

PSALMS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 146 as we continue our study through the Bible and this evening we will finish up the book of Psalms. We have been on this journey through the book of Psalms for some 10 months now and I pray you have been blessed and encouraged as we have seen these lessons of faith. We have seen how even godly men and women can get down, lose hope but that can all change as our focus changes. It can call change as we take our eyes off the situation and focus back on the Lord, the One who can help us no matter what we are going through. It is as we read in Psalm 42:11, which tells us this very thing as the Psalmist said, **“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.”**

Not only do we see this in the Old Testament, but Paul makes this point in the New Testament. In II Corinthians chapter 1 he tells us **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.”** II Corinthians 1:3-7.

And in II Corinthians 7:5-7 he wrote, **“For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.”**

This is something that we need to remember and treasure. In these verses we have read we see that it is not just God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit bringing comfort to us, but the Scriptures also comfort us as well as others who come to our side and bring to us the comfort of God. Folks, like Paul, God has given to us our Titus to bring to us comfort, to encourage us, may we not miss out on that or resist it. Also, are you a Titus to people or a porcupine? Do you bring the comfort of God when you get close to people or do you poke them with your quills? You know what God desires you to do, bring people God’s comfort! So God will give us hope, He will encourage us and He will use His Word as well as others to bring this about in our lives!

As we finish up with these last five Psalms this evening you will see that they are Psalms that focus on praising the Lord or hallelujah Psalms. What do I mean by that? Each of these Psalms opens up with the phrase, **“Praise the LORD!”** or hallelujah. You see, the word “hallelujah” means just that, praise the Lord! Not only do they open up with that phrase, but each of them close that way and thus, the Psalms are praising the ***LORD!***

And as you will see, as we go through Psalm 146 the focus is on who we are to put our trust in, man or God. Now the answer is obvious but many times we go to man for help instead of the Lord and then, when we have come to the end of our resources, when man can't help any longer, we run to the Lord. It should be the other way around. We should run to the Lord first. With that said, let's begin reading in Psalm 146, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PSALM 146

VERSES 1-4

1. It is always good to start with a correct perspective and that is what the Psalmist has done here. He is praising the Lord not just in song but with His life! He is not just praising the Lord half-heartedly but with His entire being. You might say that he is putting his heart and soul into it! We were created for His good pleasure and thus, as we live out our lives we should honor the Lord, bring pleasure to Him in all that we do. And yes, while the Psalmist lives, while we live we should praise the Lord but make no mistake about it. When we go to be with the Lord we will see that heaven is filled with the praise and worship of the Lord! It does not end but continues on because He alone deserves our worship!

2. I do find it interesting what people place their trust in. Instead of trusting in the God who loves them they trust in man who will use them to get what they want. Not only is man self-centered and only interested in getting something from another but no matter how powerful they think they are, when compared to Almighty God, they are nothing. You see, they are going to die, they will be buried, their body will go back to the dust of the earth and all their plans, all their ideas will perish with them. Make no mistake about it, man is not only unreliable, not only is he impotent, not only are his plans fleeting, but he is mortal! In other words, the best of men are men at best!

And think of it like this. Man can't even save himself and yet he has all these plans, all these ideas. But they amount to nothing. Our trust needs to be in the Lord and that is what the Psalmist is going to speak of, don't be a fool and trust in man, trust in the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth, the One who can truly help us!

VERSES 5-9

1. People are looking for the way to happiness, they are looking for the way to find help, they are looking for hope and we see the Psalmist tell us that this is all found in the God of Jacob, Almighty God! Remember when Jesus began His public ministry, He quoted from Isaiah 61:1-2 and said, **“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”** Luke 4:18-19.

In other words, the way to happiness, the way for help, the way for hope is found in Jesus and the Gospel message. You see, the good news frees us from our bondage, it breaks those chains that bind us, it sets us free. And the result of what God has done in our lives is that we are happy. We have found hope in the Lord and no one else, He alone can help us or as Peter said, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** Acts 4:12. Don't look to man for help, look to the Lord!

2. Now what I find interesting is that the wicked think they are footloose and fancy free, doing whatever they want. They are proud and think that no one can touch them, that they are not accountable to anyone, not even a God. But the Lord is saying He's got them running around in circles. Pardon my illustration here but I think the unsaved are running around like gerbils on their little circular treadmill. Lots of energy exerted, but they haven't moved one inch! They are going in circles and thus, they just can't find satisfaction in life.

