

TITLE:	Gratitude & Praise	DATE:	<i>2012-APR-29</i>
TEXT	<i>Psalm 150 (Reading HC QA 86)</i>	SPEAKER:	<i>Pastor Steve Williamson</i>

Psalm 150:

- ¹ Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament!
- ² Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!
- ³ Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp!
- ⁴ Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
- ⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!
- ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

Beloved Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

The last five Psalms echo with Hallelujah's, which in English means "Praise the Lord". Over half of the Hallelujah's in the Psalms are found in the last five chapters. The last chapter uses the word in repetitious rapid fire – 13 uses in 6 verses. The climax of the book of Psalms and of life itself is in Hallelujah!

Our Catechism captures this and calls us to give ourselves to God in thankful living...why? That **God may be praised by us**. We exist for no other ultimate purpose, than God's praise and glory. The book of Psalms encourages us to know God for the purpose of praise. Do you know God well enough to praise him? The way to know God is by the study of and submission to, the scriptures!

Our theme is, **All creatures are made for the purpose of praise!** We will study the Where, Why, How and Who of praising God!

First we ask where we praise God?

2 places: 1) In His sanctuary. Sometimes we call the room in which we are worshipping a sanctuary. However, it is important we know the difference from our building to what the Psalmist refers to.

When we compare scripture with scripture and look in the Psalms for the meaning of the word sanctuary, we are drawn to think of God's Holy Hill (Psalms 2 and 3), his Holy Mountain in Zion (Psalm 48) where the LORD himself dwelled in his holy temple (Psalm 5, 11).

Israel was bound by God to praise God in his dwelling place. And so they would travel to this temple three times a year for their great feasting festivals, to give Praise to God. Can you picture the gathering of tens of thousands of Jews, beside King Solomon's temple, giving praise to God! What a spectacle!

Contrast what should have been with what was: This holy place was often plundered, dusted over, twice destroyed, desecrated and dirtied by sin. It was looted and pillaged over and over again by wicked kings who coveted its gold. It was utterly destroyed for the people's paganism, for rather than giving praise to God, the Israelites chose to go to every high hill to offer praise to the baals. The temple was the place where money changers were buying and selling their wares in the time of Christ. We were made for praise, but we pillaged the place of praise!

Beloved, this is why Christ came: to deal with the pollution and guilt of our sin that had mucked up his dwelling place. Christ became our temple, our living sanctuary in heaven.

Praise God! We can gather together to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The way that was once blocked has been opened up. Children, remember how the Garden of Eden was closed by flaming Cherubs to Adam and Eve. That is how heaven was to us! But now Jesus has opened up the way, and we enter in him, raised up by his Holy Spirit into the throne room of God himself in heaven!

2) In his mighty firmament, which brings us back to the book of Genesis 1.14, 15, and 17 where the same word is used, showing us praises are to be offered up in the expanses of the heavens.

Our praises may not stop as we walk away from gathering together. We are to praise God in the hallways as we exit, and throughout the pitted pathways of life. When we are hungry, hurting and tired we still have reason to live after our purpose!

But we have three major difficulties which constantly confront us: 1) **Our sin inclination.** How can we praise God, when we don't feel like it? 2) **Satan attacks us.** His attacks are intense & wearying 3) **Creation is cursed.** Creation is full of Change and decay and hurt and death? Our world is infected and corrupted by the plague of sin. Romans 8.22 speaks of how the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs.

The way of escape in these difficulties is in our next point:

Why we praise God?

1) His mighty Acts. Psalm 104 and the creative works of God. Creation was created for the purpose of praise. The psalmist concludes *"I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to God while I have my being"*.

Think of the great redemptive acts of Psalm 105, in calling Abraham, redeeming Israel from Pharaoh's hand, providing food and drink in their wilderness wandering, and giving the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. *"So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing."*

The answer to our difficulties is in Christ. When Christ came, he brought full redemption and hope of full restoration. Our grief is temporary. Our tears are measured. We have perspective. We were created for praise, and God has recreated us for praise. God is making all things new. We earnestly await our future adoption and the redemption of our bodies.

We praise God for what he has done. Every waking moment offers another reason to praise God!

