



# DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

PSALMS: SONGS FOR LIFE TOGETHER •

PSALMS OF CONFIDENCE • PSALM 115 • 5/21/2023

## MAIN POINT

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Psalm 115 is one example of a Psalm of Confidence. This Psalm enables us to have great confidence in God's sovereignty and reminds us that He is in control of our lives.

## INTRODUCTION

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**What is one area of life you feel like you always have to be in control of?  
Why?**

**Would those around you call you a control freak? Why or why not?**

We all like to feel as though we are in control of our lives. We plan, we strategize, and we fight to maintain control of our work, our children, our health, our finances, and so on. The feeling of being out of control in any given situation can be terrifying;

there are so many “what ifs” and worst case scenarios that inevitably enter into our minds. But the truth is, we are not in control of our lives, no matter how in control we may feel. Before the beginning of time, God chose you as His own. The purpose of your life is to bring glory to Him as He, in His sovereignty and grace, fulfills all He has promised in His Word (Eph. 1). Once we come to understand that God is in control and sovereign over everything (including our lives) it can give us much greater confidence than believing we are in control ever could.

## UNDERSTANDING

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**READ PSALM 115.**

**Have you ever been asked, “Where is your God”? Has your faith ever been ridiculed or not taken seriously? How did you respond?**

**Think about your prayers. Do you more often pray for God to glorify His name or to glorify His name along with yours? What is the difference in these two prayers?**

**How might you make sure your prayers are not selfishly motivated?**

**What phrases in this psalm speak to God’s sovereignty—His control of our world and our lives?**

**What are the major differences between the idols in verses 4-8 and the God of the universe? What do these differences teach us about God’s sovereignty—His wisdom and control?**

Read each of the following verses: Ephesians 1:11-14; Daniel 2:20-22; Acts 2:22-24; Isaiah 40:21-23; and Colossians 1:15-17. After each passage is read, answer the question, "What is God in control of?"

When you think about all the stories in the news and the events in your personal life, do you feel like God is in control? Why or why not?

Our response to God's sovereignty should be one of trust (see Ps. 115:9). What behaviors and attitudes show we trust in a sovereign God?

How does trusting in God's sovereignty strengthen our confidence in all areas of our life?

**READ ACTS 17:22-31.**

What truths did Paul communicate about the character of God? Which of these truths point to His sovereignty?

Which of Paul's descriptions of God is most important to you at this time in your life? Why? What should be your response to God when you reflect on His sovereignty (v. 30)?

## **APPLICATION**

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Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Does the fact that God is sovereign scare you? Why or why not?

**What evidence of God's sovereign love and grace can you point to in your life?**

**How might knowing that God is in control of all things give us confidence to live boldly for the glory of Christ?**

**What is something we can do this week to trust God in practical way?**

## **PRAYER**

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For your closing prayer time, give your group members the opportunity to pray silently, thanking God for His sovereign control of their lives and our world. Encourage them to surrender to Him any areas where they struggle to acknowledge His control. Pray also for the people you know who have not given control of their lives over to God in salvation; pray that they would come to know the one true God of the universe.

## **COMMENTARY**

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### **PSALM 115**

115:1-18. This psalm contains a number of lines that are identical to those in Psalm 135.

115:2. The nations questioned the presence of Israel's God in light of her dire circumstances. The setting may be exilic, prompting the question, or the question may be a general remark on the absence of any visible manifestation of Israel's God.

115:3. This phrase expresses God's sovereignty (135:6; Prov. 21:1; cp. Ecc. 8:3).

115:4-8. Compare these verses with 135:15-18. Idols, created by humans, are lifeless. The nations' gods are impotent. The prophet Isaiah also declared the weakness of idols (Isa. 6:10; 40:19-20; 41:7; 46:1-7). While the molten images appear to have human characteristics, they are unable to act under their own power. Those who create idols and place their trust in them will be just like them—powerless and ineffective.

115:9-13. Verses 12-13 list the consequences of verses 9-11; Israel trusts God, and God blesses Israel.

115:14. Increased descendants is a sign of the Lord's favor and blessing.

115:15. The Lord created all things; He is not created by human hands (v. 4). This expression occurs frequently in poetical texts that herald the Lord's superiority.

115:17-18. Those who have descended into silence is a figure for those who are dead—lifeless idols and their makers. Conversely, those who trust in God are alive, and they bless His name forever.

#### ACTS 17:22-32

17:22. The philosophers led Paul to a meeting of the Areopagus. The Greek word Areopagus means Hill of Ares. The term was used to designate both a hill and a court that met there from ancient times. The court was responsible for dealing with such matters as the introduction of new religions into the city. Paul began by seeking to win the good will of his audience. He referred to their being very religious. He used an ambiguous word that could mean religious or superstitious. His hearers probably understood the remark as a positive compliment for their piety. Paul's disdain of their idolatry would indicate that he saw their religiosity negatively, as an empty superstition.

17:23. Several ancient writers referred to such altars dedicated to unknown gods. Most sculptures were dedicated to particular gods and goddesses. Those dedicated to UNKNOWN gods probably were furnished in case some god might have felt neglected and taken out his wrath on the people. They had room for all the gods, known or

unknown. Paul seized his opportunity to introduce them to the one true God. He proclaimed to them the God they did not know and who was the only One that counts, the only One that exists. In speaking of their ignorance of this God, Paul was striking at the very self-identity of the philosophers.

17:24-25. Paul first presented God as Creator. Paul concluded that because God is Creator of all, He is the Lord of heaven and earth—above His creation—and thus does not live in temples built by people and with materials He created (see Acts 7:48-50). He drew a further conclusion that the Creator of all that exists needs nothing from His creation such as idols or any other external form of human piety.

17:26-28. Paul's first teaching focused on God's distance from us; the second emphasized His nearness. From one man, Adam, God made all nations. The wording could mean national boundaries or the habitable areas of the earth. The Greek philosophers could resonate with Paul's words. Indeed Paul quoted two of the Stoic poets in 17:28: Epimenides (around 600 B.C.) and Aratus (who lived around 315-240 B.C.). The Stoics took the poet's words we are indeed his offspring to mean that all humans are divine. Paul understood that we are God's children, not in the sense of sharing divinity but in the sense of being His creation.

17:30. The Athenians' idolatry was a sign of their sinfulness, worshiping the world rather than God. Paul proceeded to the next step: he called on his hearers to repent, to turn from their sins to God. God had overlooked their sins of ignorance in the sense that He had not brought to them the judgment they deserved. He had instead sent the gospel to them. God now commanded them to repent.

17:31. The final step is judgment. If we fail to repent in light of the gospel, only judgment remains for us. God has set a day for judgment. That day is associated with the return of the man God had raised from the dead. He will return as Judge of the entire world. Paul did a lot of bridge-building. He presented biblical truths in a way the philosophers would understand. He even quoted their poets. However, He never compromised the gospel. He declared the central truths of the resurrection and judgment, though he probably was aware that this would cost him most of his audience.

17:32. Paul's address was cut short by mockers who found the idea of Jesus' resurrection to be foolish. (See 1 Cor. 1:23-24.) A second group was not convinced, but still open. They wanted to hear more.