

The Grand Finale

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Bible Verse: Psalm 150
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Our text for this morning comes from Psalm 150, and I invite you to turn there with me as we have the privilege of considering this text from the sacred word of God. Psalm 150.

1 Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse. 2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. 3 Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. 4 Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

This is a momentous day for our church, it's the culmination of something that began on May 11, 2014, when we first began teaching through the Psalms, and after 164 messages in the Psalms, we come to the final message number 165 here today for Psalm 150. And this is not simply a magnificent Psalm in its own right, it is a magnificent Psalm for its theme, for its subject, and for the way also it is magnificent in the way that it brings to a climax the entire Psalter. Psalms 1 through 150 have all been pointing to this final great climax, and we taught the Psalms mostly on Tuesday evenings throughout the years but I did not want this occasion, this great climax, this grand finale of a Psalm to be done on a Tuesday. I wanted to elevate the moment and to elevate the Psalm and the Psalter to a time when more people would be present to hear it and to respond to it.

I won't try to repeat everything that we've taught on the Psalms, but there are just a couple of things that those of you that are new to the series, may be visiting for the first time today, there's going to be a bit of a fire hydrant sense to what we have to say today, trying to take a drink out of a fire hydrant, but what will maybe set the stage and give some remembrance to those of you that have been with us, is that the first two Psalms function as great pillars that invite you into the entrance of the Great Hall of the Psalms that follow. In Psalm 1, you see the individual at play, so to speak. "The LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." And there is this individual Psalm with an individual theme that invites you into the Psalm to find this way that the Lord blesses and the way that will certainly perish for those who deny the glory of Christ and deny the glory of God's holy word. In Psalm 2, the parallel pillar to the entrance to the Great Hall of the Psalms, you see it expanding to the nations and you see

the nations being addressed and told to pay homage to the Son lest God be angry with them. And so at a micro, individual level and at a macro, national, worldwide level, the Psalms are addressing people at every level of life and at every stage in between. It's magnificent just to contemplate the first two Psalms, and then to see as you walk through the pillars and you walk through these great Psalms one after another after another, you see such magnificent themes being addressed. You see the themes of sin and repentance, of the love and faithfulness of God being addressed, of people pouring out their hearts in lament. You see Psalms that are messianic in nature pointing forward centuries and centuries forward to the coming of Christ. And these Psalms are beyond our ability to comprehend them in the fullness of their of their majesty, but through all of this beloved, as you read through the Psalms and as you study them as we have done together for some eight years now, you find something out, especially as you come to the end of the Psalter, you find that the entire Psalter, all 150 of them are joined together, each one providing a thread in the tapestry designed to present the great picture and the great goal of all of life, the great call that is upon individuals like you and me, the great call that is upon nations throughout all of history, all of them, all individuals, all nations being called to praise the Lord, to ascribe glory and honor to his name and every single Psalm contributes to that theme.

And so Psalm 150 becomes the climax of the entire Psalter. It is the summary message of all 150 of the Psalms in the way that they have been arranged for us so many years ago. And you can tell that the Psalter has been arranged in an intelligent way, designed to communicate this very message. The Psalms, all 150 of them, are divided into five books of different length. Book 1 contains Psalms 1 through 41. Book 2, Psalms 42 through 72. Book 3, Psalms 73 through 89. Book 4, Psalm 90, a Psalm of Moses, through Psalm 106. And then Book 5, Psalms 107 through 150. It thrills the soul of the redeemed heart just to start to see little things like this that perhaps you've overlooked in your Bible reading plan and you've just kind of brushed through things and not recognize the way that God had the Psalms put together providentially. Well, as you consider those books of Psalms, each of those books, those five books, ends with a doxology of praise to God, and I want to show you this. This was the first thing we looked at in on May 11, 2014. We're going to come back and look at it again on August 28, 2022. Look at Psalm 41 with me. 41. Psalm 41, the end of book 1. As you're turning there and as you see these things, you see that there is a crescendo that is building, there is this great momentum that all of the Psalms are pointing us to, there is a great tsunami of praise that is about to crash on the shores of human thought and human existence, all of it building up in this great and glorious way.

