

# Psalm 65

**Introduction** – Speak to the winemakers in our city and you will hear stories of the best time of year, the harvest, and the best years of the finest harvests. The abundance of the earth is something they experience while they crush grapes and taste and see the Lord is good. Except many do not taste and see the Lord is good. But this psalm sings of days when they will, days when they will be the harvest, days when they, along with the whole earth, will sing. This is a psalm of the Lord's abundant generosity, inviting us to see it in His atonement, in His election, in His blessings in providence upon His creation, and His worldwide harvest of the souls of mankind.

**An Extended Overview** – What we have here is a harvest-hymn, and while it may have been written after an especially plentiful harvest, it is a harvest-hymn for all ages. It begins with “Praise” and ends with shouting for joy and singing. Verses 1-4 anticipate coming into the presence of this generous and atonement-providing God who hears our prayers and praise. Verses 5-8 praises God's awesome deeds of deliverance and salvation over the most powerful forces of nature and nations. Verses 9-12 ends the song with shouts of praise over His reckless outpouring of blessings.

In verse 1 it is just before the service begins. Or picture the band getting ready to play “Hail to the Chief” just before the President arrives at a ceremony of victory. God is the One who has heard our prayer; it is His character, it is His name, it is His pleasure to do so, and so all flesh, the smallest and weakest, all flesh, is summoned (v2). All are covered with iniquities, but He purges them away (v3). Everyone in this gathering of the elect is blessed as He causes us to come into His home, His good and satisfying home (v4).

God has overthrown His enemies in awe-inspiring ways, and the stories of His salvation excite fear and confidence in Him (v5). Only a God of great strength can set Mt. Rainier and the Cascade Range just where He wants it (v6). Only a God of great power can still a hurricane, and of course we are invited to see Jesus in this (v7), and this is a type for the nations of men (v7c). And how much do you love sunrises and sunsets? With eyes of faith, see them as “shouting” the tokens of His sovereign grace from the east to the west (v8).

The earth is abundantly fruitful because God waters it and He does so to grow all the harvest He intends (v9). It all works because God is softening the hard ground with His showers (v10). And the result? He crowns the year with His goodness – the abundance is His goodness (v11). He makes all the pastures, even those in the wilderness, even in the smallest places, lush with fruitfulness (v12), covered with flocks and grain. These valleys and pastures, and little hills and the wilderness and the farthest parts – all shout for joy and sing (v13). Abundance. Goodness. Joy. This is the world God has made – and the Psalm-singer commands that you see it that way.

**An Abundance of Iniquity and Forgiveness** – What are you doing here? Why did you come to church? It is because God has summoned us to come into His courts with our praise. We are the living stones of His Temple, but we also come into His house to dwell with Him surrounded by those stones. We come because our God actually hears our prayers (v2) and this is so amazing that eventually “*all flesh will come*” (v2, Isaiah 66:23). This phrase also means that there is no one too insignificant and no one too elite and special that does not need nor is overlooked by God. But when we come, as our Covenant Renewal pattern teaches us, we are honestly reminded that we are overwhelmed with our iniquities (v3, Isaiah 6:1-5). Two things must happen if we are to deal honestly with our sinfulness. First, we must acknowledge our sins, some of which have a deep hold on us, and our sinfulness, that is, our bent towards selfishness and self-worship. Second, we must hear and receive the forgiveness for our sin because of the shed blood of the Perfect Sacrifice Who completely satisfied God's righteous wrath (which is what propitiation means). 1 John 1:8-9 must be burned into our hearts. There must be conviction and forgiveness. If there isn't conviction, we are redefining sin. If there isn't forgiveness, we are denying the free grace that is ours in Christ Jesus. So iniquities rise, and transgressions are purged.

**The Generous Election and Harvest** – Verse 4 is a whole course in theology and another answer to the question, “why are you here?” Notice, a particular man is blessed. That man is blessed because God chose him and caused him to approach God. But God doesn't just choose a man and leave it at that. We are chosen to be holy and blameless (Eph 1:4). We are chosen to dwell in His presence, satisfied with His goodness. So God elects us, draws us to Himself and satisfies us with Himself. We love Him because He first loved us. If God hadn't chosen you, you wouldn't want to be here with His people. There is not one person who has come to Jesus who didn't have Jesus Christ come to Him first. He gives the desire to seek Him. He gives the desire and satisfaction of being in His home, His temple, with Him and with His people. Just as little infants are born with a hunger for milk, so when someone is born again, they are hungry for the food of Christ – His Word and Spirit – fellowship with His saints, prayer and conversation with Him.

So if God has called you to be holy, do you have a hunger for holiness (Matt 5:6)? Do you love the things He loves? Do you hunger for His Word? Do you love being with His people? Do you press on? We don't desire these things perfectly, but He has promised to complete that which He has begun in you (Phil 1:6, 3:12-14). That is why we are always repenting, always confessing sins, always getting washed and set on the right path again and again. And for the one God has chosen, even those things are refreshing and satisfying as we grow up in Him.

**The Hand of God Upon His Creation** – God hears our prayers (v2) and He answers prayers in astounding ways (v5). He takes His chosen and completely upends and transforms their hearts, minds, and lives. He acts and moves in our time and space and we are invited to see this as we look upon His hand over all of creation. Psalm 19 says “*the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork.*” Paul says God's invisible attributes are clearly seen in His creation (Rom 1:20). And this Psalm tells us to see the mountains, the seas, the tumult of nations, and every sunrise and sunset, all declaring the power and sufficiency of God (vv5-8). Spurgeon warned of the “*Philosophers of the forget-God school who are too much engrossed with their laws of upheaval to think of the Upheaver.*” And Paul tells us that fallen man purposefully hides what he knows to be true of God for he refuses to acknowledge God nor give thanks to Him (Rom 1:21).

God set the stars and constellations just where He desired (Ps 8:3, Job 38:31). He placed mountains and valleys upon this earth at His command (Amos 4:13, Psalm 104:8). And the hairs of your head are numbered (Matt 10:30). We also learn that just as God can speak and the greatest sea storm is calmed (v7, Matt 8:23-27), so He calms the rebellion of people and nations (vv7-8, Isaiah 66:18-21, Rev 21:24). “*The outgoings of the morning and evening shout for joy.*” This world is not just full of sovereign control, but because of who God is, it is full of sovereign abundance.

**Paths that Drip with Abundance** – God gives water. God gives crops. God gives flocks. God gives harvests and the ability to harvest. None of this is a bunch of natural laws grinding away. It is all personal. If God doesn't give rain, the earth goes desolate and brown. But what do we generally see, season after season, harvest after harvest? God shows us through this earth how abundantly generous He is. Regarding creation, we are to see that this world does not operate on a zero-sum game. We plant, and we harvest 30, 60, and one hundredfold. God created us with one mouth and two hands. Therefore, we should be able to produce twice as much as we consume. We need to repent of our self-autonomy. God gives the increase.

But this is all a type as well. There was the harvest festival of Pentecost. But it was at Pentecost that God granted that first-fruit harvest of the Gospel after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, His ascension to heaven and His pouring out the Holy Spirit. We need to think of that when Jesus tells us that the fields are white for harvest (John 4:35). We are Reformed and Evangelical Christians, but we are not sure how to put those two phrases together. God is absolutely sovereign and we are not seeing evangelism in our nation like the harvests of the past. But God wants paths (wagon wheel marks pressed down from the weight of the harvest) dripping with abundance. We must repent of believing that God cannot do this and/or that God does not want to do this. And then we must cry out to a God who hears our prayers for Him to bring such harvests that cause us to shout for joy and sing (v13).