

Pastor Shaun Arndt
June 7, 2020
Sermon Text – Psalm 150
Holy Trinity Sunday

Praise the LORD!

Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ,

The final booms and sparks from the fireworks fade away, and the oohs and ahs turn into clapping and cheering. It is the fitting response.

The last notes of the amazing concert die away and the crowd stands up to applaud the conductor and orchestra. It is the fitting response.

The book of Psalms, God's inspired hymnal comes to its conclusion and Psalm 150 encourages not only God's people on earth, but those already with the Lord in heaven along and all the holy angels to burst into the jubilant song of **Praise the LORD**.

Not once, but 13 times the final Psalm urges us to **Praise the LORD** not only with every kind of musical instrument available to us, but with every **breath**. It is, after all, the only fitting response when we consider God's **acts of power** and **His abundant greatness**.

Just consider the high and holy mystery of the Trinity that we focus on today, that God is three distinct persons in one undivided Divine Essence. Like all the Bible, the book of Psalms teaches this profound truth.

Psalm 2 speaks of the everlasting relationship of the Father and the Son: **I will proclaim the decree of the LORD. He said to me: You are my Son. Today I have begotten You.**

Psalm 51 is one of several Psalms that speaks about God the Holy Spirit: **Create in me a pure heart, O God... Do not cast me from your presence. Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.**

So the Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods, but just one God, just as Psalm 150 tells us over and over: **Praise Him... Praise Him...** Not **Praise them**, but **Praise Him**. Just like that phrase a little earlier in our worship service: **Praise be to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: let us worship Him.**

And yet it's not just three different titles to call God either, for each person—Father, Son, Spirit—is distinct from the others. It was not the Father who was begotten in Psalm 2, but only the Son. Three persons, *One God*.

The little child does not need to fully understand how a firework is made to be able to cheer with delight to see one. So too, let us like little children simply stand in awe and delight that our Triune God is beyond understanding, greater than our comprehension and just **Praise Him according to His abundant greatness!**

That **greatness** includes what we hear about in Psalm 90: **Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.** So before creation,

before time, space, matter or energy, there was only God. He is—the Eternal One, the uncreated with no beginning and no end. Just ponder that for a while and it starts to make your head hurt!

And then Psalm 139 adds: **Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there... if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me...** We call this God's omnipresence, He is fully and entirely in all places at once, present everywhere.

Add to this His Almighty power as **the Maker of heaven and earth** (Psalm 121)... and that He knows all things, **He calls the stars by name** (Psalm 147) and graciously provides everything we are and all we have—the **earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the world and all who dwell in it** (Psalm 24) and we get it, don't we? **Praise the LORD** with all we are and all we have is the only fitting response.

So how awful and inappropriate it is that those words fail to constantly describe us and all we do. Far from a pure unbroken symphony of praise to our God in all we think we say and do, our hearts and lives have belched out sour notes of sin.

God's Word teaches us these amazing truths of what God is like, and we can be bored!

Far from the joyful nature of this Psalm so eager to **Praise the LORD**, we can say things in our heart if not with our mouths like "I suppose I *have* to go to church," rather than seeing what an awesome privilege it is to get to know and worship the LORD, the highest good.

And yes, I have to confess with shame that pastors can do the same thing. My old sinful heart also croaks: "I *have* to serve..." rather than "*I get the incredible privilege* to serve and speak the Word of the Living God!"

Now, this is God who knows all things, not just every sparrow that flitters through the sky and every star in the heavens, but He knows all we've done, all we've said—yes all we've thought as Psalm 139 says: **You perceive my thoughts from afar... You are familiar with all my ways.**

That means the holy and righteous Judge of all knows every time we've worried and whined instead of joyfully worshipped with confident trust that He is in control. The LORD knows our sinful hearts are eager to put ourselves first and look to the trivial and temporary rather than loving, trusting and honoring Him above all things.

How can we not cry out with the words of Psalm 130: **If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand? Yes with David in Psalm 41 let us confess: LORD, have mercy on me. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.**

And there can be no greater reason to **Praise the LORD** than how He has answered our desperate need for mercy. Listen to God's absolution in Psalm 103: **The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love... He does not treat us as our sins deserve... as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us!**

Yes, above all, **Praise the LORD** for His saving love that produced **acts of power** to save us. Like the love of the Father we hear about in Psalm 103: **As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion.**

Read through Psalm 22, and you'll see the love of God the Son, Jesus Christ as He gave His life on the cross, all foretold 1,000 years in advance in the Psalm. With **hands and feet pierced**, His sinless soul cried out in agony as He willingly suffered the judgment for every way we have failed to perfectly **Praise God** with every thought, word, and action, with every breath and all our life.

Read Psalm 16 and you'll hear about that awesome **act of power** when Jesus, the faithful Savior was not **abandoned to the grave** but rose triumphant from the dead to give to us **the path of life**.

Go back to Psalm 51 and we hear of the love of God the Holy Spirit and His saving work of bringing us to believe, creating a new and **pure heart** of faith in us so that we believe in Jesus and receive what He has won. It is only because of the Holy Spirit working faith through Word and Sacrament, that we with believing hearts we can actually do what this Psalm says: **Praise the LORD!** Our ability to love and worship the LORD comes from Him who first loved us.

And think what God's **acts of power** on our behalf means for us. Cleansed and forgiven through faith in Jesus, clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness—His holy life in our place—the righteousness the Psalms so often speak of: **Deliver me, LORD in Your righteousness** (Psalm 31), now through Christ you and I get to make the words of Psalm 118 our own; it describes our future: **I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.**

With risen and glorified eyes we will see the new heaven and new earth Psalm 96 and 98 sing about, when Christ comes again in glory to make all things new on that glorious day when truly **Everything that has breath will praise the LORD** for all eternity!

Yes, right now we will indeed have struggles and sorrows in this broken world. The book of Psalms makes that abundantly clear!

And yet even then, even with tears in our eyes yet we can **Praise the LORD** in our hearts, for Psalm 46 says: **the LORD Almighty is with us... the God of Jacob is our Fortress...God is our refuge and strength, and ever present help in trouble** (Psalm 46) and He is our **Good Shepherd** who Himself will finally carry us safely through every trouble, even the **valley of the shadow of death** and bring us to **dwelt in the house of the LORD forever** (Psalm 23).

The conductor lowers the baton and the concert hall is filled with applause. It is fitting, but the applause and standing ovation don't add a single note to the beautiful music. You cannot add one thing to that amazing performance, you just applaud and tell friends and family that they simply must see that show!

So too as we gather for worship in church, or for worship in our homes, or for worship as we strive to do all things to the glory of God, carrying out our daily callings with every **breath** to serve God by serving neighbor, all our **Praise** adds nothing to our Triune God's saving work. We cannot add to it, we cannot deserve it, we cannot cooperate with His saving us. We just gratefully **Praise the LORD** and tell friends and family that they simply must know His love. Amen.