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Bread of Life Baptist Church
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Psalm 150

Everyone, Everything, and Everywhere - Praise the Lord!

Intro

I was once asked what my favorite book of the Bible was. That's a very difficult question to answer. There are many I'm inclined to call my favorite, and it often depends on which one I've read through most recently. But a book of scripture that I'm always clinging to, in some capacity or another, is the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms lies close to my heart. It is an absolutely beautiful book, filled to the brim with the stuff of true Christian devotion, faith, and worship. It is a book full of prayers, poems, songs, and hymns that teach us how to come to the Lord in a real, personal, relational way, *but also in a reverent and worshipful way*. The Psalms teach us to lift our hearts and souls to God, to worship, praise, and glorify Him above all else! They form our hearts, minds, and souls to rightly praise and worship God in our whole life, in all that we think, say, and do! And the Book of Psalms teaches us this all throughout, from beginning to end.

A few months ago now, I preached through Psalms 1 and 2. We saw how Psalms 1 and 2 form an introduction to the entire book of Psalms, teaching us that there are only two paths we can walk down: the *path of the wicked*, which leads *away from God*; this is the path we all start off on, in our sin, which *leads us to destruction*. Or, we can take the *path of righteousness*, which *leads us to God, salvation, and eternal life with Him!* And as Psalm 2 made clear, *this path is the path of the Cross of Christ; we can only turn to God and know salvation in Him through the true King and Messiah, Jesus Christ!* If those two psalms formed the **introduction**, showing us where to start, then the last 5 psalms, 146-150, form the **conclusion** of the Psalter: *they show us where it all leads!* And what is the conclusion? Where does the path of the righteous, the life that bows down to Christ as King, lead us? **It leads us to a life of worship; it leads us to praise God with all that we are!** We see this played out all through the Psalms. Even in psalms of lament, where sorrows, suffering, and sin are lamented, and requests and pain are brought to God in prayer - even these psalms end in praising God and worshipping Him. We even see this in the very *structure* of the way the Psalter was written and composed. In between the "introduction" section (Psalms 1-2), and the "conclusion" (Psalms 146-150), the Psalms can be broken up into **5 Books**,

and each section of the book of Psalms concludes with a call to praise the Lord.. At the end of each book, the last verse or two or each of those last psalms ends *with an exhortation for everyone to bless, praise, and worship God!*¹

Then, after book five ends, the **conclusion of the book, psalms 146-150, begins**; this whole section is composed of 5 explicit praise psalms, with the first and last verse of each calling us - even *commanding us* - to praise the Lord! This call to praise and worship God builds throughout the book, finally culminating in the five psalms of praise! What we see is like a **symphony**, that starts off slow, and slowly builds, becoming louder and more magnificent, occasionally flaring at moments before settling back down; and then, finally, the symphony builds and builds, getting louder and louder, until it culminates in the most beautiful, jaw-dropping piece at the close. That's exactly what is happening in the book of Psalms. And the climactic portion is 146-150, especially culminating in 150, where the point of the Psalms is brought to its clear, purposeful conclusion, just as a symphony ends on a loud and high note. And the point is clear: it teaches us that the whole point, indeed, the whole point of the Christian life, is to **form within us hearts of praise that burst forth in worship!**

Psalms 150, the passage before us today, reminds us that our ultimate purpose and end in life is to glorify, worship, and praise the Lord our God. Neatly summed up within these few, concise verses are the answers to some very foundational questions about our worship: the Psalm answers for us *where* we are supposed to worship God: it tells us *why* we are to praise God; it tells us *how* we are to worship; and it answers the question of *who* is called, even *commanded*, to worship and praise the Lord. So then, our four points this morning will simply attempt to tease out each of the points that the psalm makes.

First, we turn to the question of ***where* worship is supposed to take place:**

I. Praise the Lord Everywhere (v. 1)

The psalm opens with the general call that goes forth: "Praise the Lord!" And immediately we see **where** the worship of God is supposed to take place: God is to be praised **everywhere**, whether on Earth or in Heaven.

The end of verse 1 explicitly refers to praising God in the Heavenly places, in "**His mighty heavens!**" (v.1b). At the very least, this refers to Heaven, where God dwells in glory. As

¹ See Psalms 41:13; 72:20; 89:52; 106:48; 145:21.

we see elsewhere in scripture, the angelic hosts **praise and worship God without ceasing!** God's glory is not obscured by sin, but is openly acknowledged, declared, and praised by all who witness it. Obviously, then, worship takes place in the heavenly places, in the visible presence of God, the Lord of glory.