And before we look at Psalm 41:13, I just want to say this to you: that one of the things that we have learned as we've studied the Psalms together is that we need to see them woven together and not simply look at Psalms as individual units. I understand and I have preached over the years on individual Psalms. Someone looks at Psalm 23 and meditates on it, that's fine. Someone looks at Psalm 90, meditates on the brevity of life, and in light of it, that's fine. But what we want to understand if we are going to enter into a deeper knowledge and deeper understanding of the Psalms, is that they are working together, they are firing together like pistons in an expensive engine, in an expensive, well-

designed engine. They are engineered to bring us to a powerful driving force in our heart; that these Psalms are more than simply an oasis of comfort in the midst of a difficult day, they're more than just a text that is turned to at the time of a funeral. These Psalms are designed to captivate and overtake our hearts with the theme of praising God and ascribing greatness to his being as the singular motivating force that animates all of life. There's no question about that and, beloved, until we've started to see the Psalms in that great context, we haven't really started to understand them at all.

Look at Psalm 41:13. The arrangement of this is unmistakable. Whoever arranged the Psalms, perhaps it was Ezra, had a specific intention in the way that they were put together, and it is unmistakable and undeniable, and you see providentially the way that God is drawing attention to himself through these Psalms. Psalm 41:13, the end of Book 1 says, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, From everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen." Look at Psalm 72 at the end of Book 2. Psalm 72 at the end of Book 2 in verses 18 and 19 we read this, "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen." Do you see it, beloved? I said that Psalm 2, it introduces the theme of the nations, and here at the end of Book 2, you see the whole earth called to give glory to God. This isn't simply a call upon the nation of Israel in the book of Psalms to give praise to God, although it is that, it expands beyond. There is a global call that is made to worship the one true God, to reject all other religions, to reject all other gods, and to come and kneel and bow before the God of the Bible, the God of Israel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the one true and living God.

And this is a call, a command that goes out to everyone, everywhere, at all times. There are no exceptions. All of humanity is united under the call and the command of God, and there are only two kinds of people in response: those that repent and yield to Christ in response and give glory to God, and those who reject his Son prophesied messianically, in the Psalms, fulfilled in the gospels. Which camp are you in, beloved? Which one are you in? We are face to face with a call that's been going out for millennia and you and I have the privilege of being in the word of God today to see the purpose of the existence of the universe, the purpose and existence of every man, the purpose and existence of nations, and to recognize that in in such lofty themes that there could only be consequences of the most dire and severe kind for those who reject the call because this glorious God cannot be defamed, he cannot be defied by rejecting the call to praise him and anyone to think that there wouldn't be consequences to rejecting the God of heaven and earth who calls us all to praise him.

The end of Book 3, Psalm 89. Psalm 89, the end of book 3, verse 52. Psalm 89:52, "Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen." And then in Psalm 106:48. Psalm 106:48, the end of Book 4 says, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, From everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, Amen." Praise the LORD!"

And so you see, beloved, as you walk through this book by book by book, Book 1, Book 2, Book 3, Book 4, they're all ending on this closing theme of praising God, blessing God, praise the Lord. It provides the summary. Do you want to reflect back on the prior

41 Psalms? You say at the end of book 1, here's the lesson: Praise the LORD! You want to look back on Book 2 and the prior 31 Psalms there: Bless the LORD. Praise His name. 73 through 89: Blessed be the name of the LORD. At all of these key junctures, these key hinges as the books are tied together, the hinge upon which you go from one book to the other in the Psalms is all hinging on the praise of God. It is just astonishing. It is just remarkable what is done and what I would plead with the Spirit of God to do in your hearts each one of you, is that there would just be this wellspring of awe and glory rising up in your heart to honor God and to be drawn into the majesty and power of the message of the Psalms. Praise the LORD!

