



Let Everyone Praise the LORD

Psalm 150

1. Where? (verse 1)
2. Why? (verse 2)
3. How? (verses 3-5)
4. Who? (verse 6)

Whenever you study of book of the Bible, it's always helpful to have an idea of the general flow of the book. For instance, in my continual reading through the Bible, this past week, I read the book of Esther (along with a dozen others, who are reading along the same plan). It's helpful to know the general flow of the book. How the book is about the potential extermination of the Jews, yet, through sovereign means, queen Esther was placed in the palace for such a time as to save the Jews from extinction (Esther 4:14).

The story begins at a party in the king's palace. At the party, Queen Vashti refused the summons of the king to come and flaunt her beauty before all. Which created a vacancy for the queen, into which Esther came, to be the means of the salvation of the Jews, amidst Haman's hostility against them. It's helpful to know this as you read through the book. It's helpful to understand that. It's helpful to have a grasp the overall flow of a book, even before you begin to read the book.

It's helpful to know that Genesis is a book that explains, the beginning of the world, and the beginning of the people of Israel. It's helpful to know that Deuteronomy is a book that contains the message of Moses in the last year of his life. a message to Israel as they enter the promised land. It's helpful to know that Joshua is a book detailing the conquest of the land of Canaan. It's helpful to know that 1 Samuel is a book about Samuel and Saul, as they lead the kingdom of Israel. It's helpful to know that 2 Samuel is a book about the reign of David, over the kingdom of Israel. It's helpful to know that 1 Kings is a book about Solomon and the divided kingdom. It's helpful to know that Jeremiah prophesied during the days of the fall of Judah, and that his prophecies came in the context of a kingdom that was falling to Babylon.

It's helpful to know that the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, tell the story of Jesus, from the early days of his life and ministry, to his conflicts with the religious authorities, to his death and resurrection. It's helpful to know that the book of Acts tells the divinely inspired history of the early church. It's helpful to know that the book of Revelation, is a book written to encourage the persecuted believers of the first century to endure their hardships, because the Jesus will return and right all of the wrongs that they are facing.

It's helpful to know all of these things before even beginning to read one of these books of the Bible. Indeed, these things are helpful for every book of the Bible.

Now, have you ever considered this for the book of Psalms? The book of Psalms is unique, because it doesn't have a single writer, presenting a flow of a narrative over the course of the book.

Instead, the Psalms has at least six authors. David wrote many of them, at least half of them (75 at least), probably more, but not all. Asaph wrote a bunch (Psalms 50, 73-83). That is, twelve Psalms. The sons of Korah wrote twelve Psalms (Psalms 42, 44-49, 84-88). One of them names Heman, the Ezrahite. Ethan, the Ezrahite wrote a Psalm (Psalm 89), which may have been a son of Korah. Moses wrote a Psalm (Psalm 90). Solomon wrote two Psalms (Psalm 72, 127). And there are some 48 Psalms that are anonymous. we don't know who wrote them.

All of this presents an interesting thought about the flow of the book of Psalms. This is because the individual writers of the Psalms didn't have a flow of the book in mind when they wrote. In this way, each Psalm can be taken individually, and can stand on its own. Yet, somebody arranged them, in fact, if you look at the Psalms, they are arranged into five books. (Psalm 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150). I believe that they were put together, with a design in mind. I do believe that the hand of God was upon this process. and I do believe that they have a flow to them.

In this way, I do believe that the book of Psalms is a bit like some devotional books.

For instance, I have on my shelf a few books written by Nancy Guthrie. (Well, not really written by her, but compiled by her). The first is entitled, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." It has 22 chapters, written by 22 different authors (some alive, some dead), all focused around Christmas. Nancy Guthrie has arranged the chapters to lead up to Christmas. beginning with the word in eternity past, continuing through Mary's encounter with the Gabriel, and Joseph's response. then continuing on with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (with the angels and the shepherds and the glory of God). and finishing up with the life of Christ among us that gives us hope. It all flows so well. I have used this book as a devotional to prepare my heart for Christmas, reading a chapter a day, leading up to Christmas. Nancy Guthrie put in some time to arrange it all.

The second devotional book that I have of Nancy Guthrie is entitled, "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross." It has 25 chapters, written by 25 different authors (some alive, some dead), The idea of this book is the same. Nancy Guthrie has so arranged the chapters to lead up to Easter. beginning with the ministry of Jesus, leading up to events of that took place in Jerusalem, Gethsemane, the betrayal, the trial, the words from the cross, his death, his resurrection, and the power that this is to us and our lives as we await his return. I have used this book

as a devotional to prepare my heart for Easter, reading a chapter a day, leading up to Easter. Nancy Guthrie put in some time to arrange it all.

