

PSALM 150 KINGDOM PRAISE

WEEK 28

July 15th Reading, Page 863

Summary and Goal:

Psalms shows us the heart of people who struggled as we do with doubts, fears, questions and faith. Psalm 150 is the final chapter of this book and it is all about Praise. This chapter shows us the importance of Praise as it celebrates God regardless of circumstances.

Main Passage:

Psalm 150 (only six verses long)

Session Outline:

1. Praise Defined (Psalm 150: 1a)
2. Where to Praise (Psalm 150: 1b)
3. What to Praise Him For (Psalm 150: 2)
4. How to Praise (Psalm 150: 3-5)
5. Who is to Praise (Psalm 150: 6)

Session in a Sentence:

The last verse sums it up; Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Kingdom Connection:

Praise began during the Creation Era and will continue until the second coming of Jesus Christ. We are told in Revelation that there will be eternal praise before the throne of God, but there is no better place to start praising the Lord than here and now.

Psalm 150

Kingdom Praise

Introduction

As a teacher I admit that I looked at this lesson and was not initially excited. I tend to prefer passages that are more of a narrative. I like characters we can dig into, looking at their background, their relationships, their choices and learn from their victories, challenges and mistakes.

I also tend to like those passages that have interesting historical context about the town or region; looking at the political and religious leaders of the day. You can take a city such as Bethel, Shechem, or Jerusalem and really see how God used those cities throughout generations.

Then I come to this particular passage; a chapter that is only six verses long. A chapter that does not mention one single person, city, region or leader. A chapter that has no narrative or character conflict. A chapter that has no life lessons; or does it?

I admit those things to you as a point of confession and a bit of embarrassment as a teacher.

The reality is that Psalms is a significant book of the bible with 150 chapters. The Psalms cover approximately 1000 years of history, from the time of Moses to the return of the Exile. As we have been reading the bible chronologically, we have seen Psalms scattered throughout various time periods. Psalms allows us to see the hearts of the people living out their questions, doubts, fears and faith.

"Of all the books in the Old Testament the Book of Psalms most vividly represents the faith of individuals in the Lord. The Psalms are the inspired responses of human hearts to God's revelation of Himself in law, history, and prophecy. Saints of all ages have appropriated this collection of prayers and praises in their public worship and private meditations." (Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 779)

It is not a traditional book that follows a character, a family, or even a timeline. Each chapter stands on its own; though that is not a weakness of the book, but rather a strength. And even

though each chapter stands on its own, today's lesson is the last chapter of the book and it is the pinnacle of praise. Psalm 150 is like a symphony reaching its crescendo to bring the audience to a standing ovation.

Instead of dreading this chapter, I've come to embrace the beauty of this Psalm. Beauty found in its simplicity. This Psalm is absolutely timeless and a great reminder that whatever you are going through today, this Psalm comes at the right time. Whatever challenges you might have personally or with a family member, this Psalm comes at the right time. If you are having difficulty at work or perhaps finding a job, this Psalm comes at the right time. If you are one of the few where everything is going exactly right in your life on every level without a care in the world, this Psalm comes at the right time.

I can say with all confidence this Psalm is relevant to all people, of all ages and stages of life.

Today we look at Psalm 150, the very last chapter of the book of Psalms.

PRAISE

And as Dr. Thomas Constable says, "Psalm 150 is a grand doxology for the whole collection".

Psalm 150: 1 Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

² Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

³ Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp!

⁴ Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

(Chronological Bible, pg. 863; July 15th)

In case you didn't notice, this is a "Praise" Psalm. The anonymous writer of this song wanted to communicate a focused message; Praise the Lord. He used the word 13 times, 10 of which were imperatives to praise God for and with specific things.

The first phrase sets the tone, “Praise the LORD!” If you have ever said or heard the word, “Hallelujah”, it’s taken from this Hebrew Phrase. The Hebrew word used for “Praise” is “Hallel” and the word used for “Lord” is “Yah”, a shorten version of “Yahweh”.