2. His Excellent Greatness We praise God for who he is. His character is reason enough for us to praise God. *For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD? (Psa 89:6)*

In five other uses of this amplifying term "excellent", it refers to God's abounding goodness, God's abundant tender mercies, faithfulness, compassion and steadfast love.

Arthur Pink has a classic work on the attributes of God, which offer you reason after reason to praise God. Hear what he says about God's faithfulness: *"Behold One who is faithful, faithful in all things, faithful at all times." Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God"*

And then he explains why we should focus on this attribute: *The apprehension of this blessed truth will beget increasing confidence in God. When we trustfully resign ourselves, and all our affairs into God's hands, fully persuaded of His love and faithfulness, the sooner shall we be satisfied with his providence & see that "He doeth all things well."*

The faithfulness of God is just one attribute of God to focus on. Sing, Read, memorize, meditate on the Psalms, carefully and you will grow to know God more and more, and praise him for all His attributes.

We come now to how we are to praise God. Six times in verses 2-5 the word Hallelujah is used, with different instrumentation accenting how to praise the Lord. Dr. James Montgomery Boice explains that the Psalm's poetry emphasizes the advancing purpose and expression of one key idea: Hallelujah. With a driving repetition, like a hammer that keeps pounding in a nail, this psalm keeps hammering the one point: Hallelujah!

The instrumentation encompasses a full range of ways to praise God – the Psalmist is saying, in effect, with whatever you have, praise God! The distinctions between the instruments mentioned are not to be pressed, beyond the fact that every kind of instrument, solemn or joyous, percussive or melodic, gentle or strident, is rallied here to the praise of God!

Children, what the Psalmist is saying is, use every gift you have to the praise of God. Don't play your harmonica to bother your sister, play your harmonica to the glory of God. With whatever you have been given, use it to God's glory.

Fourthly, we ask the question, who is to praise the Lord? And to this question the Psalmist could not be clearer: Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! All humanity must praise God.

1) Believers: Psalm 149 calls Israel to rejoice in their maker. The saints have the first obligation to obey this command. We know so much more about the world and its relationship to its creator. We know of God's mighty acts and his awesome character. We have tasted of his steadfast love in Christ. We are under strict obligation, to show the authenticity of our faith through praise! This Hallelujah is imperative – you have no option, but to praise God. You have heard the imperative 13 times – are you listening, and will you obey?

B. Unbelievers & Creatures: Psalm 148 calls all creatures in heaven and on earth to praise God as their creator, and as the redeemer of his people Israel. This imperative is for unbelievers – they see God's glory in creation, in the glory of the changing seasons, with the blossoming of the flowers and trees, in microbiology and in the expanses of the heavens, they taste of God's glory, and also must give God praise!

Psalm 148:7-12 speaks of sea monsters, beasts and call cattle, creeping things and flying birds that join with us to declare God's praise . All that have breath are to give God praise. (Rev 5:13) *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne*

All creatures will be brought into harmony with one another, and with man as the fear of man is removed from them by Christ. All creation will give God glory, being remade and refashioned to praise God forever and ever!

Beloved, let us together Praise the LORD, for who he is, for what he has done, wherever we are, and with all that we have. Christ is worthy! Whatever we may forget about the Psalms, never forget that central to authentic faith is the praise of God

I close with reading Revelation 4:9-11 and our obligation to give God praise for his creation:

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

And with Revelation 5:9-14 and our obligation to give God praise for redemption:

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

April 29, 2012 PM

New Horizon URC

Name:

**Text: Psalm 150
HC: LD 32 QA 86**

Title: Gratitude & Praise

Theme: All creatures are made for the purpose of praise!

1. W _____ ?

In His S _____ Psa 2:6 | 3:5 | 5:8 | 11:4 | 48:2

In his mighty F _____ Gen 1:14,15,17

Q. What makes it hard to praise God?

2. W _____ ?

A. His mighty A _____ Creation: Psa 104 | Redemption: Psa 105

B. His Excellent G _____ Psa 89:6

3. H _____ ?

4. W _____ ?

A. B _____ Psa 149

B. Unbelievers & all C _____ Psa 148:7-12

Q. Do we have a choice to praise God? Why or why not?

Q. Why are Revelation 4:9-11 & Revelation 5:9-14 so helpful for us to consider at the close?