Thankful Anyway
Psalm 117:1-2
Dr. Paul Cannings

A. At All Times (vs. 1; Psalm 34:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:16-18):

1. Praise the Lord – Psalmist commands us to come together in a full worship service with musical instruments and shouts jubilation unto the Lord. This joyful, delightful spontaneous time of praise should be because we recognized that He has all authority, is all powerful, and is mighty overall and everything. He is faithful to His covenant. This should be with all peoples (Psalm 34:1-3).

    a) If we are a worshiping people, praising the Lord, then we will be a witnessing people, telling others how wonderful He is. Like the lepers outside the gates of Samaria, believers today must confess, "We are not doing right. This is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent" (2 Kings 7:9, nasb). May we imitate the apostles who said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20, nkjv).[1]

2. All nations - The Jewish people were supposed to be *separated* from the Gentiles but not *isolated* from them, for God called Abraham to found a nation that would bring blessing to all the earth (Gen. 12:1–3; Rom. 4:17–18; Gal. 3:8). However, Israel failed and became guilty of imitating the Gentiles instead of illuminating the Gentiles with the light of God's truth (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22; Luke 2:32), for God chose the Jewish people to give the world the knowledge of the true God, the Scriptures, and the Savior.[2]

    a) The word translated "nations" is often translated "Gentiles," that is, all people who are not of Semitic origin. The Hebrew word translated "peoples" refers to the diverse nationalities in the world (Rev. 7:9). You find the phrases "all the earth" and "all peoples" frequently in the book of Psalms (47:1; 66:1; 96:1; 98:4, 7; 100:1).[3]
    b) Paul quotes from this psalm in Romans 15:11 to show that God's salvation is for *all* people, not just the Jews.[4]

---

[1] Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., p. 96). Cook Communications Ministries.
[2] Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., p. 95). Cook Communications Ministries.
[3] Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., p. 95). Cook Communications Ministries.
[4] *Life Application Bible Notes* (p. 968). (2007). Tyndale.

3. Laud Him, Extol – The Psalmist also commands us to loudly esteem the Lord's greatness. "Because your loyal love is better than life, my lips will praise (*šābaḥ*) you." (compare Psa 147:12)

   a) Laud, which means "to speak well of," nicely parallels the term praise, which means "to be excitedly boastful about."[5]

4. Praise the Lord – Because of the great deliverance the Lord provided Israel they are commanded to be loudly jubilant in their worship to Him because they only reason they were delivered is because of God's commitment to His covenant. There were many other nations around them but they were the ones who were delivered because of God's love towards them.

a) The first "praise" translates the familiar Hebrew word *hallel* which gives us "hallelujah—praise the Lord." The second "praise" is *shavah*, which means "to boast, to extol and laud." When we praise the Lord, we not only tell Him of His greatness, but we also "brag on Him" to those who hear our songs. Worship and praise are the highest occupations to which we can dedicate our voices, the activities that will occupy us for all eternity![6]
b) This psalm gives two reasons for praising God: his unfailing love toward us and his faithfulness that endures forever. If he did nothing else for us, he would still be worthy of our highest praise.[7]

B. Remember (vs. 2):

1. The attributes of the LORD are the cause for praise. His love (*ḥeseḏ*) is His covenant loyalty for His people, which is great.
2. This word *ḥeseḏ* is often accompanied by the word *'emeṯ*, "truth" or faithfulness (cf. 108:4; 115:1; 138:2). Because the Lord's word is reliable, He is faithful. This term strengthens the concept of His covenant loyalty.
3. Great is his love – God is completely committed and is obligates Himself based on His covenant with us to abundantly love us.

   a) *Love*…. See note on 6:4 – *unfailing love* – The Hebrew for this phrase denotes befriending. Appeal to God's "(unfailing) love, kindness mercy" is frequent in the OT since it summarizes all that the Lord covenanted to show to Israel (see Dt. 7:9,12) as well as to David and his dynasty (see 89:24, 28, 33, 2 Sam. 7:15; Isa. 55:3; NASU Study Notes).

---

[5] Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* (p. 725). T. Nelson Publishers.
[6] Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., p. 95). Cook Communications Ministries.
[7] *Life Application Bible Notes* (p. 968). (2007). Tyndale.

4. Great is his love – God's love is steadfast. He is powerful and is superior to all therefore how is He loves us is always going to be accomplished. There is nothing or no one that can prevent Him from achieving His goals. He will never stop until all His kindness is extended toward us. He obligates Himself to faithfully, and generously love us (chesed love).

   a) Have we forgotten that "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lam. 3:22)? We have been saved by grace, not by our good works (Eph. 2:8–9), and were it not for God's merciful lovingkindness, we would still be in darkness and death. How unfortunate that some of the Jewish leaders became proud of being God's chosen people and began to look down upon others. They even called the Gentiles "dogs." But God's people today are guilty of the same sin. "His lovingkindness is great toward us" (v. 2a, nasb) so we have nothing to boast about. "Not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:9). If we are humble before the Lord, He can use us to reach others, but if we are proud, He will reject us. [8]

5. And the truth/faithfulness of the Lord – God's truth is everlasting, 'unchangeable and it is impossible for Him to lie' (Hebrews 6:17-18), He is always dependable and trustworthy, therefore whatever He promises there is completely certainly it will be accomplished. He is loyal to His covenant and therefore to His people.

   a) God's "truth" is here, as so often, his faithfulness to his promises, the promises being especially those made to Abraham and David. His "mercy and truth" to Israel were an indication of what the Gentiles might expect of him in his dealings with them (comp. Rom. 15:8, 9).[9]
   b) The word translated "truth" or "faithfulness" means in Hebrew "to be firm, to be unshakable." God's character cannot change and His promises will not change, so why are we fretting about the feelings within us and the circumstances around us? Why do we hesitate to obey Him when He abounds in faithfulness (Ex. 34:6)? If God calls us to do something, He is faithful to help us do it (1 Thess. 5:24). To rely on our faith is to put faith in faith, but to rely on God's faithfulness is to put faith in the Lord. Our assurance is in the Word of God and the God of the Word.[10]

6. Endures forever – His love is continuous and it is limitless. God has no intention of ever stop executing His love towards us.
7. Praise the Lord – Psalmist commands us to come together in a full worship service with musical instruments and shouts jubilation unto the Lord. This joyful, delightful spontaneous time of praise should be because we recognized that He has all authority, is all powerful, and is mighty overall and everything. He is faithful to His covenant. This should be with all peoples (Psalm 34:1-3).

---

[8] Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., p. 96). Cook Communications Ministries.
[9] Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). *Psalms* (Vol. 3, p. 84). Funk & Wagnalls Company.
[10] Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., pp. 96–97). Cook Communications Ministries.