

Last week I preached from the word of the Lord in verses 1-7 of this great Psalm, which calls all nations to noise abroad the praises of the Lord, for that is the most noble activity of mankind.

Far better to praise the Lord than to cry aloud our blasphemies and lies, which bring a stench to the nostrils of God and often bring His chastisement and wrath. The blood of Abel cried out to God from the earth and the blood of innocents and the blasphemies of Antichrist often fill the earth, but the earth was created for the glory of God. Men were given voices to “sing forth the honor of His name; to make his praise glorious,” as verse 2 commands.

We saw that “glorious” meant “weighty” as gold and silver and precious stones, not flimsy plastic and tin. Our praises are to commensurate with the honor of His name. God does not trifle with men, and we are not to trifle with Him. He is terrible in his dealings with men, bringing His enemies into subjection, though He is longsuffering with them. He is terrible in wrath against those who hate His children, illustrated by the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and from the Red sea. Vs. 5,6 He brings the rebellious down, so men should not raise their hands and their voices against him. Thus far last week and the message: “Let the Whole World Praise the Lord.”

This Sunday the message is “Let the Whole Church Praise the Lord,” the command of God in verses 8-12. We will see several things this morning. The church is to praise Him for, **I. His Covenant Blessing; II. His Covenant Chastening; III. His Covenant Discipline.** His Blessing; His Chastening; His Discipline.

I. His Covenant Blessing. Vs. 8,9

A. We bless Him, because He has blessed us. Vs. 8.

1. We are not to be ashamed of our election. Malachi 1 indicates that Israel was ashamed of their election to life, and refused to be a peculiar people to the Lord, but followed the ways of the nations around them, worshipped their gods and adopted their customs.
2. We are to make the voice of His praises to be heard. It is of His grace and not our worthiness that we have received the election. The message of this grace is to be told, not buried under a bushel.
3. This history of theology of the Christian church is a history of seeking to cover up the doctrine of election and find some worthiness in man—to think that certain men and nations are elevated because of worthiness in them, not in the election of God. This is the history of theology in America, which is based upon the human emotion of revivalism; human will, and human righteousness. We will be celebrating this all across our nation today and few will be voices that give God praise for His eternal election and favor. He will receive very little sincere praise. Much will be the praise of men; little will be the praises of God.
4. The substance of this election is found in verse 9:
 - a. He holds our soul in life. Our life is His gift; the soul does not have independent life. Every soul is in the Hand of God and every soul is held by Him. The Hebrew is an active participle and the meaning is unmistakable: God is the

"Holding" one. The "Establishing" One, the "Setting" One, the "Appointing," "Making," "Putting" One.

- (1). God "placed" Adam in the Garden of Eden. He "put" a mark on Cain. He would "make" Abraham's seed as the dust of the earth, etc.
 - (2). Jesus said that that His sheep are in the hands of His Father and His hands. We are held by the power of God in Christ, and without Him we can do nothing. There is much more that can be said. We are to bless God because of the blessing of election to life through the blood of Christ. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ, not by any works of righteousness which we have done.
- b. He suffers not our feet to be moved. Our security is in Him alone.
- (1). The contrast between the clauses in verse nine could not be greater. Our feet cannot be moved, they cannot waver or tremble, for that is the meaning of the word, because the "Holding" One does not "Permit" it.
 - (2). I do not know how this great truth could be stated more firmly nor unambiguously. Only those kept by the power of God will not be moved. All other houses will be shaken and will fall under the forces of sin and rebellion; only those kept by the power of God will remain. We are kept because He keeps us.
 - (3). This is the heart of the faith, and we are not to be ashamed of it, as Israel was. We are to boldly say that there is salvation in no other but in Jesus Christ because this is the ordinance of God. That message is laid upon us; we did not invent it; we did not choose ourselves; we are chosen to deliver that message and can do nothing else.
 - (4). Peter puts it this way, echoing Moses:

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:9-12, and Exodus 19: 5,6 etc.

II. His Covenant Chastening. Vs. 10. We are to praise Him for His chastening: There are two purposes for this chastening:

A. He proves us. To see if we are real.

1. He has had a special providence for His church to determine that she is pure gold and silver.
2. He examines the church.
3. He shows the difference between what is real and what is not real.

4. To quote Peter again: 1Pe 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.
5. True faith is a weighty faith also, that can be tested and not blown away by the wind. It is of God and kept by God.