Now, these doxologies at the end of the first four books reinforce the theme of the Psalms, and as they've gone through all manner of circumstances of life, David in a cave, David before his enemies, David confessing his sin, with Bathsheba, the psalmist in Psalm 73 wrestling, nearly losing his faith because he's troubled by the prosperity of the wicked and the troubles of the righteous, the majesties of Psalm 119, in some ways the greatest of all the Psalms, 176 verses all magnifying the word of God, the written word of God, the written, inerrant word of God. And all of these other great themes, Psalm 22, looking forward to Christ. Psalm 23, looking forward, looking at the Great Shepherd, and Jesus in John 10 saying, "I am that Shepherd." All of these things calling forth praise to God, calling us to worship through all of life.

And as you go through and you continue on, you come to Psalm 146, turn there with me. Psalm 146. In Psalm 146, the arrangement of the Psalter brings all of this praise and takes it somehow, somehow takes it to yet another level of glory and praise and worship to God, showing forth in the final five Psalms, the great climax of all five books of the Psalms. It just builds praise upon praise upon praise. The last five Psalms, 146 through 150, are known as the final Hallel, Hallel being the Hebrew word from which we get our word Hallelujah, praise Yahweh, praise God. Now as I've mentioned on Tuesday nights a number of times, if you think about going to a great fireworks display, there's great excitement and beauty as one by one the rockets are shot up and you see these magnificent rockets going off and exploding against the night sky, the colors radiating throughout the sky as the ashes fall down and display their intended glory, and each individual firework has its own unique contribution to the overall show. But you know that in a well-designed, a well-engineered firework display, there is a massive climax to it where fireworks are going off, if not dozens of times, dozens at once exploding Boom! Boom! Boom! And you're just overwhelmed by the colors and the sound and the majesty against the night sky. It's electrifying. Well take that, multiply it by infinity, take away a human element that's going to come and go in a few moments, and the lights are going to go back on and you're going to go back home, and it's all passing, contemplate the grand finale of a fireworks display and realize that that's what you're getting in the final five Psalms of the Psalter. Each one of these five Psalms begin and end with Hallelujah, Praise the LORD!

Look at Psalm 146. This is all setting up the context for Psalm 150, by the way. I am not on a tangent here this morning. When the theme is the praise of the Lord, you're never on a tangent, you're at the very core of why men were created to exist to glorify God and to

enjoy him forever, according to the Westminster Catechism. And I want you to see this. You've seen the hinge points at the end of the first four books of the Psalms. Now, in Psalm 146 through 150, you see each Psalm beginning and ending with the theme, "Praise the LORD! and when that happens, there's an envelope technique, a bookend technique, maybe easier said, that the beginning bookend and the ending bookend are telling you what the whole Psalm is about. Everything in between the opening and closing verse is telling you that what comes in between is all designed to contribute to the greater theme that's been identified at the beginning and at the end.

And so let's just see this without looking at the Psalms in detail. Psalm 146:1, "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!" And then in verse 2, "I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being." Verse 10, "The LORD will reign forever, Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!"

Psalm 147:1, "Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant and praise is becoming." Verse 20 of Psalm 147, "He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His ordinances, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!"

Psalm 148, "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! Praise Him, highest heavens." Verses 13 and 14 of Psalm 148, "Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven. And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise the LORD!"

Psalm 149. Now let me just stop here for a moment to just say something here. I could picture an impatient skeptic in the audience saying, "Get to the point. Let's get on with it. You've made your point, it's about 'Praise the LORD!' Get on to whatever it is that you're going to say." Beloved, that's a wrong, sinful, rebellious attitude toward the word of God. God has given us his word in a way that calls us to the attention of his praise in very profound and repeated ways and we are to see this repetition, to understand the great emphasis that it places on this theme, to understand that this is the way to understand all of the Psalms, to set aside everything about our impatient carnal spirits and to bring it into submission to this great theme of praising the Lord, praising the Father of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The emphasis is not something to be rushed through in our modern mind and our short attention spans, the emphasis and the repetition is something that we are to stop and to dwell upon and let the constant repeating of these phrases and these words sink deep into our hearts. Why do we need that? It's because we are so stubborn and we are so slow to learn, we are so slow to take our focus off of ourselves and our earthly problems and lift them up in praise and glory to God that all of this emphasis is designed so that there is no excuse for missing the theme. Every one of us in this room is now accountable for recognizing that this is what all of Scripture, and the Psalms in particular, call us to, to live a life to the glory of God and to praise him from the bottom of our hearts with all of our being, with all of our might, soul and strength, and to love him. We could never go through this slow enough to give the proper attention that it deserves.