Now some of you may disagree with me on that point but let me ask you this. If people are so satisfied in this country apart from God, in a land that is more prosperous than most of the world, why are so many people depressed? You see, things will not fill the void in their lives and thus, they run here and they run there to find that satisfaction and they are going nowhere apart from the Lord!

VERSE 10

1. I like the way the Psalmist closes and let's see if you can help me out here. What are you going to say when I tell you that one day the Lord will return and reign forever? "**Praise the LORD!**" or "**HALLELUJAH!**" We long for that day! You see, there is man who is transient, he will not live forever and then there is Almighty God who is eternal! Aren't you glad you know Him!

PSALM 147

Many feel that this Psalm was written in response to the Jews returning home from their Babylonian captivity. That may be a near term fulfillment of what is written here but I see this as future. I see this as the Lord returns and sets up His Kingdom and rules and reigns from the throne of David in Jerusalem. He will re-gather the Jewish people from all over the world and bring them back home. With that in mind, let's begin reading in verse 1 of Psalm 147 as we continue to praise the **LORD!**

VERSE 1

1. Some people have a hard time with praising the Lord and I think the Lord makes it very clear here what He thinks of praise. He tells us that as we praise Him it is good, it is pleasant, it is beautiful. And make no mistake about it; praise is something that soothes our souls.

Remember when Saul had the distressing spirit come upon him and he would call for David who would play worship music that refreshed him. Worship is good, it is pleasant, it is beautiful, and it has a way of lifting up a down cast soul.

Some of you may have a hard time believing that but think about it. When I was younger, before I was saved, when I was down I would play music that kept me down. When someone is singing the blues, does it lift you up or bring you down? It brings you down or keeps you down, you are not only singing the blues, you are living them! But I also know that after I got saved, when I put praise and worship music on I got focused off myself and onto the Lord and my spirit was lifted up.

In Psalm 96:1-5 we are told, **“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the Lord made the heavens.”**

Praising the Lord, getting refocused on Him will lift you from your despair!

VERSES 2-6

1. If this Psalm is speaking of the exiles returning home, remember the city was destroyed. They needed hope, they needed encouragement, and they looked to the Lord to be the one to re-build Jerusalem. Now look on ahead to the Tribulation Period and the destruction that takes place and it is once again the Lord who will give them hope as He will set up His Kingdom on this earth, He will gather the Jewish people back into the land. Lives that were broken, devastated will be healed!

2. Now how does that apply to us today or does it? I do believe it does apply to us today. You see, many times our lives are broken, our lives are devastated because of sin and we don't know what to do, who to turn to. Look to the Lord, He will heal your broken heart, bind your wounds, heal your sorrows, and help you to re-build or put your life back together. That is what we saw in Isaiah chapter 61 and it is seen in the ministry of Jesus as He spoke those words in Luke chapter 4!

3. Now some have a hard time with this, believing that God can do all of these things, how can we be sure? First of all in verse 4 we are told that the Lord not only counts all the stars but He names them as well.

Way back in the year 100 A. D. Hipparchus carefully gazed at the skies and counted 1,022 stars. Not bad back then, but not even close to the number. Then, two hundred years later, Ptolemy, the father of astronomy, counted 1,026. I am not sure how Hipparchus missed those 4 stars but Ptolemy picked up on them.

Today it has been estimated that there are 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy alone, and you can multiply that out times the billions of galaxies that have been estimated to be in this universe. Someone has said that they estimate that the total number of stars in the universe to be 10^{25} , and God has not only named each one, but He calls them by their right name. Hey, I only had two children and I would mess up their names at times and my dad, with four sons, he would just go down the list until he got it right! But not our God, He knows each one by name and He numbers the hairs of our head!

What does that all mean? It is like verse 5 says, **“Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.”** In other words our God is all-knowing, He doesn’t have to learn anything, He is not surprised by anything, He is not caught off guard, He knows it all! He has infinite knowledge. To me that brings me great comfort. In Isaiah 55:8-9 we read, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”**

Thus, because He is an all-knowing God and I am not, I have to trust in Him instead of myself, even though I may not understand fully what is happening or why He is leading in this direction. It is a step of faith.

4. Now is God going to be fair, is He going to do what is right? Absolutely because the Bible tells us that God is holy, He is righteous, all His judgments are right, they are fair. In Psalm 11:7 we are told, **“For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.”** In Psalm 119:137 we are told, **“Righteous are You, O Lord, And upright are Your judgments.”** And in Isaiah 6:1-3 we are told, **“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’”** I think we can see that God is fair, He is righteous, He is holy, all of His judgments will be right.