B. He purifies us as silver in the fire, when the dross is burned up, and the pure silver remains.

1. "Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer." (Pr 25:4) The "finer" is the One who refines.
2. The NKJ says it this way: "Take away the dross from silver, and it will go to the silversmith for jewelry."
3. You exist for the Master's use, not for your own use, and He will make you suitable for His work, refining you by his testing and fire.

III. His Covenant Discipline. Vs.11, 12. We are to praise Him for His discipline.

A. He has caught us in His net. It is a harsh figure, but it seems harsh to the unbeliever.

1. It is a figure that Christ Himself uses for the preaching of the Gospel: it is like a net that is cast into the sea. 47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.
2. If you are a Christian, you have been caught by the net of the Gospel, and have been brought under the discipline of the Gospel.

B. This discipline involves binding as with chains. "affliction upon our loins." "Lay" is the same word as "hold" in verse 8. These afflictions are appointed for you and for me. Burdens upon our backs. You know what I am talking about. Sometimes the burdens may seem impossible to bear, but God is faithful.

1. As Paul says: "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. – 1Thess. 3:3,4. It is through many tribulations we enter into the kingdom of God.
2. We are not to chafe under them, but receive them as from the Lord, as Paul says again in 2 Timothy that if we purify ourselves we will be vessels unto honor, fit for the master's use.

C. This discipline involves afflictions from evil men. Men who ride over our heads. Unreasonable and cruel men, sometimes. Sometimes thoughtless and selfish men. Sometimes well-meaning but ignorant men. We have to put up with this. It is part of the discipline that He has appointed for us.

As we read in HC Q104: What does God require in the fifth Commandment?

A104: That I show all honor, love and faithfulness to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me, submit myself with due obedience to all their good instruction and correction, and also bear patiently with their infirmities, since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.

It is not God's will for us to be laws unto ourselves, but to live at peace according to the order that He has for us. It is also certain that if we do not willingly submit to His mild and loving rule, He will provide government for us that is of a very different variety, though He is longsuffering with us.

- D. This discipline involves fire and water. These were symbols for the greatest tragedies in the ancient world: wildfire and floods. Fire is good and water is good, but only if kept within their bounds, under discipline. When we break out in our lives against the discipline of God, we become like wildfire and floods to our loved ones and friends. God will not permit it to continue, but will bring to us our own fire and flood to discipline us and bring us back to obedience; or if we are not elect, to overwhelm and destroy us.
- E. This discipline is for our good, and results in riches to the soul and spirit. "a wealthy place" or "rich fulfillment. Or a "moist" place, literally "a place running over with water." What a tremendous figure this is.
1. The fires of God's discipline bring true riches, riches of gold and silver in the soul and often to the body, also.
 2. The floods of God's discipline bring a flood of blessings to the soul and body.

Application

1. The church is publicly to proclaim to the world the grace that she has received from the Lord: Her Covenant Blessing; Her Covenant Chastening; Her Covenant Discipline.

2. This is our light that is to shine to all the world for the glory of God. We have been ordained and called for that purpose, everyone one of us.

Let us carefully consider the words of our confession in this regard: First concerning our Lord; then concerning ourselves:

Q31: Why is He called "Christ," that is, Anointed?

A31: Because He is ordained of God the Father and anointed with the Holy Ghost [1] to be our chief Prophet and Teacher,[2] who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption;[3] and our only High Priest,[4] who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and ever lives to make intercession for us with the Father;[5] and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.[6]

1. Heb. 1:9
2. Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22
3. John 1:18; 15:15
4. Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:21
5. Rom. 5:9-10
6. Psa. 2:6; Luke 1:33; Matt. 28:18; Isa. 61:1-2; I Peter 2:24; Rev. 19:1

He was and is not ashamed of us, but has adopted us and given us as lights to the world.

Q32: But why are you called a Christian?

A32: Because by faith I am a member of Christ [1] and thus a partaker of His anointing,[2] in order that I also may confess His Name,[3] may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him,[4] and with a free conscience may fight against sin and the devil in this life,[5] and hereafter in eternity reign with Him over all creatures.[6]

1. Acts 11:26; I John 2:20, 27
2. Acts 2:17
3. Mark 8:38
4. Rom. 12:1; Rev. 5:8, 10; I Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6
5. I Tim. 1:18-19
6. II Tim. 2:12; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 3:2

We must not be ashamed of Him

Amen and Amen. God bless you.