Psalm 149:1, and, you see, when we embrace it, when we embrace, beloved, this theme and embrace and take the time to see what Scripture says about it, embrace the time to go through the Psalms like we're doing this morning, as we embrace that we are finding forth what the effect that the Psalms are intended to have upon us.

Psalm 149:1, "Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones." Verse 9 of Psalm 149, verse 9, "To execute on them," the kings of the earth, Psalm 149 answers the call upon nations in Psalm 2, "To execute on them the judgment written; This is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the LORD!"

And after all of that, all 149 Psalms, all of the prior four books coming together, and everything that we've seen so far just this morning, let alone over the prior eight years and four months or whatever it's been, now we come to Psalm 150 and we come to the close of the final Hallel, we come to the grand finale of it all. Beloved all of the Psalms, all of the structure, all of the books of the Psalms, everything that has been said, all of it has been pointing to Psalm 150 as the climax. If you want to think about it from another terms of a metaphor or illustration, we've gone to the camp at the base of Mount Everest and we've gradually worked our way up taking in the oxygen as we can, seeing the sights along the way, now we're at the summit. Now there is no higher point to go, and we look to our left, to our right, we do a 360 around, and we take in the fact that there is this splendor all around us, and everything, everything is below that great summit. Everything is subordinate to that high point. And now in Psalm 150 we stand on the summit of the Mount Everest of the Psalms and we see what it's all about. Everything that would obstruct our vision. the trials, the temptations, the terrors, the enemies, the friends, everything has been taken away that would obstruct our view and we're standing at the top and we look around and everything that we see is praise. All the joy, sorrow, confession, lament and trust points right here. The promised Messiah throughout the Psalms, this is the response, the Lord God is to be praised.

Psalm 150 combines brevity with comprehensive. It is brief, and yet it is exhaustive in what it calls us to do and gives us the reasons for which we praise our God. The word "praise," it's just amazing, it's just just remarkable. Everything about this is remarkable, and the reason that it's remarkable is because this is the inspired word of God. This comes to us from the mind of God, mediated by his Spirit through the writers of Scripture so that we have an inerrant word in front of us, and we see the purpose of God in his word as the Holy Spirit illuminates our minds. If this doesn't thrill your heart, something's wrong, there's a deadness in you that needs to be awakened by the Holy Spirit.

The word "praise" that we've been emphasizing so much for 149 Psalms as we've compacted them here this morning, the word "praise" now dominates Psalm 150. You would think, you would think in our modern way of doing things, you would think that 149 had been enough. The point has been made. Why dwell on it anymore? If we stopped right here, everybody would have the point. But God's word doesn't see it that way. God's word says we need to take it all in one more time and come to the same conclusion one more time, so that in these six brief verses of Psalm 150, the word "praise" occurs 13

times, 13 times in six verses after the whole book has been given unto this theme. And you reach a point as a teacher, as a preacher, as an expositor of the word of God, you run out of ways to illustrate and to emphasize it. All you can do is just step back and let the word of God speak for itself and let the Holy Spirit have his way in the hearts of those who hear. And so we're not in a hurry this morning. In fact, it's kind of sad for me to come to the end of it, but it's with a grateful heart for the strength that the Lord has given to us as a church to be able to bring it to this great climax, to the praise and glory of his most wonderful eternal name.

What we're going to do as we look at Psalm 150, we're going to structure our exposition this morning around four questions, four very simple questions that are going to address it for one final time, give us the summary of it all one final time, and then see the climactic call one last time at the end. May God help us as we do.

