

### Praise for the Lord's Dependable Care and Control

#### Psalm 33

Psalm 33:1-3 - *"Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, for praise from the upright is beautiful. Praise the LORD with the harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song. Play skillfully with a shout of joy!"*

#### Background Notes

In this psalm, the Lord's people are exhorted to praise the Lord for His dependable care and control over all things.

The last verse of Psalm 32 says, *"Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"* Then Psalm 33:1 tells the righteous to sing for joy in the Lord! And verse 3 says, *"Sing to Him a new song."*

*"Play skillfully with a shout of joy!"* (v3). There is no idea here that our praise to the Lord should be sloppy, haphazard and without creativity! No! In fact, when our praise is put to music, we should aim to use the most skillful musicians - not just use anyone who can bang out a few notes on a piano or some other instrument.

So whether the musical instrument is a lyre or harp (v2) or another instrument (including guitars, basses and drums), our worship music should not be just "noise." Instrumental music should be provided by skillful accompanists, and provide quality praise to the Lord from the people of the Lord.

That says a lot about what the content of our praise songs should be, doesn't it?

Praise music should be **about the Lord** – who He is and what He has done and what He is doing and what He will do. Our praise and worship **should not focus on ourselves**, but on **the Lord**. Praise should characterize a believer, because this is pleasing to the Lord. *"Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, for praise from the upright is beautiful."*

What about the *"new song"* (v3)? In the context, the idea is that our praise should be fresh, and not stale. The gospel and biblical truth does not change, but the appreciation of our redemption and the Lord's faithful blessing for us should bring new and fresh praise from our lips and our hearts every day. As Lamentations 3:22-23 says, *"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.*

*They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness!"*

In the rest of Psalm 33, we see two major areas where we should praise the Lord.

## Doctrinal / Teaching Points

### 1. Believers should praise the Lord for His sovereign care of creation.

Psalm 33:4-9 – *“For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him, for He spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast.”*

The focus and heart of Psalm 33 are verses 4-5: *“For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice.”* God’s righteousness, justice, goodness, and grace characterize all His words and works! We can depend on this truth, and praise God for this truth, because God is faithful to His Word.

At the end of verse 5 we read, *“The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”* Anyone who denies this statement should try living on another planet! Our Lord Jesus had the global goodness of God in view when He said in Matthew 6:26, *“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”*

When little children thank the Lord for warm sunshine, pretty flowers, and puppies and kittens, they are right in line with Psalm 33. They’re acknowledging the truth that the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord! So never discourage your children and grandchildren from thanking God for the simple joys of His goodness to us.

In verse 6, we read about the creation of the starry heavens: *“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”* And about the earth, verse 9 says: *“He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”* Do you think the psalmist was thinking of a Big Bang scenario, with millions of years involved for the formation of this earth? Or do you think the inspired psalmist was thinking more of a Creation Week as described in Genesis 1 and 2? I think you know the answer!

The Lord not only **created** this universe, but He sovereignly **controls** it. Colossians 1 says, *“All things have been created by Him... and in Him all things hold together.”*

For this we should praise Him! Think of the devastating power of water, for example, when it is not under control. But verse 7 says that God controls all the waters on the face of this earth. God allows storms and tsunamis and flash floods, but only within the limits that He has determined. The whole world should stand in awe of such a God, and believers should praise the Lord for His sovereign care of creation.

## **2. Believers should praise the Lord for His sovereign control of history.**

In verses 10-19, we see that no matter what the peoples and nations of history have planned with their political power and military strength, it all comes to nothing if their plans are not in line with God's plan and purposes for history.

Psalm 33:10-11 – *“The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing. He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever; the plans of His heart to all generations.”* In view of this great truth, *“How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people has chosen His own inheritance”* (v12).

In Psalm 33:13-15, we see the omniscience of the Lord. *“The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashions their hearts individually. He considers all their works.”* The Lord sees all and knows all. Throughout human history, no one has been able to hide anything from the Lord - and that includes every thought and every plan!

Psalm 33:16-19 – *“No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety, neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”*

These verses make it clear that every battle ever fought in history has been under the sovereign control of God. Think of the battles recorded in the Bible, and how God controlled the outcome - even when it was against overwhelming odds (humanly speaking). And God still controls the outcomes of wars and battles. The outcome of the Six Day war in Israel in 1967, for example, did not happen by chance!

God is always in sovereign control of history, and that includes the personal history of every person. We see this wonderful truth in verses 18-19: *“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”*

Believers should praise the Lord for His sovereign control of history.

### **Practical Applications**

#### **1. Rejoice in the standards of God.**

In verses 1-3 we're exhorted to rejoice in the Lord, give praise to the Lord, and sing to the Lord. And verses 4-5 give one direct reason: *“For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice”*

In other words, we should rejoice in God's moral standards, as revealed in His Word. The question is, do we? Do we actually **rejoice in the standards of God**? Do we love and rejoice in God's moral standards - or do we just tolerate His moral standards?

Do we rejoice in the fact that God's Word declares that lying and stealing are wrong and sinful? What about deceptively lying about our achievements - or stealing credit for something that belongs to someone else? Do we rejoice in God's standards when we know that God labels our selfishness and pride as sin?

Do we rejoice in the standards of God when His Word clearly teaches that sex should be between one man and one woman, and that sex outside of marriage it is sin? Some folks, including some Christians, only rejoice – they tolerate God's moral standards, even though they obey them. And some folks decide to go along with society's moral standards - that God's standards are out of date, and no longer apply. They tolerate what the Bible says is **not** right, and they certainly don't **rejoice** in God's moral standards.

What about us? Do we merely tolerate? Do we reluctantly obey? Or do we **rejoice** in God's moral standards?

Psalms 33 says we should **rejoice** in the moral standards of God!

## 2. Rejoice in the sovereignty of God!

*Psalms 33:20-22 - "Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our hearts shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You."*

I love the doctrine of the sovereignty of God! Do you? Knowing that God controls all things, including all of nature and all of history, and all of our lives, should give the believer great confidence in the Christian life of faith!

That's the position of the believer in Psalms 33:20-22. We can wait on the Lord, knowing that our best interests are part of His sovereign plan (v20). We can rejoice in the Lord, as we submit in trust to His sovereign will (v21). And we can trust on the basis of God's sovereignty, knowing that He loves us and cares for us, because our lives are part of His sovereign plan (v22)!

Rejoice in the sovereignty of our great God!