So, the Psalmist is saying, “Hallelujah”, which is a unique and universal word. In fact, if you try to translate Hallelujah into any other language you wind up with Hallelujah, though some languages spell it “Alleluia”.

This phrase is a call to worship and a call to action.

Praise is not just a word used in church. The word “praise” simply means to say something good and positive about another person. It can be expressed in writing, verbally or in action.

The Hebrew word, “Hallel” literally means: *to shine a light on*.

We are to shine a light on the LORD. And when LORD is in all “caps” it is the Covenant name of God, Yahweh. So, we are to shine a light on Yahweh, the One True God, the God of the Covenant, the God of Promise.

Several years ago, the single parent ministry of our church took a single parent family vacation to a Christian camp in the Ozark mountains of Missouri with over 150 people. While the group was there, about 65 of them went into a cave for a guided spelunking adventure. No one was allowed in the cave without an individual flashlight. Everyone proceeded to walk, crawl, and climb their way through this very dark cave. After about 40 minutes of going deeper into this cave they suddenly came into this huge opening where all of them could fit with a massive ceiling height where they could stand up freely. The guide then had them all sit down in a big circle and told them to turn their flashlights off.

The cave’s darkness was absolutely pitch black. You literally could not see your hand in front of your face. There was no light whatsoever, just utter darkness. The guide proceeded to talk about God and creation and how it all began in the darkness. Then God said, “let there be light, and there was light.” It was at that moment the guide turned his flashlight on and it was almost blinding.

That one flashlight appeared to be brighter than all the other flashlights had been put together. It was the only flashlight shining. The guide would point the flashlight at various things around the

cave, on the walls, on the ceiling, and on the ground. Your eyes could not help but follow that flashlight wherever it went.

That is the picture the Psalmist is painting here when he says, “Praise the LORD.” Shine a light on the One True God. Even if the circumstances are pitch black and you can’t see your hand in front of your face, Praise the LORD and shine that light on Him. The Psalmist wrote this during a time when Israel was divided; it was the divided kingdom. It was a dark time in the history of God’s people. There was not a lot to be excited about politically, economically, or even religiously. Both the northern kingdom and southern kingdom were all over the place with no continuity in any of those areas. For instance, one king only lasted 6 days, another lasted only 6 months.

Life was complicated, confusing and dark. And yet, the Psalmist said to shine a light on the LORD. He did not make any qualifications on this imperative.

The Psalmist could have said when the economy becomes stronger and more consistent, then you should shine a light on the LORD. The Psalmist could have said when you get a raise or better job, perhaps even a new boss, then you should probably shine a light on the LORD. The Psalmist could have said when you are no longer in financial debt or in poor health, then you can shine a light on the LORD.

The Psalmist made no qualifications for shining the light on the LORD. He simply said with boldness, confidence and authority, “Praise the LORD.”

Shine a light on the One who created light. Shine a light on the One who spoke the world into existence. Shine a light on the One who will never leave you nor forsake you. Shine a light on the one who knew you in your mother’s womb. Shine a light, regardless of circumstances.

The truth of the matter is, when you are in a dark cave, the light that shines is so much brighter. If you are in a dark season of circumstances, the light you shine on the Lord shines even brighter.

Where to Praise

The tone is set as the crescendo begins to build. The Psalmist proceeds to tell us where to shine this light. In verse 1, he mentions two places; 1) His sanctuary, 2) His mighty firmament.

Spoiler alert, that means everywhere!

His sanctuary then and now was considered to be a tangible place of worship, whether it was a tent, or a permanent structure made of stone/ brick/ wood. It was a specific place that people could purposely go to with the intention of praising the LORD, with other people. It was a corporate place of worship.

They would hear scripture read from the scrolls (*it would have been from the first five books of our bible, and probably some of the prophets of their day*). They would gather to offer sacrifices and offerings. They would gather to sing songs and pray. It was a time where people come together as a community of believers to worship and praise God. This is not unlike what we do on our church campus locally and churches do all around the world.