First question asked and answered by Psalm 150, number 1 is: where should God be praised? Where should God be praised? Simple answer, the short answer to that question is: everywhere. God should be praised everywhere. Look at verse 1,

1 Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse.

Now, even at the start there, there's a difference of view, difference of opinion among good commentators. Some of them take the word "sanctuary" to be a reference to the dwelling place of God in heaven and in the exalted skies. And the parallel, they would say, look at the parallel at the end of verse 1, it says, "Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse." So the idea is the parallelism is that you're looking up at the universe and saying praise God in the universe, but it's probably better to take it in a slightly different way. All of the Psalms have been building up, and this is directed to men to praise God, and so we could think of his sanctuary as the temple on earth before it was destroyed in the invasion against Israel, the temple where the God manifested his presence, where the worship of Israel was focused. Praised him in his sanctuary there. Look to the place – oh, this is so good. Look to the place where God has manifested his presence on earth and worship him there. It's a call to God's worshipers among men to give him praise where he has made himself known.

Now why is that so good? Why is that so clarifying for us? Because we can look at this after the cross. We can look at this after the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask ourselves where has God tabernacled among men? Where has God made his presence known among men now in our day? And he's made himself known in the Lord Jesus Christ. God manifested his presence in the temple in the days of Israel in the Old Testament. Now he's manifested his presence in the Lord Jesus Christ fully God, fully man, fully equal with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And now he's made known in the perfections of his word.

The people of God are being called from among men to give him praise. Then the mighty expanse in verse 1 becomes the skies which declare his glory. Psalm 19:1, "The heavens

are telling of the glory of God." And so we look at men, we look at worshipers on earth, the call is to praise the Lord. We look up at the sky and the heavens are telling of the glory of God and in response we praise him. In other words, beloved, on earth and in the skies that we observe, we see this magnificent fact, the glory of God fills the universe, therefore earth and all within it should be filled with his praise.

The Lord made you in your mother's womb, Psalm 139:13 to 16. He not only made your outer man, he formed your inner man. He gave you a soul and in that soul that God has given to you, with the body that he has given to you, in the lifespan that he has given to you, everything about you is to be devoted to this same great theme that Psalm 150 has laid out, praise the Lord. You know, in one sense it doesn't matter whether you drive a truck or drive a hammer for a living or, you know, if you have some spiritual vocation by which you pay the bills. The call is the same, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do all to the glory of God, 1 Corinthians 10:31. Scripture emphasizes this point in so many different ways. The point is that we come under the majesty of the Psalms, we see their theme is to praise the Lord, and we realize that everything about us, all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our strength, all of our minds, our thinking is given over in a way that is given over to the worship of God. If God has given you a mind, not only physical life but God has given you mental capacities of varying kinds, your mind even is to be exercised so that glory is given to God, not to man. Glory is given to God, not to yourself because the theme of it all is praise the Lord. Not praise Don, praise John, praise Joan, praise Sue. All of a sudden, we realize that the purpose of our lives has been defined for us by the Psalms so that everything we do, everything that we think is given over to obedience to God, given over to obedience in great principles and in small principles, that there is nothing in God's word that calls for our obedience that we are free to disregard and disobey. Yes, we all sin, we all stumble in many ways, but we don't accept that. We don't consciously accept rebellion and sin against his word and say that's okay. It's not okay. It couldn't be okay to be living in opposition, known unrepentant opposition to divinely revealed principles, to reject Christ as Lord and Savior. That can't possibly be okay.

So where should God be praised? He should be praised everywhere in the universe and, beloved, understand that your inner man, your heart is in the universe so that your inner man gives praise to God as part of this comprehensive call to praise the Lord. We are not content to simply go through motions, to give an external appearance of worship that's not genuine and heartfelt. We're not content to have men think that we're something that we're really not. No, men can think badly of us if they will, men can treat us badly if they will, but we understand that from our hearts we want to give our love and praise and adoration to this God who is revealed in the Psalter.

