



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
January 7, 2022
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



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Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence
“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.”
(Psalm 145:8)

Did You Know?

Let's revisit the core information we gathered previously on the **Book of Psalms**:

- The titles “Psalms” and “Psalter” come from the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- The Book of Psalms contains ancient Israel's favorite hymns and prayers, which were used in their worship of the Lord, the Great King.
- The Book of Psalms was put into its final form in the 4th century BC. However, the time of the writers of these prayers and songs covers a long period from 1440 BC to after 538 BC.
- The 150 psalms gathered in the Psalms are divided into five books by scholars: Book I: Ps 1-41; Book II: Ps. 42-72; Book III: Ps. 73-89; Book IV-V: Ps. 90-150.

Psalm 145 is a magnificent hymn to the Lord, the Great King, for his mighty acts and benevolent virtues, which are the glory of his kingly rule. It exploits to the full the traditional language of praise, and as an alphabetic acrostic, reflects the care of studied composition, which can be seen in the whole structure of the psalm.

Between the two-line introduction and one-line conclusion, four main stanzas describe the Lord's divine attributes: greatness, goodness, trustworthiness, and righteousness.

(The NIV Study Bible; Psalms)

Personal Insight

For those people, who lived at the time when the Psalms were composed, it was natural and common experience to live under the control of a king. We know from historic records that some of them were good rulers, and some were quite hard on the people they governed.

For me, who was born into a republic, it is hard to imagine what their lives were like, depending on the characteristics of a king, and not having a choice of their leadership. When I became a Canadian citizen, I had to pledge allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and her heirs. It is reassuring that from the information I have on her, she belongs to those royals, who want to serve their people at their best abilities.

But in my understanding, we are not only ruled by kings, queens or political parties, but by our own desires and nature. When we surrender these to the One True King, the Source of Life, that is when we experience graciousness, compassion and unconditional love. As Paul formulated it: **“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”** (Romans 8:14-15)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



When Love Never Ends

The Lord watches over all who love him.

Psalm 145:20

READ Psalm 145:8 – 20

“Whenever my grandfather took me to the beach,” Sandra reminisced, “he always took off his watch and put it away. One day I asked him why.”

“He smiled and replied, ‘Because I want you to know how important my moments with you are to me. I just want to be with you and let time go by.’”

I heard Sandra share that recollection at her grandfather’s funeral. It was one of her favorite memories of their life together. As I reflected on how valued it makes us feel when others take time for us, it brought to mind Scripture’s words on God’s loving care.

God always makes time for us. David prayed in Psalm 145, “You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. The Lord is near” (vv. 16–18).

God’s goodness and thoughtful attention sustain our lives each moment, providing us with air to breathe and food to eat. Because He is rich in love, the Creator of all things mercifully crafts even the most intricate details of our existence.

God’s love is so deep and unending that in His kindness and mercy He’s even opened the way to eternal life and joy in His presence, as if to say, “I love you so much, I just want to be with you forever, and let time go by.” – By **James Banks**

REFLECT & PRAY

Father, thank You for Your perfect love. Please help me to praise You for it and to share it with others today. Amen.

How does your availability to others reflect God’s faithful love for them? In what ways can you follow His example by making time for others today? Read [God Is Love](#).

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Psalm 145 is the last of David’s psalms and introduces the hymns of praise (Pss. 146–150) that fittingly complete the book. This psalm specifically praises God for His generosity and goodness toward His people. One special feature is the many different words it uses for “praise”: “exalt” (v. 1); “extol” (v. 2); “commends” and “tell” (v. 4); “speak” and “meditate” (v. 5); “proclaim” (v. 6); “celebrate” and “joyfully sing” (v. 7). Verse 8 extols God for being “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.” For some, these phrases seem contrary to the God of wrath often depicted in the Old Testament. But He’s always been the God of justice and mercy! We see the phrase “gracious and compassionate” attributed to Him throughout the Old Testament (Exodus 34:6; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalms 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). - By **Alyson Kieda**

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