

Psalm 115: God Reigns No Matter What!!

Looking at the news as I do occasionally I can't help but think where is God in all of this chaos? To think that someone can think they are serving God by blowing up an aircraft, along with hundreds of people, is beyond belief.

Then to watch what is happening in the Middle East is so sad and obviously of great concern to us all.

Then there was the report of a road rage incident here in my home town of Perth. Three teenagers decided to express their anger by beating up another teenager on one of our main highways, seriously injuring him. The culprits were caught and arrested. It seems to me that the further we get away from God the more we see anger being expressed both nationally and internationally.

Psalm 115 helps to give us some encouragement during these times. We are living in a society that is learning the hard way what it costs to worship substitutes, when we worship everything and anything other than the living God.

So it is no surprise that the Psalmist begins with the fact that: *Our God Reigns*, verses 1-3. This is especially important to understand when confronted by the catastrophic things going on around the world. The temptation for us is to become overwhelmed by fear and at worst immobilised by fear.

When Isaiah went into the temple in Isaiah 6 he must have thought it was just another day in the office, so to speak. That perception changed rapidly when he saw the Lord high and lifted up.

Isaiah no doubt would have been concerned about Israel's future with the death of King Uzziah after a 52 year reign. He discovered that human kings come and go but the King of Kings reigns supreme.

We need to keep the same mindset when confronted by a world that is beset by chaos and turmoil. We have a wonderful God who reigns in mercy and in truth and does so on earth and in heaven.

This then reveals to us how important it is for us to worship: *The Living God*, verses 4-8.

The sad outworking of a rebellious people, nation and world is the shift from worshipping the true and Living God, to worshipping dead gods. These dead gods are characterised by first and foremost by the reality that they have no life or power. This means they cannot impart spiritual life and or give power to live a spiritual life.

To underline this the Psalmist points out a number of what seem rather obvious observations, which almost have a comical nature to it.

(i) *No mouths* – These dead idols cannot speak to their worshippers. They cannot impart advise, knowledge or wisdom. Dead god's cannot make covenants, make and keep promises, or give encouragement. However, our God speaks and speaks to our points of need.

(ii) *No eyes* – Thus such idols cannot give their followers protection, oversight or care. Our God watches over us 24/7 and can be trusted to care for us.

(iii) *No ears* – No matter how much the worshippers of dead gods repeat themselves or how loud they pray they cannot hear or respond. This reminds us of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel who were cutting themselves and shouting themselves into a fruitless frenzy. Our God's ears are attentive to the cry of our hearts 24/7.

(iv) *No noses* – No matter how much the fire was piled with offerings dead gods could not smell them. Yet our God is available to receive our worship 24/7, and delights in our genuine worship.

(v) *No hands* – The reality of this rather sad but comical picture, was that the makers of the idols had more power than the idols themselves. Our God is constantly at work for us and in us.

(vi) *No feet* – These idols were immobile unless carried by their worshippers and yet they were blind to this. Yet our God carries us in those challenging and difficult times and walks with us each day.

The dreadful outcome of this is that those who trust in idols become like them.

We become like the god with worship. With all the addictions we have in this world you don't have to go far to see this with drug addiction, alcoholism, or pornography.

(Please turn over)

What we worship determines how we think and how we think determines how we behave. However, when we come to Jesus and commit our lives to Him, He transforms our minds, ears, eyes and hearts.

So the Psalmists then states what must seem the obvious in that our God is: *A Giving God*, verses 9-15. We discover as we trust in the true and living God He gives us His help and protection. No matter what we see on the TV news our God reigns. As we stand in awe of God we grow in our understanding of just who God is.

One of the things we see is that we are remembered by God. In fact He knows us much better than we know ourselves. He is aware of our needs and meets them according to His perfect will and purpose.

Lastly we see that our God is: *A Receiving God*, verses 16-18.

We know that all things belong to God but life has given us the earth to inhabit and look after. We who are the Lord's can give Him His due praise and worship. The wonderful joy of being a Christian is that God responds to the continual praise of His people. Remember – OUR GOD REIGNS.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



Praise

1. Praise God for the ongoing incredibly encouraging responses we are having as a result of our Impact Africa mission trip. For example the work done in various prisons has seen, so far, over 500 responses to the gospel. The VBS Ministry to children saw 80 children make a response to the invitation to commit their life to Jesus Christ. We also want to praise God for the 'sea' of people who prayed for the Team. Again and again we were so aware of the Lord's people praying for us.
2. Praise God for the work of Peacemakers Fellowship Intl. Bi-monthly 15,000 papers are being distributed and the director of this work, Paul Dondoh has indicated that the last edition has been the most successful in terms of responses. Also Paul has reported on the successful planting of their ninth church in just under a year.
3. Praise God for His faithfulness and provision for the work both here and overseas. We have some wonderfully faithful and incredibly generous folk who give to the work of Challenge for which we are enormously grateful.
4. Praise God for "open doors" into the countries of southern and central Africa.
5. For recent purchase of publishing software which will be integrated over the coming months to further improve the newspaper. So pray for staff in the learning curve they need to schedule in.

Prayer

1. Pray for our first sponsored edition of Challenge coming out in October. This is being done in partnership with Radio Rhema Port Macquarie. We anticipate a print-run of 30,000 papers to be delivered into every home in Port Macquarie, NSW. We are looking at a similar idea for Brisbane and possibly Darwin.
2. Pray for ongoing negotiations for the paper to go into Malawi and Nigeria. Opportunities abound which are limited predominantly by finances.
3. Pray for other opportunities in South and Central America and North America. Pray for wisdom in consolidating the work in the various countries we are already circulating the Challenge.
4. Pray for Carl Carmody in his leadership of the team ... particularly with his absence from headquarters on a regular basis.
5. Carl will continue promotion to the United States this month and will be away for several weeks. He will be accompanied by a good friend of Challenge, Michael Hunt.
6. Pray for a second edition of Challenge in Spanish to go into Argentina in September. Pray for our partner there, Will Herndon in the city of Cordoba, as he seeks to encourage churches to use the paper.
7. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will continue to provide resources for the task at hand ... distribution networks, personnel with writing skills, finance for print bills, visionary and praying people on our Board.

Special Request: We are still collecting books to send to African Pastors.

If you have any good quality books on Christian Living, Commentaries, Biographies, etc., that you are no longer using, please contact us here at Challenge.

Challenge Literature Fellowship

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