And so where is God to be praised? He's to be praised everywhere in the universe but for you and me, we take responsibility, we welcome, we seek that that would start inside. And so many Psalms come to my mind as I'm preaching this climactic message. Psalm 19:14 makes the point that I'm saying here, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be pleasing in thy sight, O LORD, my God, my rock and my Redeemer." Everywhere in the universe, macro, micro, from my inner being.

Question 2. Where should God be praised? He should be praised everywhere. Question 2: why should God be praised? Why should God be praised? The short answer to that question is this: why should God be praised? He should be praised for who he is and what he has done. God's character, God's attributes, his perfections in his Triune, ineffable glory, is worthy of praise intrinsically, independently, apart from anything about man, anything apart from me. He's worthy of praise in and of himself and then you consider what he has done and you praise him for that. And we see this in verse 2. The brilliance of the Spirit of God to say so much in such a compact way. Verse 2,

2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

In other words, praise him for what he has done. Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him for who he is. His mighty deeds refer to his saving acts for his people. God has done wonders, he's done wonders in creation, in his providence, and in the redemption of his people. Israel looked back to the deliverance from Egypt and the majesty of the way that he parted the Red Sea and delivered them into a land of their own. We look back at Christ and at the even greater majesty of redemption by shed blood, the greater majesty of redemption by the shed blood of a man who was God in human flesh laying down his life for sinful people like you and me. We see the great love of God on majestic display in the cross of Christ, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." We look at the cross and we're overwhelmed by the majesty of justice meeting mercy, at that piece of wood. The law of God and its justice upheld fully. The love of God providing a way for pardon for sinners as Jesus Christ stood as a substitute in their place and bore the punishment that our sins deserved.

These are great deeds from a great great God and, beloved, the point of Psalm 150 here in verse 2 is that he deserves praise for them. We praise him by ascribing greatness to his name. "God, You are great. You are good. You are majestic. I ascribe praise to You from my heart. I honor You in response to what You have revealed and what You have done. I give thanks to You for all of Your kindness. Father, I confess all of my sins before You and I thank You for divine mercy." And on and on it goes. Beloved, what I want you to see is this, those of you that are gathered together here, we're a middle class, upper middle class kind of congregation: you don't have to be a scholar to see these things, you don't have to be somebody that understands the original languages in order to be able to praise God, the word of God translated from the original languages made known to you in the English text, is more than sufficient for you to understand the greatness and the goodness of God, to understand the glory and the graciousness of his ways. What is said and taught to us in Scripture about the Lord Jesus Christ is more than enough for you to understand and to have your heart overwhelmed with love and gratitude at one greater than you, one who loves you in Christ, one whom you fear, one whose word you recognize and give allegiance and authority to, all that he's done creating the world in six literal 24 hour days a few short thousand years ago, providentially working out everything that has happened since then by his hand, causing all things to work together

for good to those who love him. And beloved, to realize that we haven't even seen a fraction of it yet. For those of us that belong to Christ, we're going to see him face to face. We're going to be with him in eternity. Made like him. Glorified. Perfected. One day our bodies raised to join our glorified spirits and we'll be in heaven forever with him praising him and honoring him, all sin, all temptation, all sorrow, all tears wiped away, all traces of rebellion eliminated and conquered by the glory of Christ. We'll be gathered together with the saints throughout the ages around his throne and as eternity unfolds, whatever that looks like, our comprehension of the greatness and glory of God somehow expanding with that. It won't be like this but somehow there will be such a marvel to the glory of being with God that if we're next to each other, we would just pinch, "We're here! Isn't this, isn't this wonderful? Can you believe we're here? We're in the presence of Christ and we're never going to be castaway and all of this resplendent glory is ours, and we belong here and this is more like home than earth ever was."

