

PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS EXCELLENT GREATNESS

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Psalm 150

Let All Things Praise the Lord

**Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty firmament!**

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

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

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

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

**Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord!**

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Psalm 150 is the last Psalm in the book of Psalms. This Psalm is not attributed to King David and it's not even attributed to any author. What first attracted my attention about this Psalm was in the fact that this Psalm isn't a laying out of the many reasons why one should praise the Lord. Nevertheless, it still speaks to all listening to "Praise the Lord". There are but two sentences or phrases that tell the listener why they should praise the Lord. "Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!"

What we considered last Sunday is in how each generation and really each individual person will have a certain perspective of who God is and what He means to them. Some people may recognize the blessings in their lives that have come from God and others may feel as though they have been slighted, given the short end of the stick, so-to-speak, in their lives. The people through the southeast of the United States, in what is called the Bible belt will most definitely have a different perspective of God than someone who lives in India or China or any other country that doesn't have a prevailing of Christian churches in their communities.

Yet, this Psalm isn't speaking of our circumstances as much as it speaks to praising God for who He is and what He has done. When the Israelites were told in the time of Nehemiah, "do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength", what really were they being told?

Since the praising of God is closely tied to the "joy of the Lord" we can ask ourselves, what does that mean "the joy of the Lord is your strength"? (**Nehemiah 8:10**) What we are to see is how God transcends all of time, and all of our circumstances. When we look at that passage of Scripture in context, it says that the people were read the law and they began to weep. They had known from their time in captivity in Babylon and in hearing the word of the law that they had messed up badly. They had rejected God and followed after other gods, that is, idols that they had that had replaced God. Ultimately, they had not wanted to be accountable to God, their Creator and Sustainer. So what happened? God gave them up to their desire to not be accountable to God, which of course includes the great benefits of having God's grace and mercy and blessings, and they were taken into captivity, becoming slaves then to the Babylonians. In the book of Ezra, which is mostly the narrative that preceded what took place in the next book, Nehemiah, we are told that King Cyrus had allowed the Israelites to go back to Jerusalem, to rebuild the temple. The book of Nehemiah is primarily talking about the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem and then Ezra is about the rebuilding of the temple. In Ezra, the narrative begins with them laying the foundation of the temple and it says, "But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy." (**Ezra 3:12**)

They had seen the previous grandeur and glory of the temple built by King Solomon and they couldn't help but grieve over the past and what once was. In the account in Ezra it says, "And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off." (**Ezra 3:11-13**)

We know that the law of God reveals to us our sins against God, our shortcomings in what God expects of His people. When the Israelites were read the law, of what we read in the book of Nehemiah, their initial reaction was sorrow. Nothing wrong with that. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." There is clearly a difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Looking back in regret of our failures of the past brings forth worldly sorrow, bitterness, and self-pity. Acknowledging our sins against God

and turning to Him for forgiveness of sins is a Godly sorrow that leads us to what the Levites told the Israelites in Nehemiah, "do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength". The Israelites, in the story in Ezra, was a mixed crowd of rejoicing and mourning. Some of the people were not ready to move on.

The question to us is, will we take heed to **Psalm 150** that tells us, "Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!" God's Word is telling us, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"

There is nothing we can do about the past, although we, as children of God, that is, those who have believed on Jesus for dying on a cross for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself, giving us forgiveness of sins...but wait, there's more. "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**) That ministry of reconciliation begins with us being reconciled to God so that we can have fellowship with God in Christ. That also is the message, the good news we can share with others, praising the Lord for "His mighty acts" in forgiving us, giving His Holy Spirit to us, and then "working in us to will and to do for His good pleasure." (**Philippians 2:13**) It is though, once again, imperative for us to realize that it is God who is working in us---His Wisdom, His Righteousness, His Sanctification, and His Redemption. (**1 Corinthians 1:30**) That ministry of reconciliation also works in us in reconciling us to others, like our family, and friends, and acquaintances; those bridges we have burnt in our past.

Let me ask you this. When you read God's Word or hear it read to you, does it just grive you and bring you to sorrow because you know you can never meet God's expectations of you? Does it just make you anxious and fearful knowing that there are many a skeleton in your closet? Or do you read or hear God's Word with excitement and anticipation for what God is doing in you and will carry out to completion in you? Once again, there is but one way that we are expected to go and that is in Christ Jesus. When Jesus claimed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me", (**John 14:6**) He also stated, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (**John 15:5**) Jesus was speaking literally not figuratively. He wasn't speaking of a concept to grasp or a teaching to master. Jesus is telling us in His Word that He alone is what we need in our lives, to satisfy what God desires for us to become and who to be. In Christ alone can we bear the fruit that will equip us to overcome this world and in becoming who we were

created by God to be. The fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

Faithfulness and self-control. In Christ alone will we overcome this world and live the victorious life in Christ Jesus! That is more than enough for us to rejoice in the Lord and praise the Lord! Is it not? The Apostle Paul tells us, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (**Philippians 4:4-7**) "Let your gentleness be known to all men." Gentleness is a part of the fruit of the Spirit is it not? What that is saying is what Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (**Matthew 5:16**)

Same thing goes for joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength means it is the joy that is coming from the Spirit working in us that will be our strength! That ties in with **Ephesians 2:8-10**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." That includes the joy of the Lord that is our strength! That includes Him guarding our hearts and minds! That includes His Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption! That also includes the receiving of the great and wonderful grace and mercies of God!

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