Thus, when God judges the wicked He will be righteous in His actions. Sadly there are a lot of people today who are walking around with a self-righteous attitude. And what is even worse is we see so-called Christians that are demanding God to do this and do that. God wants us to come before Him in a humble spirit, realizing that He is a holy and righteous God, and the only reason we can come before Him at all is because of the righteousness that has been imputed to us by Christ. If we do, He will lift us up. If we don't, He will bring us down! That is what the Psalmist said here, **“The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.”** Psalm 147:6.

5. And out of all this look at what we are to do.

VERSES 7-9

1. We should praise the Lord because our God is not distant from us but He is actively involved with His creation. He cares for us, watches over us, He even knows when one sparrow falls to the ground. To say that God put all the elements of life together and now has just stepped back to see how they evolve, not interfering at all, is wrong, it is contrary to Scriptures.

VERSES 10-11

1. Our society places great worth on being strong, being in shape, attaining this and attaining that but God doesn't. Now I am not saying we should not take care of these bodies that the Lord has given to us, but do we really think God is up in heaven saying, “Joe, he kind of let that body go. I am not to sure about him anymore!”

Absolutely not and if you disagree with me, then listen again to what the Psalmist said here, in what God takes pleasure in, **“The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.”** I am thankful for that. God is looking for people who love Him, who maybe are not in that great of shape but because of it they will have to trust in the Lord! Maybe they don’t have a charismatic personality, but they will have to trust in the Lord. You see, put anything in there, God is not looking for your strength but that you have that reverential fear of Him and your hope is in the mercy that He has extended to you. In other words, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Philippians 4:13. That is what God takes pleasure in!

And the reality is, we must come to that realization that when we are weak, not dependent upon ourselves, then we are strong for we are dependent upon God.

VERSES 12-14

1. If this was speaking of their return to Jerusalem from their Babylonian captivity, the first group came home in 538 B. C. with the foundation of the Temple being laid in 586 B. C. Then Nehemiah came back in 445 B. C. and re-built the walls of the city, its gates, and the people could once again live in the safety of a walled city, filled with the blessings of family, food, and peace.

But I see this future, when the true King returns and peace will fill this land. It is as Isaiah 54:11-13 tells us, **“O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, And lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, Your gates of crystal, And all your walls of precious stones. All your children shall be taught by the Lord, And great shall be the peace of your children.”** The King is coming and when He does He will bring about civil security, domestic contentment, national tranquility and agricultural prosperity!

VERSES 15-18

1. Here we see the Psalmist speak of the power that God has over the elements. He is in control and when He speaks things happen. He is in control and nothing happens without His knowledge or His approval. Thus, we can praise Him because He is a God who is actively involved in every aspect of our lives, even the elements!

VERSES 19-20

1. Make no mistake about it, the Words that God has given to us are not only precious to us but they are also very powerful in our lives. Look at just a few aspects of this. First of all we read in Genesis 1:3, **“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”** And you can see throughout the creation process, as God spoke things happened. With His Word God began the work of creation!

Not only did His Word begin the creation process but we are told in Mark 4:39, **“Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.”** In other words, as God spoke, as His Words went forth creation was obedient to Him, He commanded His creation!

Not only that but we see that His Word sustains His people. In Jeremiah 15:16 we are told, **“Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.”**

And lastly, and there is more, but it is through His Word that we find salvation as John tells us in John 1:12-14, **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

The problem today is we have moved away from God’s Word and that is a very dangerous thing to do. In some churches today we have replaced the Word of God with other things and it reminds me of the Southern Kingdom of Judah during times of apostasy. You remember, the Scriptures, God’s Word was tossed in the back room of the Temple cluttered with all kinds of garbage. It was lost because God’s house was filled with other things!

Today we are entertainers and we feel we have to whip people up into some kind of frenzy, but it is all emotion, and there is no real change in their lives. We put on plays, skits because God's people are not smart enough to understand the Word of God! Really, what about God's Spirit opening up the Word of God to the people? Have we lost sight of that? Do we trust in what we can do instead of what God can do in people's lives? I think so!

When Jonathan Edwards gave his famous sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God" from Deuteronomy chapter 32, he was not a flamboyant speaker. He was not a charismatic speaker that whipped people up. He read his sermon word-for-word and kept it close to his eyes because he could not see very well. And it was not Jonathan Edwards, but the Holy Spirit that moved and opened the hearts of the people. And when that happened many were on their knees asking God to forgive them their sins. And as people cried out, he would look up to see what was going on.

