

Thanksgiving Sunday 2021

Praise the Lord!

October 10th, 2021

Psalm 150

Rev. Levi denBok

Introduction:

Good morning, and Happy Thanksgiving!

I want to give you a heads up off the top that we are going to do things a little differently today. This morning, we are going to spend some time studying God's word, but then we will devote the majority of our time to RESPONSE. We are going to give thanks with grateful hearts! We are going to sit around the thanksgiving table with our family and celebrate the eucharist – that literally means “The Thanksgiving”!

And we're going to begin our time with a call to worship.

Have you ever stopped to think about what a call to worship is? Josh does a great job each week leading us in songs of gratitude and praise, and he always begins the service with a reading from God's word. But why? What is a call to worship?

A call to worship serves to remind us that worship is God's idea, not ours. A call to worship points at our wayward thoughts, our grumbling attitudes and our ungrateful tendencies and says, “Turn your eyes upon God and see that He is GOOD! See that He is KIND! See that you have been given every reason to PRAISE! See that, even in the midst of your worst circumstances, God is still with you, and He is still for you, and He is still absolutely, positively, infinitely WORTHY OF YOUR WORSHIP!

God knows our wayward hearts. He knows that we naturally drift away from gratitude – that Thanksgiving is not our mother tongue – so He consistently and lovingly calls us back. That's what a call to worship is.

This morning, I want to lead us in an extended call to worship, and I would invite you to turn with me now in your Bibles to Psalm 150.

The Book of Psalms is the Holy Spirit-inspired hymnal of the church! Here, in the final Psalm, the book comes to a close with a crescendo of praise! Technically, Psalm 150 should probably be understood as the fifth and final VERSE in the closing song, because it is intentionally bound together with the four Psalms that go before it. Together, they are referred to as the “Hallelujah Psalms”, and our text this morning is the resounding conclusion.

Hear now God’s holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active word to us today.

Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
 praise him in his mighty heavens!
² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
 praise him according to his excellent greatness!
³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
 praise him with lute and harp!
⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
 praise him with strings and pipe!
⁵ Praise him with sounding cymbals;
 praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150:1-6 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

In a typical sermon, I read, explain and then apply the text. This morning, however, there is very little explaining that needs to be done. What we have before us is a call to worship. In this call, we find the where, the why, the how and the who of worship¹. It won’t take us long to unpack this text, but the application will resound for all eternity! Let’s consider now this call to worship.

A Call to Worship

The first thing we find in our text is:

¹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150 TOTC*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 491.

1. The place of worship²

Look again at verse 1:

Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens! (Psalm 150:1 ESV)

Here, as the Psalmist describes the “where” of worship, he presents two avenues that – when taken together – represent the whole of creation. First, he calls us to praise God in His sanctuary. As we saw in our Leviticus series, the temple was the place where God’s presence was tangibly manifest among His people. They made pilgrimages to the temple on an annual basis to gather in corporate worship, and it was a big deal when the people came together in praise!

He deserved praise in the sanctuary, but the praise wasn’t reserved for the sanctuary. The Psalmist goes on to declare: Praise him in his mighty heavens!

This is remarkable! The Psalmist is calling upon the angels to join him in his praise of the King! Of course the Psalmist has no authority over the angels, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he here declares that God is to be praised on the earth below and in the heavens above! Just think about that for a second: As we worship with our feeble voices, they are intertwined with the powerful bellows of the heavenly host declaring praise and honor and glory in the heavenly realm! This, by the way, is what we were declaring in our opening song! Did you catch it? *Sing.

Doesn’t that make you want to lean in with a little more weight? As one commentator notes:

So the call is to God’s worshippers on earth, meeting at His chosen place, but also to His heavenly host to mingle their praises with ours... His glory fills the universe; His praise must do no less.³

² I selected these main points before reading the commentaries. Derek Kidner suggests: The where of praise, the why, the how, and the who. His outline is better!

³ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150 TOTC*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 491.

Amen! Praise Him in His sanctuary! Praise Him in His mighty heavens! May gratitude and adoration resound in every realm!

Next, we find:

2. The essence of worship

Look again at verse 2:

Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness! (Psalm 150:2 ESV)

Here, the Psalmist calls us to worship God for what He does and for who He is. The reality is, the two go hand in hand.

Our God delivers because He is the Deliverer!

He rescues because He is the Rescuer!

He purifies because He is a consuming fire!

He exudes grace and mercy because He is love!

He overwhelms and overthrows the power of the evil one because He is holy!

He casts out the darkness because He is light!

He cares for the widow and the orphan because He is Provider!

He reigns with justice and equity because He is the Perfect King!

He is near to the brokenhearted because He is the God of all comfort!

He invites us to take shelter in Him because He is the Rock of Ages!

There is not a creature on this planet that is able to take a breath apart from the mercy of God. All creation is groaning under sin and would be consumed in wrath and judgement were it not for the grace of God relenting and extending forgiveness and hope and a future. As John Calvin notes:

until men really apprehend how much they owe to the mercy of God, they will never with a right feeling worship him, nor be effectually stimulated to fear and obey him.⁴

Millions of men and women and boys and girls are going to sit down at dinner tables this evening to celebrate health, and provision, and prosperity yet how many of them will direct their gratitude to the One who gave them every good gift? Let that not be true of us! Praise Him for His excellent deeds! Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Let the praise that resounds from our hearts fill up what is lacking in the gratitude that is being expressed across this nation. Christian, let your praise today reflect the thanksgiving that God is due!

Praise Him because He is absolutely perfect in every way!

Praise Him because He saw you in your sin and took pity on you.

Praise Him because He sent his Son to cleanse you from your sin and to die in your place.