In a similar way, is the book of Psalms. Somebody (we don't know his or her? name), Somebody put the Psalms together, and arranged them for us. I do believe that there is a natural flow to the Psalms.

The first two Psalms begin with the idea of blessing. The man is blessed who meditates on God's law, day and night (Psalm 1:1-2). The one is blessed who takes refuge in the Son of God (Psalm 2:12). The Psalms continue on with a bunch of Psalms by David, as he encounters the trials of his life, and becoming king. The Psalms continue with on with more and more difficulties, reaching a low in Psalm 77, when Asaph says the following:

Psalm 77:7-9

Will the Lord spurn forever,
and never again be favorable?
Has his steadfast love forever ceased?
Are his promises at an end for all time?
Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?

From this low point, the Psalms climb up, through the Psalms of Ascent (which call us to worship), until the end, when we get this doxology of praise in the last five Psalms, the Hallelujah Psalms!

Though life is difficult, and you will face pressures in life. and it's hard as you wade through it, and you may even reach the point (like Psalm 77), where you think that God has forgotten you. and that God has forgotten to be gracious (Psalm 77:9). Yet, in the end, we should praise the LORD. He is working through our trials to bring us to glory someday, that we might be with him forever. The Psalms remind us that there is a struggle. But our end is praise.

If you tried to graph the book of Psalms, on the grandest scale, it might look something like a reversed bell curve. It begins high at the beginning and end as it travels from blessing to praise. Yet in the middle, there the trials and troubles of life. But through it all, we are called to praise the LORD.

In fact, this is the message of each of the five books of the Psalms. Each book ends with a doxology, and expression of praise. Book 1 ends with this verse: "Blessed be the Psalm 89:52, the God of Israel, From everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen" (Psalm 41:13). Book 2 ends with these verses: "Blessed be the Psalm 89:52, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!" (Psalm 72:18-19). Book 3 ends with this verse: "Blessed be the Psalm 89:52 forever! Amen and Amen" (Psalm 89:52). Book 4 ends with these words: Psalm 106:48 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD! (Psalm 89:52).

Book 5 ends, not with a verse of praise to God, but with five Psalms giving praise to God. For the past month at Rock Valley Bible Church, we have been looking at the last five Psalms of the Psalter: 146, 147, 148, 149, and 150. These are called, the "Hallelujah Psalms," because each of them begin with "Hallelujah." and each of them end with "Hallelujah."

Each of them have their own particular slant on praising the LORD. Psalm 146 calls us to resolve to praise the LORD. Psalm 147 tells us how fitting it is to praise the LORD. Psalm 148 is the exhaustive call for all of the created order to praise the LORD. Psalm 149 is a call to praise the LORD with joy and obedience. This morning, we come to another one of those exhaustive Psalms, which tells us where and why and how to praise the LORD.

So, let's read Psalm 150. It's short, only 6 verses.

Psalm 150

Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the Lord!

Though this Psalm is a mere 6 verses long, it contains 13 commands. and they are all the same. Thirteen times, the Psalmist calls his readers to "praise the LORD."

It doesn't take great powers of observation to understand the point of the Psalm. We are called to praise the LORD. That is, we are called to speak highly of him. We are called to honor him. to give tribute to him. speak well of him. We are called to tell others of him.

Like fireworks. The intensity and "volume" and quantity of hallelujahs peaks at psalm 150.

- In Psalm 146, there are 5 commands to praise the LORD.

- In Psalm 147, there are 6 commands to praise the LORD.
- In Psalm 148, there are 10 commands to praise the LORD.
- In Psalm 149, there are 11 commands to praise the LORD.
- In Psalm 150, there are 13 commands to praise the LORD.

My hope and prayer through this series is that we would become aware of God's call on our lives to praise the LORD, especially in the context of all of the Psalms, which bring us into the heart of the trials and hardships of life! That's why the Psalms resonate with us (even though written thousands of years ago, before the cross of Christ), because they deal with life as it is. Often hard and cruel. Yet, through it all, the Psalms call us to praise the LORD. He is worthy of our praise.

This comes through loud and clear in the last of the Psalms.

- We see a call of where to praise the LORD.
- We see a call of why to praise the LORD.
- We see a call of how to praise the LORD.
- We see a call of who should praise the LORD.

The title of my message this morning is, "Let Everyone Praise the LORD." So, let's look at our first point.

1. Where? (verse 1)

Where are we to praise the LORD?