We need to truly believe that God's Word is living and it is powerful as Paul reminds us in Hebrews 4:12-13, "**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**"

2. And what is our response to all of this? "**Praise the LORD!**" or "**HALLELUJAH!**"

Our Lord is coming back and He will restore this land to what it was like in the Garden of Eden – *Praise the LORD!*

PSALM 148

As you will see, this Psalm speaks for itself. It is a Psalm that is filled with worship, the worship and praise to our Lord from all of creation. So let's dig into this Psalm of praises to the **LORD!**

VERSES 1-6

1. The Psalmist is declaring that all of creation is praising the Lord. Now how can the sun and the moon praise the Lord? That seems a little far fetched. Let me share this with you and I think you will see that the Psalmist means what he is saying. This is an article titled: Astronomy Fan Louie Giglio Shows Universe Is Playing Music to God. (Author, Anugrah Kumar, September 24, 2011). We are told,

Pastor Louie Giglio left the delegates at the Desiring God National Conference in Minnesota astonished Friday night as he played audio tapes containing sounds of heavenly bodies that had both rhythm and melody "to praise their Creator." . . .

Astronomers, he said, struggle with the purpose and function of the universe. But the universe, he added, "is doing what it is made to do . . . It is praising God in a staggering magnitude."

Giglio, also a song writer, then played the sounds recorded with highly advanced electromagnetic telescope programs by scientists. One sounded like a percussion instrument, and the other like the church organ. Then he played the whale sound under the water.

When Giglio played the tapes together, “un-doctored and unedited,” it sounded like a symphony. That’s what it is, he said, “the symphony of God’s praise from all creation.” He then led the audience to sing Chris Tomlin’s “How great is our God” with the “symphony of the universe” playing in the background.

The pastor said the psalmist also talked about the sun, the moon and the stars praising God. That was not just poetic, he said. “Stars also sing.” . . .

- <http://www.christianpost.com/news/astronomy-fan-louie-giglio-shows-universe-is-playing-music-to-god-56433/print.html>

I do believe that the universe and all of creation praise the Lord and thus, why are we not doing what all of creation is to do? The voices of creation sing out praise to the Lord and so should we!

VERSES 7-12

1. The Psalmist now speaks of the sea creatures praising the Lord, all the swimming life that is in the oceans. They testify that there is a God who created them. The elements testify that there is a God. The beasts of the earth, the creeping things, the birds of the air all praise the Lord, they testify that there is a God!

Job picks up on this in Job 12:7-10 when he said, **“But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you; Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know That the hand of the Lord has done this, In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?”**

Job is saying that creation itself is crying out that there is a God who created all of this. Every creature knows this except man who has taken God out of the picture and points to some primordial slime pool where life evolved from non-life! Creation itself shows us that there is a designer, a creator, a God!

2. Now what about man? Well the Psalmist does speak about man praising God but many times man worships the creature rather than the creator. That is what Paul tells us in Romans 1:18-25, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man - and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”**

And man has done just that, they turned from their creator and worship His creation instead. We worship the things He created, like the angles, stars, moon, various animals, even man himself. And some of you think I have gone a little too far on this but you tell me if I have.

Several years back there was an article in the Chicago Tribune that caught my eye and it did make me laugh at the foolishness of man. It was written on Tuesday, November 16, 1993 and the title of the article, believe it or not, is “A Former Roadblock Becomes Key Thoroughfare To Hindu God.” And they think we are crazy for worshiping the true and living God!

Let me share with you what took place. In this article there is a picture of supposedly intelligent people bowing and praying before this one time traffic barrier. The article says, “Devotees from as far away as India worship at the San Francisco shrine to the Hindu god Shiva. Although it originally was just a traffic barrier, believers now pray and offer flowers, food and coins there.” Hey, if anyone is interested I have an orange cone you can come and worship and leave some food and money if you want. For the love of God, how crazy have people become!

And it does all boil down to this. If you reject the love of the truth then God will give you over to believe all kinds of things that are in your heart and you will worship all kinds of bizarre things, like this stone traffic barrier. And ultimately, “**the lie**” that is spoken of in Romans is that eventually people will believe that they are God, it was the lie spoken of in Genesis chapter 3 and we are seeing that idea grow not only in the secular world, but in the church today. We are not God, God is the creator, He is the one to be worshipped, not His creation and definitely not ourselves!