The church is a place that you are to shine a light on the LORD. We do it through bible study classes like this and teaching the bible. We do it through worship services with choirs, bands and praise teams leading us in songs. We do it through the preaching of the bible. We do it through the giving of tithes and offerings. We do it through baptism. We do it through prayer. We do it through coming forward to join the church to be part of this particular community of believers at this church. Each weekend when you come to this place for worship and bible study, you are living out Psalm 150: 1.

But then the Psalmist also says to Praise the LORD in “His mighty firmament”, other translations say, “mighty expanse.” Think all of creation. When we started this journey of 52 Week of Knowing the Bible chronologically, we started with Genesis 1:1 which says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

God created what you see when you look up into the sky. The sun, the moon, the stars; the vastness of the universe. God also created what you see when you look around and down at the earth. The mountains, the trees, the flowers, the plants, the animals, the oceans, the ground, the vastness of planet earth.

We are to shine a light on the LORD both in His sanctuary and in the vastness of creation.

Throughout the previous 149 chapters of Psalms, the various authors would at various times write about creation, perhaps none more clearly than David in Psalm 8.

Psalm 8: 1 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens!... **3** When I consider Your heavens, the work of
Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

There is something spectacular about the ocean and the beaches. The water, the waves, the tide, the rhythmic movement of ocean as it comes up to the sand on the beach. On the other end of the spectrum, there is something spectacular about the mountains as they reach up to the heavens seeing the rocks that keep reaching beyond the tree line. There is even something beautiful about the flatness of West Texas, or so some people think. But definitely with the ocean and the mountains.

Summertime is a wonderful time to go outside when the sun has gone down, and it has cooled off to a mere 92 degrees and you can look up in the sky at the moon and the stars. And as David considered, what a great opportunity for us to consider the Heavens of God, the work of His fingers that He has ordained. What a wonderful opportunity to shine a light on that which gives us light.

The first verse tells us where to Praise Him; Psalm 150:2 tells us what to praise Him for.

What to Praise Him For

Psalm 150: 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

Shine a light on Him for His mighty acts, which we have seen over and over again thus far in the reading of the Old Testament. His mighty acts go beyond speaking the world into existence.

The mighty acts of God are not based on size or grandeur. The flood was definitely a mighty act that was massive; however, the mighty act of the water receding and a rainbow in the sky commemorating a covenant never to flood the earth again was a mighty act greater than the flood.

Taking the son of an idol maker named Abram who could not have a child with his wife Sara and making a covenant with him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars was the beginning of a mighty act. Abram's name was changed to Abraham and He became not only a

Father of a Nation, but the Patriarch of all Patriarchs. God would forever be known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 3 generations that had begun with a mighty act of God.

The 10 plagues of the Exodus Era were mighty acts of God that even Pharaoh couldn't completely deny. The parting of the Red Sea was a mighty act that has been depicted throughout the ages in drawings, paintings, sculptures and more.

Though when the Psalmist wrote this he was looking backward, and we have the privilege to be living in a time that our backward would have been his future. For us we know the mightiest act of all mighty acts was God sending His only Son, Jesus Christ to live a perfect, sinless life on this earth as a human being. Jesus gave His life on the cross, being crucified to death for our sin and being buried in a tomb. And then three days later Jesus rises from the dead, conquering sin and death. He did this so that all who believe in Him would have eternal life. The death and resurrection of Jesus was the mighty act of God based on His love for us. It is a mighty act when God takes sinful, rebellious, complacent people and saves them.

We have the privilege and honor to shine a light for the mighty acts He has done and has yet to do in your life and mine.

Beyond the mighty acts of what God has done, we are to Praise Him for His "excellent greatness."

Sometimes we can be so focused on the acts of God, we forget about the character of God.

