** God and if we embrace our present and trust God for our future, then **marvelous** things can happen. We'll be open to the creative ideas for ministry coming forth from those who have experienced ministry in other settings and bring fresh expressions of ministry and new and creative ideas. We'll **care** for our *Seniors*, **inspire** our children and youth, and provide relevant ministries for our young adults and adults.

Imagine what will happen when we see our challenges as opportunities for God to do the impossible. **Imagine** what will happen when we really love each other and treat everybody right; and there is no division between families and different generations. **Imagine** what will happen when we trust God for our future to do a new and awesome thing **in, through** and **with** us. **Imagine** what kind of church we'll be when we become the true and genuine church of prayer, study, worship, and fellowship. The Lord will do

exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or think through the power of Christ that works in us.

*I don't know about tomorrow
I just live from day to day
I don't borrow from its sunshine
For its skies may turn to gray*

*I don't worry o'er the future
For I know what Jesus said
And today I'll walk beside Him
For He knows what is ahead*

Refrain

*Many things about tomorrow
I don't seem to understand
But I know Who holds tomorrow
And I know Who holds my hand*

*Every step is getting brighter
As the golden stairs I climb
Every burden's getting lighter
Every cloud is silver lined.*

*There, the sun is always shining
There, no tear will dim the eyes
At the ending of the rainbow
Where the mountains touch the sky.*

Refrain:

*I don't know about tomorrow
It may bring me poverty
But the One Who feeds the sparrow
Is the One Who stands by me.*

*And the path that is my portion
Maybe through the flame or flood
But His Presence goes before me
And I'm covered with His blood*

*Many things about tomorrow
I don't seem to understand
But I know Who holds tomorrow
And I know Who holds my hand*

Let us make a new commitment to God and to each other, that we will honor our past, embrace our present, and trust God for our future.

Let the Church say, "Amen."