But worship is also to take place among us, *here on Earth, among humanity*. I think this is what is referred to by the word "**Sanctuary.**" The word *sanctuary* refers to the **Holy presence and dwelling place of God**. But even within that definition, there are still a couple of possible references here. This is possibly speaking of the heavenly places, the **true, heavenly dwelling of God**. As we have just seen, the second half of this verse explicitly speaks of that reality. But another possibility is that **sanctuary** here refers to the *dwelling place of God among humanity; the place where God's people gather to worship and praise God*. In the Old Testament, the word "**sanctuary**" can refer to the *Temple* of the Lord, the physical location in Israel where God's covenant people could come before the Lord to worship Him. It refers to the place where God comes and dwells among His people, and where God's people could gather together to worship Him. That is how I think it is being used here.

But now that Christ has come, we no longer live under the Law and the Old Covenant. Under the new covenant in Christ, there is no longer a physical temple or a physical location where we go to worship. **Jesus Christ is the true temple**, the dwelling place of God among mankind, and the place where God's people come into the presence of God in true worship, this is true for all who believe in Him are *united to Him*. We come into the presence of God to worship Him as His people, first and foremost, by being *in Jesus Christ*. Furthermore, we receive the very Holy Spirit of God, meaning God *dwells in and among us!* He dwells among His people - the Church. He also dwells *with and in each individual Christian*. This means that the *sanctuary* of God on earth - the place where humanity can gather in the presence of God to worship Him - is no longer a physical temple, but is *the local church - the individual people of God and the local gatherings of the people of God in Christ Jesus*.

Since it is no longer confined to a physical temple, the *location of worship* expands and extends to any and every place in all of creation! Whether in the Middle East or America, Europe or Asia. Whether in church, at home, at work, or a night out on the town - *all believers are part of the true temple, the true sanctuary of God, all the time! We are in Christ and His Spirit is in*

us! Therefore, wherever and whenever you are, *that is the place where you are called to praise and worship the Lord!*

But this is especially true for when we gather as the local church - when we gather, as God's people, in the name of Jesus Christ! As we are doing right now, for example! As Jesus tells us in Matt. 18, "Where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (18:20). When we gather *as the local church*, coming together as the people of God in Christ, Jesus is with us in a particular way. How appropriate it is, then, that we gather together *week after week* to worship and praise our great God! Yes, we each have the Spirit of God inside of us and are called to worship in every place, in all of our life! But we each exist only as a *part of God's temple* - the Church, Christ's body. Therefore, it is not enough for us to only worship as individuals, but also to come together and worship in the congregation! To come and praise the Lord **as the church - the visible dwelling place of God among humanity! The true place of worship: where people gather in Christ's name to worship the Lord!**

So then, the attitude of our hearts should be: **Let God be praised everywhere! In the heavens and here on earth! Let us praise God wherever we are! Let us praise God in every place! Let us praise God in public in private; at work and at play. And let us make it a priority in our lives to gather together, as God's people - as a local church - to corporately worship and praise the Lord, just as we're doing right now, and as we do every Sunday.**

But why, exactly, are we supposed to worship? This question is answered next.

II. Praise the Lord for Who He Is and What He Has Done (v. 2)

In the second half of verse 2, we are told to "praise the Lord" because of God's "**Excellent greatness**" (v.2b). In other words, we're told to worship God because of **who He is** - because He is the most "excellent," the "greatest," the most **glorious, majestic, and highly exalted being in all the universe!** He is exceedingly great, worthy of all worship, honor, glory, and praise! Everything about Him is wonderful and praiseworthy! He is the true God, and is therefore *the only one* worthy of worship!

And His glory - *His praise-worthiness* - is revealed in what He does - in what He *has done, is doing, and will do*. And so, as the beginning of verse two tells us, we also **“praise Him for His mighty deeds!”** We worship and praise God because of *what He does*.

In one sense, this includes all of what God does, for it is all good, all praise-worthy, and it all reveals His glorious nature. THE fact that He *created everything that exists* reveals to us that He is the one, true Creator God! As our maker, He deserves our worship and praise! All of His works of divine providence, whether seemingly “normal” or “miraculous” reveal His divine power and glory!