Praise Him because He has transformed you from a slave to a son! From an enemy to an heir!

Praise Him because He has prepared a place for you in glory!

Praise Him because of who He is! Praise Him because of what He has done! Praise Him because He is infinitely worthy! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!

Next, we find:

⁴ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries (Complete)* (trans. John King; Accordance electronic ed. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), n.p.

3. The tone of worship

The psalmist instructs us:

- ³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
- ⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
- ⁵ Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals! (Psalm 150:3-5 ESV)

Here, the psalmist is calling us to use whatever we can lay our hands on to make music for our great God! Music! There is something indescribable about it. It is a gift from God to us, and it is a gift that He has called us to turn back toward Him in response. I love this quote from Martin Luther. He wrote:

I have no use for cranks who despise music, because it is a gift of God. Music drives away the Devil and makes people gay; they forget thereby all wrath, unchastity, arrogance, and the like. Next after theology I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor. I would not exchange what little I know of music for something great. Experience proves that next to the word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the mistress and governance of the feelings of the human heart.⁵

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to hear complaints and objections about music. I've even heard some argue that music can be manipulative – that songs can be used to stir up emotions and to evoke certain responses. That is just about as obvious as saying that the sun can be used to warm our skin and to melt our snow! What do you think music is for if not to stir up emotions?!

Many Christians worship as if it is their goal to sing without succumbing to a single feeling. What a tragedy! What an unbiblical mindset! God gave us music because God knows that we FEEL.

⁵ Martin Luther as quoted by Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand – A Life of Martin Luther*, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1950), 351.

Praise God that the worship wars seem to be behind us! How can it be that we spent so much time fighting over which instruments ought to be included in our worship when the obvious implication of Psalm 150 is that we should use ALL OF THEM?! Talk about an exercise in missing the mark!

Here, the Psalmist COMMANDS US to praise God with trumpets, and lutes, and harps, and tambourines, and – brace yourself – DANCING, and strings, and pipes, and cymbals, and LOUD CYMBALS! It sounds as if the ushers might need to hand out earplugs in this Holy Spirit designed worship service!

If we cannot muster the instruments that the psalmist here describes, let's resolve to muster the enthusiasm. May His praise be GLORIOUS in this place! May people walk away from the corporate worship here marveling and asking: "How great must their God be if they respond to Him like THAT week after week?" As William Plumer notes:

The righteous set no bounds to their praise of the most high.⁶

Amen? Amen! Finally, having considered the place of worship, the heart of worship and the mode of worship, the psalmist ends by presenting us with:

4. The breadth of worship

The Psalm book ends with these words:

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150:1-6 ESV)

This is a call to the congregation, but it extends beyond us, doesn't it? We will respond to this call to worship, and we will praise God with all that we can muster, but the imperative in this text calls out beyond these walls. Let EVERYTHING that has breath praise the Lord!

Let your neighbors who have spurned your invitations to church praise the Lord!

⁶ W.S. Plumer, *Psalms* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 1210.

Let your extended family who shut down every gospel conversation praise the Lord!

Let the kings and the emperors and the presidents praise the Lord!

Let the people groups who have never heard the name of Jesus praise the Lord!

This call to worship is simultaneously a call to mission! As John Piper has famously stated:

Missions exists because worship doesn't.⁷

Missions exists because Psalm 150 verse 6 is not happening yet. Everything that has breath is NOT yet praising the Lord, and that reality – that longing – should propel us out into the world! God deserves the praise of your neighbor! Do you believe that? God deserves the praise of your aunt! Missions exists because worship doesn't.

I am convinced by the word of God that you will never find a church who is passionate about missions who is not first and foremost passionate about worship. People who attend corporate worship twice a month – who sing begrudgingly with scowls on their face – who daydream about sports and sitcoms while the word of God is preached – will NEVER change the world! They won't attempt to! Why would they bother sharing a gospel message that seems to them cold and dry? Before you can declare "COME AND PRAISE THE LORD" to your neighbors, you need to first to say it to the man in the mirror.

This Psalm presents us with a call. It is a call to BEHOLD GOD! It is a call to RESPOND with everything that we can muster! And it is a call to SEEK THE EXPANSION of the worship of God until EVERY SINGLE THING THAT HAS BREATH PRAISES THE LORD!

And that day will come. I know that that day will come, because the Apostle John has already witnessed it, and he describes it for us in Revelation 7. John's vision describes the day that Psalm 150 verse 6 points forward to. Let me read this for you:

⁷ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/missions-exists-because-worship-doesnt-a-bethlehem-legacy-inherited-and-bequeathed> Accessed Oct. 4, 2021.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹² saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” (Revelation 7:9-12 ESV)

One day, every people, nation, tribe and tongue will lift up their voices in praise and adoration. And, until that day, let the world catch a foretaste of that future whenever they witness the church in worship. Let the world hear our song! Let the world see in the church a family that gives thanks around the table every single week! Let the world come to know us as the people of PRAISE! J.I. Packer once wrote:

Prayer and praise are like a bird's two wings: with both working, you soar; with one out of action, you are earthbound. But birds should not be earthbound, nor Christians praiseless.⁸

So, would you join me this morning? Let's lift our voices and play our instruments and make his praise GLORIOUS in this city! Stand with me now, and let's declare this call to worship together.

Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
 praise him in his mighty heavens!
² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
 praise him according to his excellent greatness!
³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
 praise him with lute and harp!
⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
 praise him with strings and pipe!
⁵ Praise him with sounding cymbals;
 praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150:1-6 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God! Let's pray together, and then let's praise together!

⁸ J.I. Packer as quoted by R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Prayer That Turns The World Upside Down*, (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2018), 115.