

**This Is What We Do! This Is Who We Are!**  
**Psalm 71**

November 18, 2018

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Several matters collide this Sunday morning. As we strive to do every Sunday, we gather to worship Jesus. He is the only reason we gather on Sundays anyway. We will do our best to honor Him and preach Him. Second, we are dedicating parents and children to the Lord. This is a tradition for us on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We have a number of families who are participating. Third, today, we are celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Chinese ministry. As you know, we believe that God has called us to preach the Gospel to the nations. We are blessed in our city to have a direct ministry to Chinese. And, finally, today is the Sunday before Thanksgiving. So, in all of these things, we give thanks.

And so, as I began to think about this Sunday, I just began to think about the fact that this is what we do. This is who we are. Early on in my ministry here, I shared with you a word from Psalm 71 that I believed should direct our ministry. It has been a while since we have visited that text, so today presents the perfect day to do that.

**Text:** But I will hope continually  
and will praise you more and more.

<sup>15</sup> My mouth will tell about your righteousness  
and your salvation all day long,  
though I cannot sum them up.

<sup>16</sup> I come because of the mighty acts of the Lord GOD;  
I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone.

<sup>17</sup> God, you have taught me from my youth,  
and I still proclaim your wondrous works.

<sup>18</sup> Even while I am old and gray,  
God, do not abandon me,  
while I proclaim your power  
to another generation,  
your strength to all who are to come.

<sup>19</sup> Your righteousness reaches the heights, God,  
you who have done great things;  
God, who is like you?

**Reminding Ourselves of the Core Values of our Church:**

Let me remind you of the key elements of this text. Our strategy is based on four key points from Psalm 71. You might could say, "Here is the purpose of the New Testament Church from an Old Testament text."

1. Our church is called to preach **The Gospel**.

We exist to tell about His salvation all day long. The Gospel is the same. As you have heard many times before and will continue to hear, the Gospel never changes. Our methods must

change with every generation and in every culture in order to effectively reach those generations and cultures, but our message must never change. That basic message is that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,” said the Apostle Peter after having been arrested for preaching this message about Jesus. (Acts 4:12) We must have that same conviction.

Here is the Gospel. God created us. He desired to have a relationship with us. We are the object of His affection. But, we rebel. We run from Him. Sin creates a barrier between us and a Holy God. With that sin and separation come consequences—both now and forever. That is the bad news. But, here is the good news. God, desiring to bring us back to Him, did something for us. He sent His one and only (unique) Son to die. His death was the reason for His coming. He came, Luke said, to seek and to save the lost. When He died a miracle of transfer occurred. He took our sin. So, if we would be willing to repent of our sin, believe in the Lord Jesus, we can be reconciled to Him. We, who were once far away from God can be brought near to God. We can have the forgiveness of our sin, through Him have freedom from sin, and then when we die have a forever with Him in Heaven.

We must put action to that conviction. In summary, even those “old and gray,” in the words of the Psalmist, cannot sit around and be content with their own salvation, their own right standing with God, but instead continue to preach that message of His salvation. This is why we exist. This is what we do! This is who we are!

2. We must preach the Gospel to **The Next Generation**.

We believe that it is the command of God to every generation to reach the next generation. We cannot do anything about the generation that is already past or the generations beyond our lifetime, but we must do all that we can do to reach the next generation of our time. As many have said, “We are only one generation away from extinction. If we care, if there is compassion, we will go above and beyond so that the next generation gets it. We will continue to put an emphasis on reaching the next generation. I make no apology for that. It is the command of God.

A moment ago, when you stood, I hope you meant it. We must do all we can do to reach the next generation.

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3. We must ultimately preach the Gospel to **All the Nations**.

Then, along with the next generation, we must take the Gospel to all who are to come. A way to apply this is to take the Gospel to the nations—to every people group. This is a combined effort of every church. God has uniquely positioned us, and we celebrate that today, for a reach to Chinese speaking people living in our city.

There is something else about reaching the next generation. They may be our best hope for reaching the nations. If we believe that God has called us to be a part of reaching the nations, we must understand that we have to lead the next generation to have a burden for the nations.

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4. We must do all of this **All for God's glory!**

We must never forget that the reason that we do all of this is for God's glory! We see this in our text in verse 19. This phrase speaks to our motivation. Our motivation must be that God gets the glory. Put simply, it's all about God's glory! This is continual Thanksgiving.

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### **So What?**

As I think about where we are and as I re-visit this text, I want you to see four additional ideas about this text. Psalm 71 is a Psalm of...

#### **1. Priority**

I sense in this text that the priority of the Psalmist's life is to tell of God's works to the next generation. I sense that this is his priority because of the *fear* in his voice as he calls on God to give him strength.

- 71:9, "Do not cast me off in the time of my old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails."
- 71:12, "O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!"
- 71:18, "Now also when I am old and grayheaded..."

The Psalmist fears that there may be a time when this will not be the priority of his life. We need to have that same kind of fear.

I sense that telling the next generation is the priority of his life because of the *faith* to call on God to come to his aid. He knows that his strength comes from God and not himself so he depends on God.

Finally, I sense the priority of his life because of the continued *focus* of his life. David's enemies are out to get him. That could be the priority, but rather the priority is on telling the greatness and the righteousness of God. (v. 15, 18, 24) We should notice the recurring phrase in verse 15 and 24: "all the day" or "all the day long."

The priorities of a church or an individual can easily get out of order. We can easily get sidetracked about issues that concern us (Christians) more than them (non-Christians or immature Christians). May God give us the continued priority on those who are not yet part of the kingdom of God!

#### **2. Perseverance**

This Psalm is a Psalm of perseverance. Our task is a task of perseverance. Thirty years is a long time. Over one hundred years (our church) is a long time. We must persevere. We will forever be trying to reach the next generation. We must forever be trying to reach the nations. Our task

leads us from one generation to the next, one nation to the next. If you are tired and weary, don't be. We've got work to do.

**3. Perspective**

Life is not about me. The Kingdom of God is not about me. Church is not about me. It is about Him and them—those not yet part of the church.

**4. Personal Involvement**

Ultimately, here is a Psalm of personal reflection. The first person (I, me) is used throughout this text. So, what are you personally doing to reach the next generation? What are you personally doing to reach the nations? It is not enough to say that your church or your denomination is reaching the nations. Each one of us must personally be involved.