

The Exalted Name of God  
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“I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.” Psalm 138:2 (ESV)

In reading the Scriptures, I try to pay particular attention to the verbs. In this verse, the verbs are “bow down,” “give thanks,” and “exalted.” The first two verbs are done by us and they are responses to God’s verb – exalted.

God has chosen to exalt his name and his work above all things. The name that is above every name is Jesus. As Paul writes, “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

The work of Jesus that has been exalted is his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins. In your congregation, the work that Jesus does for you is proclaimed every Sunday from the pulpit—Jesus shed his blood so that you would be purified; Jesus died so that you would not suffer everlasting death; Jesus rose victoriously so that the gates of heaven would be opened to you.

The work of Jesus is bestowed upon you at your Baptism. The work of Jesus is given to you in the elements of Holy Communion. This Gospel—the Word and Sacraments—continues to go out to the ends of the earth.

God places the exalted name of Jesus upon you and bestows his work upon you simply because of his steadfast love and faithfulness toward you. God is love. His love is seen in his grace. God gives you the fullness of the Gospel day after day after day.

Every day, every moment, your sins are forgiven anew. Every moment, eternal life is again bestowed upon you. Every moment, God exalts the name and work of Jesus by having mercy upon you.

God has acted first. God blessed us through Jesus when all was lost. God loved us through Jesus when we were completely unlovable rebels.

As God acts in love, we give him thanks and speak of his steadfast love and faithfulness in Christ.