The excellent greatness of God is unsurpassed; these are the intangibles of God. We are to Praise Him for His sovereignty, His immutability, His omniscience, His omnipotence, His omnipresence, His power, His grace, His mercy, His goodness, His kindness, His holiness, His faithfulness, His justice, His wisdom, and on and on and on you go. And that's exactly what you read in the Old Testament. (John MacArthur, a "*Hymn of Praise*")

There is nothing and no one that compares to God's greatness. The intangibles are life changing. Throughout the Psalms the authors have written about each element of God's character, whether it's His sovereignty, omniscience, power, grace, justice, wisdom, love, faithfulness, holiness, forgiveness, goodness, etc. David summed it up this way in Psalm 40.

Psalm 40: 5 (NASB) Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done, And Your thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, they would be too numerous to count.

Sometimes in our lives, our prayers, our thoughts we tend to focus on and desire the hand of God more than the heart of God. Psalm 150 calls us back in such a way that we are to shine a light on His excellent greatness; the intangibles that are incomparable. When you say these characteristics of God out loud, that is Praise; that is shining a light on His excellent greatness.

We have looked at where to Praise, what to Praise and now let's look at how to Praise.

How to Praise

Psalm 150: 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! ⁴ Praise Him with the timbrel (*tambourine*) and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! ⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

To put your mind at rest; No, you don't have to play an instrument to Praise God.

However, throughout scripture music is an integral part of praise and worship. When Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, the first thing that they did was sing a song.

Exodus 15:1 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! ² The LORD *is* my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He *is* my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

Many times, in the Psalms it says to sing to the Lord, though in Psalm 150 it is all about the instruments. Trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, stringed instruments, flutes, and cymbals. When we think of these instruments perhaps, we think of school bands, rock groups, orchestras, movie soundtracks. We think merely of the instrument itself which is vastly different from what the people in the day of the psalmist would have thought.

There praise was enhanced not only musically, but it was enhanced historically by these instruments. For instance, the trumpet for a Jew would remind them of religious ceremonies and

festivals. Trumpets were blown to announce sacrifices in Jerusalem. Trumpets were blown by Gideon and his men to have victory over the Midianite's. Trumpets were blown to call people to worship. Trumpets were blown to announce the entrance of a King.

So, these are not arbitrary instruments; rather these are instruments that carry with them history, memories, devotion and purpose.

The tambourine and dance were a celebration of joy. Often in scripture dancing is contrasted to mourning. Dancing was a way to celebrate the freedom, joy and happiness of who the Lord is and what He has done.

The cymbals are a sign of exaltation. It is like an exclamation point to the crescendo. The psalmist even emphasizes them twice in verse 5.

Ultimately Praise is not about the instruments, it is about the heart. It is an expression of what is going on in your heart, mind, soul and spirit. Some people Praise the Lord through song, through instruments, through writing, through artwork, through serving others, through prayer; there are countless ways to Praise the LORD.

Thus far, we have seen where to Praise, what to Praise, how to Praise and finally we see who is to Praise.

Who is to Praise

Psalm 150: 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

If you are breathing, you are to praise the LORD. When I think of this verse I think of animals, especially dolphins. There is something about watching dolphins in the water as they jump out of the water, it is like they are dancing in celebration of life. And the dolphins always seem to have a smile on their face. Or when you come home from a long day and your dog is there wagging its tail just so happy to be in your presence. Or a bird soaring through the air peacefully with the blue sky as a backdrop.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Once again, the Psalmist doesn't qualify praise based on circumstances, relationships, achievements, bank accounts, or anything else that would be temporary.

With boldness, confidence and enthusiasm he says, "Let everything that has breath shine a light on the One True God." Shine a light on the One who said in the very beginning, "let there be light." Shine a light on the Light of the World no matter how dark this world may be.

This week when you take that deep breath waiting for the red light to turn green and the person in the car in front of you to stop texting; remember what Psalm 150:6 says, the last verse in all of Psalms.

The crescendo of the symphonic book of songs, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD."

Resources:

Dr. Thomas Constable; Psalms

John MacArthur, "A Hymn of Praise"

The Scofield Bible

Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament

www.biblestudytools.com/psalm150