

April 23, 2009

Psalm 150 (ESV)

**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!**

So this is it. The end. The final stop on our 22 month journey through Psalms. We've looked at more than fifty of these shorter psalms, and we've encountered all sorts of emotions and thoughts. I have learned a lot about God from these psalmists, and it makes me want to learn more.

We began with Psalm 1 on July 17, 2007, and reflected on the two paths we can take in life. We can take our stand with the righteous or we can fall with the wicked. It is a great psalm with which to begin the 150 psalm collection that we have today. It properly aligns our orientation by giving us the assurance that God will judge righteously between the righteous and the wicked. Having faith in that claim allows us to wrestle with the psalms that follow. We can understand and experience the joy and sorrow, the passion and the pain, the certainty and the doubt, the praise and even the anger of the psalmists who open themselves fully before the throne of God. We know that life is tough—even tragic at times. But the end result for every believer is praise. It has to be.

One thing I have learned from this journey is that the psalms are not museum pieces meant to be looked at but untouched. These are models for us to examine up close, to handle and tug at as we try to read between the lines. These psalms are meant to teach us and to show us how to talk to God. So what does your praise psalm sound like? Do you have one yet? If not, try taking a few minutes and jotting down your own psalm of praise to God. It can be whatever you want it to be. There are no formal rules to follow except one: speak from your heart. The psalmists did.

I can imagine the psalmist as he wrote this final psalm. With a big smile on his face and with thoughts of blessings racing through his head, his joy must have been contagious as his pen shouted out these words. Praise the Lord! Praise Him! Praise Him! Let all things praise the Lord! The Lord is so good. He has done so many magnificent things. Praise Him with everything you have. Let your praise be a joyful noise to the Lord. Let your life sound out His greatness. Don't hide your joy from the world, because it is a gift from God. Don't reserve your praises for whispers in the dark. Let go and let the whole world know that your God is mighty and exalted and greater than any created thing.

Never forget the goodness of your God. Don't get lost in the darkness of a world that runs from the Light. Stay on the path that leads to righteousness even if it means you walk it alone. And remember that life is hard but God has given each of us reasons to live lives of praise. Keep learning, keep living for Him, and PRAISE THE LORD!

Steeped in grace,
Patrick Barber