Praise him. God deserves praise for his sovereign perfections, for his sovereign love. We're already overwhelmed in response to the majesty that we've seen from his word just this morning, and then to contemplate the fact that we haven't even seen the part of it yet that we'll see in heaven? You run out of words. You can see why the psalmist, why the Psalms, dozens, hundreds of times, "Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!" Just to think that he loved us enough to create us with the intention to bring us to that glory. He didn't need us. We don't add anything to his perfection, to his self-sufficiency. In love he appointed us before the foundation of the world to be believers in Christ, if we're in him. Seeing the end of eternity from the beginning, if I can put it that way. And Christian brother, Christian sister, here today looking in over the live stream, that God had it in his heart to say, "I will create you and My intention in creating you is that you would share this kind of glory with Me forever as a free gift of My grace as an expression of My perfect love."

You can artificially generate what people call praise with loud music and lights and shows and that kind of stuff that so many people want to run after, but what I want you to see here this morning is that true praise is not in response to that kind of human external stimulus that may or may not have anything to do with the truth that we're talking about here today, true praise comes from as a response to this revealed truth found in his word. That's true praise that somehow starts to take it in, take in the propositional truths of Scripture and say, "God, I understand something of it. My mind is overwhelmed. My heart bows before You in response to Your truth. In this place, I worship and honor You." That's true worship. Those who worship God, John 4:24, must worship him in spirit and in truth. In spirit and in truth.

So why should God be praised? It's for what he's done and for who he is. Now, thirdly: how should God be praised? How should God be praised? The short answer is that God should be praised with joyful celebration. His people should recognize the glory of God and be glad in him, be enthusiastic, be overwhelmed by the glory of his name. Verses 3 through 5. How should God be praised? With joyful celebration. Verse 3,

3 Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. 4 Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

You get the picture of a magnificent orchestra with the best musicians of all time playing the best, most finely tuned instruments and coming together with all of that collective skill, and in perfect harmony bringing all of the notes and all of the instruments together, representing in the musical combination, the combination of people from all nations and tongues and tribes all coming together and in a perfect symphony ascribing glory and praise to God in a time of the most majestic, transcendent celebration that could possibly be imagined.

The psalmist calls for musical instruments of every kind. You find wind instruments with the trumpet and the pipe. You find stringed instruments with the harp and lyre. You find percussion with the timbrel and the cymbals. Loud instruments and soft ones, solemn ones, gentle instruments. Think of a quiet flute playing versus bold instruments, majestic kettledrums, Boom! Boom! Boom! Giving the sense of majesty and weight and bigness alongside the gentle tones that minister to a troubled heart. From all of those realms are drawn upon to give variety to the praise, to accent different notes at different times so that the praise would be multifaceted, it would be beautiful, it would be majestic, everybody drawn to contribute to it all.

We addressed the issue of dancing in our last message from Psalm 149. I'm not going to talk about that here other than to say that the Old Testament context of dancing is completely different than what we think about in our modern context. This Psalm is not referring to sensual or man-centered worship. This Psalm is God-centered, for the glory of God not for the entertainment of man.

And so how is God to be praised? With joyful celebration, everybody contributing their note on their instrument, and the gift of music brought to bear to captivate the heart and to give expression beyond what lips alone cannot do. You've heard me say, I've said it many times and I feel it far more than I say: when I'm teaching the word of God, expounding it, hardly a Sunday goes by or a Tuesday goes by where I'm not conscious of my mental inability to do justice to the text, to set forth fully what it says and the glory of God that it reveals, and all the more when you're talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. We come to the word of God, beloved, humbly. We come to the word of God desiring it to teach us, to instruct us about ourselves, not to change it into that which would please men.

Fourth and final question. I don't want this to end but it's going to so we might as well get to it. Question number 4: who should praise God? Who should praise God? And the short answer is: all living beings. All living beings. Look at verse 6. It's so beautiful.

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Are you breathing here this morning? You are to praise the Lord. He who has ears to hear, let him hear, Jesus says. Do you have ears? You're to hear, you're to respond. If you're breathing, Scripture calls upon you to praise the Lord, to praise him everywhere, to praise him in your inner man, to praise him for his deeds, to praise him for his excellent greatness, to praise him with joyful celebration.