But in another sense, this calls us to praise God **because of what He has done to save and redeem sinful, rebellious humanity**. This covers the entire scope of *redemptive history*, from Genesis to Revelation. The entire storyline of the Bible is *the story of how God mercifully saves wretched, rebellious, hopeless sinners*. God is perfectly good, holy, righteous and just. We are all broken, sinful, selfish, and wicked. And yet the Bible reveals **the mighty deeds of the God who stooped down to saved lost causes like you and me!** The whole Bible reveals God’s “mighty deeds” of redemption and salvation, and it *all points us to the climactic work of Jesus Christ*. The fullness of redemptive history, the fullness of God’s “mighty deeds,” indeed, the fullness of the very glory of God, **is revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ!** And why did Jesus, the Son of God, take on flesh and become a man? What was His work all about? *He came to bring salvation to sinners!* In the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God worked out salvation *for anyone who turns away from sin and turns to God in faith, trusting in Christ alone to be saved from our sins and the wrath we deserve!*

This is the “excellent greatness” of God revealed in the “mighty deeds” of God all throughout the Bible and in the gospel of Jesus Christ! And we **experience God’s work of salvation** for ourselves when we turn to the Lord in faith, trusting in Christ alone! And as we experience and learn more about God’s mighty works of redemption in Christ, *it rightly compels our hearts to worship and praise God!* This is the natural and right response for sinners who receive undeserved mercy and grace - who receive undeserved forgiveness, righteousness, redemption, transformed lives, and eternal life in Christ!

So meditate on who God is and what He has done; see this most fully displayed in the life and work of Christ in the gospel, and let this move you to genuinely worship the Lord!

[Transition]: And as our hearts are moved to worship, the next question is, of course, “How?” This brings us to point number 3...

III. Praise the Lord with All That You Have (vv.3-5)

Verses 3-5 erupt in a flurry of praising God with any and every musical form and instrument at hand. It is a call to **praise God** with whatever musical instruments and abilities we have at our disposal. Each burst of praise calls forth different instruments and musical forms to be used: Praise God with trumpets! Praise God with lutes, harps, pipes, tambourines and cymbals! It is a varied list, touching on all different kinds and forms of musical instruments available when the psalm was written. “Lutes” and “harps,” two types of stringed instruments, are listed in verse 3, then in verse 4, it is opened up to any other “stringed” instruments that exist! And it’s obviously not just confined to playing instruments, but breaks out into “dancing” as well! It even lists two different types of cymbals, or percussion instruments.

So this is clearly not meant to be an exhaustive list of appropriate instruments to use, or even *commanding these specific instruments to be used*. The point is: *use whatever you have at your disposal to worship and praise the Lord!* Do we have trumpets? Praise God with them! Do we have lutes, harps or any other “stringed instruments” of any kind? Praise the Lord with them! Grab them pipes and flutes! Do you play the tambourine and dance? Use it to praise God! Do we have cymbals? Use them to praise God! Do we also have loud clashing cymbals? Use them as well!

The point is calling us to use whatever means we have at hand to worship and praise God!

And so we can say today in our local church setting: Do we have a piano? Great! Let us use it to praise and worship God! Do we have violins, guitars, banjos, any other kind of stringed instrument? Let us worship the Lord the Lord with them! Can we sing? Let our voices lift up his praises! Has the Lord gifted you with musical or technical talents to help aid in our corporate worship? Praise God! Does this instrument, or these different styles of music, or this piece of equipment or technology aid us in worshipping the Lord and singing His praises? Then let us employ it all to the glory of His great name!

And so we could keep going and extend this to *all of life!* Has the Lord given you any gifts, talents, or resources? Praise God! Let us use them together to worship, praise, glorify the Lord! Let us join together in praising God with all things, with all that we have, with every

opportunity and with whatever is at our disposal! Let us praise God with all that we have and with all that we are!

And finally, we see “**who**” is expected to praise God...