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

Praise him on the earth. Praise him in the heavens. At first blush, you might be thinking that this simply means that God should be praised everywhere! And indeed, he should be. You should praise the LORD at home. You should praise him at work. You should praise the LORD outside. You should praise him inside. You should praise the LORD in your car. You should praise him on your bike. We saw last week that we should even praise God on our beds (Psalm 149:5).

But if you think about it a bit, that's not precisely what this verse is saying. Because, when referring to the earth, the Psalmist doesn't say, "Praise the LORD everywhere." He says, "Praise him in his sanctuary." For the original hearers, this would have meant, "the temple." Or it could mean, the assembly in the synagogue. It's where the crowd of worshipers would gather together. For us, this is Sunday morning, when the church gathers together.

There is a sense where the LORD particularly loves our gathering together to praise the LORD. Psalm 87:2 says this: "The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than the dwelling places of Jacob." In other words, when God looked down upon Israel, he loved the people. He loved their dwelling places. But there was one place that he loved above all others. It was the gates of Zion, that is, the inner city of Jerusalem, where his people would come and gather and worship him. Now, certainly God wants to be praised everywhere, but there are certain places where God, particularly loves to be praised.

Furthermore, the people of God have a similar desire: "A day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10). In other words, the house of the LORD, the temple, is a good place to be! It's a place where God is worshiped! God loves that place! And we, as the people of God, love the place as well. If we can't be with God's people, worshiping the LORD together, there is a sorrow in our soul.

I know that when it comes to church attendance, many people feel guilty when they don't attend church. But this isn't the perspective that we ought to have. We ought to be disappointed that we can't join the crowd of people in worshiping the LORD. In Psalm 42, when the Psalmist was in depression, he remembered the happy days, when he would go with the throng, in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of praise, when a multitude were keeping festival (Psalm 42:4). Yet, in his anguish, he was away from the gathering of the people to worship, and he was in despair.

I think that we faced this during the days of COVID, when we were forced to separate. We were forced to be away from the people of God. Do you remember the first time that you gathered with a church after weeks of absence? Wasn't it great?! To be with God's people, singing praise to God, and being encouraged by one another. It was far better than watching on a screen. The call here in Psalm 150:1 is to praise God "in his sanctuary." It's a call to praise God with the church.

Now, I'm thankful for COVID, in that it has pushed many churches to stream their services online, which has helped those who are at home. Which has helped reach out to those without a church family. Yet, remote cannot even begin to compare with the dynamics of in person worship and fellowship.

During the days of COVID, I was on Sabbatical in California, where laws about gathering were very strict. So, my wife and I were prevented from attending any church services. But we had the opportunity to watch a bunch of worship services online. On a typical Sunday, I was watching three services online. Yet, on coming home from Sabbatical, I was able to attend a worship service in person. And though the sermon was probably not the best of sermons that I heard during my time away, it was the most edifying because it was with the people of God!

And that's the call of our first verse. Where are we to praise the LORD? "in his sanctuary." Let's look at our next question.

2. Why? (verse 2)

Why are we to praise the LORD? Consider verse 2.

Psalm 150:2

Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Often when this question is asked, "Why should you praise the LORD?" the answer comes back twofold: Because of who he is, Because of what he has done.

Indeed, this is the case. We saw this last week: Praise the LORD because of who God is. Psalm 149:2, "Let Israel be glad in his Maker; Let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!" God is our creator. He is worthy of praise. God is our king. He is worthy of praise. To this, you could add many more titles: God is our savior. He is worthy of praise. God is our rock and our fortress. He is worthy of praise. God is Holy. He is worthy of praise. God is all powerful. He is worthy of praise. God is omniscient. He is worthy of praise. God is omnipresent. He is worthy of praise. Indeed, God is to be worshiped because of who he is.

Also, God is to be worshiped because of what he has done. He chose Abraham to be the father of the faithful, He redeemed Israel from slavery, He gave Israel a king, He brought Israel back into the land, He came to show us how to live, He came to die on a cross to forgive us our sins. He will come again to give us new bodies, sinless bodies. Indeed, God is to be worshiped because of what he has done.

And here in Psalm 150, verse 2, we see the same reasons being given. God is to be worshiped because of who he is and what he has done.

"Praise him for his mighty deeds;" That is what he has done. "Praise him according to his excellent greatness!" That is who he is! This is why we come into his sanctuary week in and week out! to worship the LORD, because he is worthy of our praise. He has excellent greatness! He had done great things mighty deeds!

We don't worship the LORD just because. We don't worship the LORD with hopes that he will then show his favor to us, as if we make a deal: "I will worship you. and you can do good things for me." No. We worship the LORD because "The LORD is great and greatly to be praised!" (Psalm 145:3; 96:4). We worship the LORD because, "His steadfast love endures forever" (Psalm 136). We love him because he first loved us! (1 John 4:19).

