

“Praising God All the Way Home”
Psalm 150

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Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.

That’s what we are trying to do this Thanksgiving Sunday. Psalm 150 tells us how; it is a rousing invitation to praise God. Praise the Lord.

WHERE: PRAISE GOD IN HIS SANCTUARY, PRAISE GOD IN HIS MIGHTY FIRMAMENT.

From sanctuary to sky, praise the Lord. Praise God on the highway, in the by-way, in waiting rooms and working rooms, through field and forest, in the city and the country-side. When I walk through the valleys of the shadows of death, I Praise the Lord. Praise God when you are healthy; praise God when you are sick.

Oliver Cromwell was dying and said, “Is there no one here who will praise the Lord?” John Wesley was on his death bed when he said, “Children, as soon as I am released, sing a Psalm of praise to God.” Everywhere we go, in everything we do, in whatever state we are, let us sing a song of praise to the One who made us, the One who sustains us, the One who will see us through.

I’ve always felt sorry for people who are born in the objective case. You know people that major on pessimism, look for the dark and gloomy side of life, never able to do much of anything but grumble and criticize. It is easy to gain a critical spirit in our lives, but we are not called to be critics, to be negative, or live in doom and gloom. We are called to praise the Lord from whom all blessings flow.

Tony Demello tells the story about two taxidermists who stopped before a window in which an owl was on display. Immediately they began to criticize the way it was mounted. Its eyes were not natural. Its wings were not in proportion to the head. The feathers were not neatly arranged and the feet could be improved. They looked at each other and said, “You know, whoever did this job didn’t do a very good one.” As they continued their critique, the old owl turned its head and winked at them.

Learn to praise God wherever you are!

WHY: PRAISE GOD FOR HIS MIGHTY DEEDS. PRAISE GOD ACCORDING TO HIS SURPASSING GREATNESS.

He has done great things. His love endures forever.

If you don't already know him, I would like for you to meet Dr. David Bratton today. He and his wife, Allison, and their family came to this congregation back in the 1990's. David has been an Orthopedic Surgeon for almost twenty-six years and runs a clinic in Franklin. He grew up in Memphis and then moved to McMinnville until he moved to this area. A few years ago life threw David a curve ball, but he says that if you stay in there and keep batting, you can hit a home run. A few years ago he developed a tremor and it turned out to be Parkinson's disease and he had to stop doing surgery. Everything was running on schedule and then the schedule kind of got eschewed. About a year later he was diagnosed with genetic kidney failure, which caused him to face quite a bit of uncertainty with regard to that, as well. This resulted in a kidney transplant which is not easy to come by since there are seventy thousand people in America waiting for one at this point with only about eighteen thousand done per year. This is certainly a reason to sign your donor card when you get a chance.

This is the part of the story I want you to know. There was a beautiful miracle that happened in David's life and it is simply a beautiful story. He decided he had better start walking to prepare his body for this surgery and during his walks he decided to praise God for His creation. While he was walking and looking at the trees and the sky, he began to paraphrase the "Lord's Prayer," which is a great praise of adoration. One of his requests was for God to just give him his daily bread and the strength to accept whatever that might entail. Soon he found out that a friend of his daughter had been praying to the Holy Spirit as she was considering donating a kidney and was determined that she would be a perfect match. He wasn't really sure that he wanted someone to sacrifice for him that way but she insisted that she wanted a number to call. He had a lot of people here in the church praying for him, especially his Encounter Sunday School Class and many people in many places and on many prayer lists. She went to be tested and told them as she went in that she would definitely be a match whether they believed it or not. One Sunday he came home from church and she was at his home and informed him that she was a perfect match. He simply felt that it was unbelievable and certainly an answer to many prayers. Later, when the doctors asked her how she knew she would be a perfect match, she simply replied, "It's just a God thing." So now David has her kidney, feels great and praises God for what He has done for David. It isn't hard for David to say, "Praise the Lord."

HOW: 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 CLANGING CYMBALS; WITH LOUD CLASHING CYMBALS! Let every section of the orchestra join this symphony of praise.

My grandmother did not know how to play the trumpet, but she knew how to

praise the Lord. She lived during the era of rousing revivals and frolicking camp meetings. My grandmother would get happy in Jesus. She would wave her white handkerchief in the air. Pretty soon she would start shouting “Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!” Occasionally she would take a trip or two around that little country church. She may not have known how to act at a concert, but she knew how to bless Jesus at a prayer meeting. Sometimes I long for some of Grandma’s spirit. The key is this, with everything I’ve got, Praise the Lord!

WHO: LET EVERYTHING THAT BREATHES PRAISE THE LORD.

For sixty-nine years Roy lived in an institution for mentally handicapped persons. Then a few years ago he moved to the L’Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto, a place where the handicapped are treated with dignity and personal attention. Many people thought Roy would not make the adjustment, but they were wrong. Within weeks this exuberant, warm-hearted man had friends eager to take him fishing or out for a cup of coffee. He delighted in the unlocked kitchen refrigerator, where he could have all he wanted to eat. Roy could have been bitter. Instead he found himself rejoicing in all that he discovered, becoming a delight to himself and others.

If you are breathing, you need to be praising God.

Let the women say praise the Lord – “Praise the Lord!”
Let the men say praise the Lord – “Praise the Lord!”
Let the choir say praise the Lord – “Praise the Lord!”
Let all who breathe praise the Lord – “Praise the Lord!”

If we could see how much God’s Worth,
His Power, His Might, His Endless Love,
Then surely we would never cease to Praise Him.

To Praise is to Live – to Live is to Praise.

Amen.