Isn't it sad to live in a world where this doesn't happen? You know, we'll walk out, we'll drive by billboards and stores and all kinds of places that are designed directly to contradict this. To people who have no heart for this, it's sad. It's a disobedience to God, first of all, it's a sorrowful loss of their soul to contemplate that their lives are being wasted on something less than this glorious theme. But it saddens us most of all because we realize, we see that God is worthy of everything that his book calls us to do. He's worthy of this. Right now we live in a disjointed realm, a disjointed parenthesis of time, a disjointed epic where God, for his own purposes, allows it to go unfulfilled by most, preserving a remnant of people, Christians today, born again believers today who devote themselves to this, who are the foretaste of the greater glory and the fulfillment to come.

"Let everything that has breath Praise the LORD." This includes all men, men made in the image of God. We saw in Psalm 148 that the call is personified and goes to creatures as well, brute creatures, animal creatures. It goes to the angelic host, Psalm 148:2. It goes to sun and moon, Psalm 148:3. Everything about it. You know, if you're ever out in a dark place at night, you see the glory of the stars on display, you're overwhelmed by it, beloved, what we're talking about here transcends that greatness because we just see the stars, we just see the fingerprints of God when we look on the galaxies, we're just looking on the fingerprints of his imprint upon creation when we see that. If the fingerprints, how much more the one? Praise the LORD!

The heavens are telling of the glory of God. Get up and walk in the early morning before the sun comes up and see it for yourself, beloved, if you haven't, if you don't. Look in the sky and see Jupiter and see Mars and see Saturn and see Venus and realize how the vast distance and remember the God who hung them on nothing and displays them before your wondering eye. Praise the LORD!

One writer says in conclusion, kind of taking our look back over all of the Psalms, he says, "Whatever else you may forget about the Psalms, never forget that central to authentic faith is the praise of God. Forget that and you will undermine the foundations of everything else." Every living being in every place has every reason to praise God.

Look at it there again in verse 6, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD." All 150 Psalms informing that statement. We, I'll say it one more time, we as the people of God in the New Testament church, those redeemed by the blood of Christ alone, our praise is deepened even further in his coming. The God who is the object of the Psalter, the God who wrote the Psalms, is the God who came in the person of Christ and offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice for your sins. This God who deserved all praise, humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, loved me and gave himself up for me. I defy anyone. I defy anyone, I defy anyone to properly

understand that and properly exhaust the praise that is to be given to God for that, majestic in his being, majestic in his condescension, majestic in his grace, majestic in his love.

There is no end to this. There is no end to this, the reasons for praising him but, beloved, remember Christ at the center of it. The God who is the object of praise in Psalm 150 is the God who took on human flesh and offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of men, for the sins of you. It's remarkable and so, beloved, the emphatic conclusion of Book 1, Book 2, Book 3, Book 4, the emphatic conclusion of the final Hallel, 146 to 150, is defining the theme of this entire Psalm 150: through all of life, our duty is to praise the Lord, everyone who has breath. And when we arrive in heaven and, oh, I hope that you're there, I hope that you're there in Christ. What a tragedy it would be for you to miss the climax of it because you were unrepentant now in this life. And setting aside the unredeemed who refused to give him praise, beloved, you and I, brother and sister in Christ, when we arrive in heaven the Psalms will be utterly fulfilled to the highest. Revelation 15 and Revelation 19, I won't be more specific in the reference than that. In heaven the chorus, the shout, the celebration will be this, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name for You alone are holy, for all the nations will come and worship before You for Your righteous acts have been revealed. Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous."

The theme of the Psalms is the intended theme of life, and the theme of life is the theme of eternity. Praise the LORD! It's all been said, hasn't it? Everything that the Psalms have to say have been said when it said, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD." No. No, it hasn't all been said just yet. Look at the end of verse 6. He's taken it all in, he's taken all of this in that we've discussed here this morning and he looks back on it as one great whole, as one great completed unit, think about the universe as being an infinite globe. He steps outside of the infinite globe, looks on it as a whole, tells us look at that, and says one final time,

Praise the LORD!

Take this lesson away from the Psalms, the psalmist tells us, "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!" Amen.

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