IV. Everyone Should Praise the Lord (v.6)

The last verse ends this psalm - and the entire Psalter - by a double-exhortation to praise God. And it gives a resounding, exhausting answer to *whom this exhortation is given*. Who should praise God? **Everything that has breath**. This is clearly saying: everyone in all the earth should praise the Lord! But it *even goes beyond all people*: everyone and everything, every living creature that moves and breathes - let everyone and all of creation praise and worship God! And then for good measure, the psalm ends with the same phrase with which it started: the repeated call to “**praise the Lord!**”

There couldn't be a more appropriate way to end the entire book of Psalms. After all, that's what the whole book points us to: **the worship of God**. But even more than that, *this is where the entire Bible leads to!* The entire end and aim of the Christian life is the worship, praise and glory of God! Not only that, but *all of history* is leading and building up to the day when **everyone and all of Creation will give God the praise and glory He deserves!** Fallen humanity does not do this now, in the fallen world we live in today. Even we, as the people of God, do not glorify God in all that we do or give Him all the praise He is due. And yet, this is exactly where all things are headed. We saw this just a few weeks ago, in **Philippians 2:9-11** - there is coming a day when *every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus; when every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord* - among every single person and being, in Heaven, Earth, Hell, and all of Creation! **That is where all things are headed - to the praise and glory of God in Christ Jesus!**

So then, this means that we should make **worshipping the Lord** the aim of *our lives*. Our entire purpose for existing is *the glory of God*. This is true of all people. How much more is it true of God's people - we who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, we who have been filled with the Holy Spirit of God, we who are **royal priests** in Christ? The glory of the Lord should be what drives us; we should do *all things* for the purpose of glorifying God in Christ Jesus. We should make it our aim and goal in life to cultivate a *genuine heart of worship*,

genuinely seeking to worship and praise God with *every thought, every word, every feeling, and every action we take*.

And this also means that we should make it our aim to see **every single person in the entire world also praise and worship God in Christ!** Our aim in life is not *just* our own personal worship - *it is also to see other people worship and praise God!* We should work towards GOD's glory covering the earth! And how do we do that? **By proclaiming God's glory through the gospel of Jesus Christ, seeking to make disciples of all nations, so that everyone, in all the earth, would praise the Lord through faith in Christ!**

One of my favorite books that has been written on the subject of *missions* is "*Let the Nations Be Glad*" by John Piper. He began that book with these powerful words: **"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't.... So worship is the fuel and goal of missions."**²

John Piper is exactly right. Psalm 150, along with the rest of Scripture, makes this point very clear. God is worthy **of all worship, honor, and praise**. Everyone and all of creation were made *for the purpose of glorifying God. All of Scripture, and all of history, is moving towards the day when everyone will bow the knee and praise the name of the Lord!* And yet, all who are still dead in their sin **intentionally do not worship God; they emphatically do not bow their knee in faith to Christ**. On that day, when all will be compelled to praise God's name as they see His glory, it will also be a day of judgment; when we sin and rebel against God, we are doing the *opposite* of worshipping God: we are trying to worship *ourselves and the things of this world that we turn into our idols*. And this deserves God's wrath; we deserve death. Worshipping God is not optional; it is not merely something that is *nice* or *appropriate* to do. It is, in a very real way, *a matter of life and death*. And so, we must glorify God by taking the gospel of Christ to all the nations, to every person in every place! We proclaim the glory of God revealed in His Word, revealed fully in the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ! We proclaim to all the good news that we can be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone!

But the end goal is not *missions itself or the expansion of the church*. **The ultimate goal is the worship and praise of God**. We proclaim the gospel *and make disciples, teaching one another to worship God*. We proclaim Christ and preach and teach the Word *so that all might know and praise Him!* Even after the opportunity for missions is over; even after the heavens and

² John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 11.

earth pass away; even after the judgment day has long ended - *we will continue to worship and praise the great name of our glorious God forever and ever!*

So let us be about the work of missions! Let us eagerly throw ourselves into the task of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone! Let us be about the mission of *making disciples of everyone*, from Plattsburgh New York to the ends of the Earth, by *teaching the Word of God to everyone that we can!* Let us call all people **to glorify God with us through faith in Christ Jesus!** This is why we exist; this is why we gather as the people of God; this is why Christ has given the church the mission of evangelism and discipleship; this is why we live the Christian life - **to worship and praise the Lord!**

And we can only worship God by coming to Him **in faith; by believing who He is and trusting in what He has done, most fully revealed in Jesus Christ.** If you're not a believer this morning, then the way for you to worship God is by first and foremost putting your faith in Jesus Christ, believing that he lived, died, and was raised in your place to deal with your sin so that you can be forgiven, declared righteous, and live forever with Christ in glory! To trust not in yourself or your own works to save you, but to trust completely in the grace of God, all to the glory of His great name!

If you have any questions about how to be saved in Christ, or about baptism or joining the church, please come and speak with me or one of the deacons. You can come and speak to me after the service, or even come now during the last song if you'd like; we would love to speak with you. Let us pray.