

Let Everything that Has Breath Praise the LORD - Psalms 150
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Hallelujah! The Psalter ends with a great song giving a call to every breathing creature to lift our voices in praise to Jehovah God. It is part of a subsection of Psalms made up of the final five Psalms all which begin (and some end) with the cry of hallelujah! Anywhere you could travel on planet earth, no matter what language, believers there know this ancient Hebrew word and will use it in their worship. I vividly remember the glorious sound of Haitian worship as people raised their hands and cried out to God in Creole, of which I understood nothing yet understood everything. In the midst, over and over again, from every lip sprinkled in to their prayers I would hear them say, actually shout, “Hallelujah, hallelujah!” That I understood. The word’s meaning is fairly simple. It combined two Hebrew words into one. The first, *hallel*, means to praise, to declare, shout, and sing glory to God. This word is echoed 13 times in our verse after the first “Hallelujah”. The second, *Jah*, is actually a shortening of the covenant name for God, Yahweh. So simply put, hallelujah means to sing, shout, declare our praise and worship to the One True Living God who has loved us, come near to us, and put us in relationship with Himself!

This final Psalm then, is a call to the congregation to gather as the band is playing songs that will lift our hearts to praise of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This song begins with a call to praise Him in the sanctuary, but that praise echoes the praise taking place in the heavens. In other words, as we sing at church we are an echo of what is taking place in the glorious throne room of the Eternal King at this very moment. We are to praise Him for his mighty deeds and excellent greatness. In other words, we give thanks for what He has done and worship Him for His beautiful, holy character. Then the Psalm goes through a list of instruments used at various times in Hebrew worship. Here is what is important here, these are their instruments. The application is not that we need to go find a ram’s horn shofar (trumpet) or build a lute and harp. What is being proclaimed here is that the congregation should come together in celebratory praise using the instruments of their culture. We obey this as our amazing Genesis worship team uses their skill for God’s glory playing guitars, bass, keyboards, and yes, drums and cymbals. This singing together becomes an invitation for every person, everyone who has breath to praise the Lord. And it is a call to each of us who still have breath to lift that breath in praise, because, “It’s your breath in our lungs, so we pour out our praise (from the song *Great are you Lord*, which is our family worship song for the week).”

These last five Psalms are the culmination of all the Psalms and their placement seems to be purposeful. The songs to be sung with the band playing are the previous 149. The Psalter begins with a simple Psalm reminding the people of God that they are to walk in the call and Law of God, and when they do they will be like a tree planted by a river that cannot be uprooted. It ends with this call to celebratory praise. In between are songs and prayers that deal with every life situation, emotion, pain, and struggle. But the message the Psalms lead us toward is that all of our prayer should end here, with a hallelujah song on our lips. Yes, we cry out to God in our loss, fear, loneliness, darkness, despair, rejection, suffering, heartache, and anger. But as we cry out to God we also praise Him. And it is our praise that will lift our eyes to see His glory and our hearts to believe His goodness.

So why should we do this? Do we praise to stroke God’s ego. That seems petty. I’ll end this letting C. S. Lewis answer from his book *Reflections on the Psalms*. *But the most obvious fact about praise — whether of God or anything — strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise*

The world rings with praise — lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game — praise of weather,

wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. . . . Except where intolerably adverse circumstances interfere, praise almost seems to be inner health made audible. . . . I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?" The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	Philippians 1	Philippians 2	Philippians 3	Philippians 4	Ezekiel 1

Reading from this past week: Psalm 150

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 122

Family Worship

Song - Great are you Lord

<https://youtu.be/ZZqV6i98SkA>

Gospel Project

Story: Jesus is better

Story Point: Jesus, our great High Priest, brought a better covenant.

Big Picture Question: What is the Gospel?

Answer: The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Scripture: Hebrews 1-8

New City Catechism

Question #1: What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?

Answer: Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone.

Verse: James 2:9

Scripture

Psalm 150

- What is your favorite worship song and why?
- If we were to rewrite this Psalm, what instruments could be included? Why is music so important in our lifting up praise?
- Why should all of our prayers lead us toward praise, the hallelujahs toward Jesus? What can happen if our prayer does not lead to trust through praise?
- Spend time singing with your family and practice your "hallelujahs".

Prayer

*Pray for our worship team, and all the band members who play their instruments so we can sing praises to Jesus.

*Do some singing in your family worship, and praise God for the gift of music.