Church family, this is why we worship the LORD! He has been kind to us in Jesus Christ. Listen, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, it is amazing what the Lord had done for us. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), that he might save us by his grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), by dying upon the cross for our sins! We can come and be reconciled to God, not because of our works, but because of his mercy (Titus 3:5). Indeed, because of Jesus, we face no condemnation, our sin debt has been paid. the wrath of God has been satisfied!

That is what God has done for us. He has brought us out of the kingdom of darkness, and has brought us into the kingdom of his son! He has promised to return and to bring us safely into heaven, where we can fellowship with the Lord forever, he is our God and we are his people (Revelation 21:3). And when we believe, we are no longer condemned for our sins. And we are kept secure by the love of Christ (Rom. 8:38-39). Indeed, this is "why" we praise the LORD! This is why, we, as New Covenant believers, praise the LORD.

But that's not where the Psalm ends. In verses 3-5, we answer the question of "how?"

3. How? (verses 3-5)

How are we to praise the LORD?

Psalm 150:3-5

Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

The emphasis here is upon music. That's the focus of our worship when we gather. Music has a way of stirring us in our praise of God, like nothing else. That's why thousands will attend a Rock Concert, because music can move us to a worship experience. Now, at a Rock Concert, the musicians are praised. But in the assembly of the church, God is praised. In other words, the music of the church is to turn us to God.

In verses 3-5, we see all sorts of instruments. In verse 3, we see the trumpet. In Biblical times, this was a bit like our trumpets today. However, they had no valves. So, it might have been a bit like our bugle today. In verse 3, we see the lute. The closest comparison we have today is like our guitar, which we strum. Some lutes even had 10 strings. (Psalm 33:2). In verse 3, we see the harp. This was a string instrument that was plucked, not strummed.

In verse 4, we see the tambourine and dance. Tambourine and dance often go together. We saw this last week in Psalm 149:4. It seems to be the instrument that women would often play. In Exodus 15:20-21, we read of Miriam and "all the women" were playing their tambourines and dancing after the Red Sea came over the Egyptians, drowning them all. We also read in Psalm 68:25 of the maidens who were playing their tambourines.

In verse 4, we see the strings mentioned. This is an all encompassing reference to any sort of stringed instrument, like the lute and harp. The pipe mentioned in verse 4 is something that you blow into. It may have been like a recorder with holes in a reed. Or it may have been like a flute that you blow over to make a sound. We aren't quite sure. In verse 5, you see cymbals These are like our cymbals today. Loud and crashing.

We see many of these instruments in the account of the dedication of the temple during Solomon's day. The following account comes right after the ark of the covenant was brought into the temple:

2 Chronicles 6:11-14

And when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions, and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever," the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

It all sounds like chaos to me, like our song during the service this morning.^[1]

Now the point in all of this isn't to pull back the old, ancient musical instruments so that we should play them all. The point is that God can be praised with an assortment of musical instruments. We should use an assortment of instruments. Whatever is appropriate for our culture. Whatever our people have the skill to play.

Do you have an instrument to praise the LORD? If you have the ability and are able to play before a congregation without distraction, then I would encourage you to use your gifts to praise the LORD.

Now, you may say that you don't have an instrument that you play. Well, yes you do. I know that you do. Verse 6 tells us that you do. You have a voice! Verse 6 answers the question of "who" should praise the LORD. Everyone with a breath!

4. Who? (verse 6)

Psalm 150:6

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

OK, so take a big deep breath. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. If you inhaled and exhaled with me, you are officially qualified to praise the LORD. No, you are officially commanded to praise the LORD.

You all have voices! You all can sing. That's your instrument! It has been said many times that "the most beautiful of all instruments is the human voice." So, use the beautiful instrument that God has given to you to praise the LORD.

So, when we come together, let us sing. Let all of us sing. Let everyone praise the LORD.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on August 21, 2022 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] During our worship service before I preached, we had a bunch of instruments play a song together. For several weeks, we had invited everyone in the congregation to bring a musical instrument that they had at home to join in the event. Everyone sang, "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah ..." and then all of the instruments chimed in on the "Praise Ye, the LORD" part. Bum, Bum, BuBum. We continued with another round. Bum, Bum, BuBum. Finally, during the one last, "Praise Ye, the LORD," those with instruments played out, Bum, Bum, BuBum. How appropriate was this song, because it was filled with Hallelujahs, just like our "Hallelujah Psalms" we had been looking at for 5 weeks. Anyway, we played through the song several times, trying to be especially loud on the final time. It turned out to be a very joyful occasion for all involved. One that will not be forgotten very soon.