VERSES 13-14

1. Yes, even man is to praise the true and living God, it was the reason we were created in the first place. But instead we worship all kinds of things, even man himself. But the focus is on God, the One who has created all things and thus, what should we say? You have to have it down by now, **“Praise the LORD!”**

PSALM 149

As you read through this Psalm you will see two distinct parts. The first part which covers verses 1-6a deal with the saints of God singing praises to the Lord. Then, in verses 6b-9 the focus is the saints reigning with the Lord, the One they love and worship! So let's dig in and see what the Lord has for us.

VERSES 1-4

1. I truly believe that God gives to us new songs, fresh songs, songs that reflect the period of time we are living in, the situations we are facing. That is truly what we have seen in the Psalms, various periods of time and various situations.

And as God gives us these new songs to worship Him by I think that just shows me that our worship should be alive, it should be fresh. Too often people get stuck in a certain style, like the hymns, and they live in the past, as if God is not or will not give them new songs. Worship needs to be fresh or it becomes mechanical. I am not saying hymns are wrong or we should not sing them, but as the Bible tells us, God gives to us new songs by which we will worship Him by.

I also see in the new songs that God shows us that He is working, He is speaking to His people. Could you imagine if I came up every week and taught you the same thing! You would not learn all you need to. You would get tired and bored. Worship should be alive and it should be focused on the Lord. And when we do worship it gets us focused on Him, brings us into His presence so that we may be taught by Him, so that we may receive from Him.

That is why we have worship before we study God's Word here at Calvary. We bring many things into the church with us that occurred throughout the day and sometimes those things overwhelm us. Sometimes it is hard to put them aside and thus, as God's Word goes forth you are distracted. But, as we worship the Lord that focus changes and we let go of those things as we focus on Him and then as God's Word is taught we are ready, we are open to receive what He has for us!

2. Now as some read this they may wonder why we don't dance when we worship the Lord. Really, have you seen me dance! That is not the reason even though it is true. Keep in mind on the feast days it was a time of celebration but in the church, if people are dancing and jumping around during worship the attention, the focus would be on them instead of God. I think that is an important reason. And I think the idea here is that our whole being is given over to the worship of God, we give our lives unto Him!

3. And notice the response from the Lord as we worship Him, "**For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.**" God takes pleasure as we worship Him!

VERSES 5-6a

1. What is the idea here? The Psalmist is saying that throughout the day and night our lives should be filled with joyful songs unto the Lord. We want so much for our lives to change for the better, we want our families to change, our neighborhood to change, our country to change and there are many ideas in what we need to do to accomplish that. I am not a complicated person, I like to try and keep things simple and I think it can be very simple. Fill your life with Scripture, the Word of God, fill your mouth with praise and see what God will do in you and through you as you do! Revival begins in your own heart!

VERSES 6b-9

1. Do you want to live the victorious Christian life? Then go into battle with a song on your heart, praise flowing from your lips and the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God in your hand!

Remember in II Chronicles chapter 20 as the Moabites and the Ammonites and others came to battle against King Jehoshaphat and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They were outnumbered, they could not win this battle and thus, the King gave it to the Lord to bring about this victory.

And of this battle we are told in II Chronicles 20:20-24, **“So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.’ And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: ‘Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.’ Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.”**

Notice what they did, they came upon the enemy with praises sung unto the Lord and God put the enemy into confusion and they killed each other, none were left. The enemy hates praise because it throws them into confusion. They can't understand how we can praise the Lord in the midst of difficulty.

And yet, how often, instead of praise we complain and that is just where the enemy wants us. He wants us weak and defeated because we have taken our eyes off the Lord, we are missing the salvation that He wants to bring to a situation and then we wonder why we are not seeing the victories in our life. It is because we are not putting our faith in the Lord and we are complaining instead of praising and worshiping of the Lord! God does not inhabit the complaints of His people, but the praises of His people!

2. Now let me also say this. This last part of verse 6 through verse 9 seems out of place, but it is not. It is looking forward to the Millennial Kingdom when the Lord will deal with the unrighteous and we will rule and reign with Him. And our response to all of this is, **“Praise the LORD!”**

PSALM 150

We now come to the final Psalm, the grand finale you might say. And as you read through this short Psalm, notice the questions that are answered, there are four of them. In regards to the subject of praise, this Psalm answers: Where, What, How, and of course Who! So let's see what the answers are to these four questions as we go through this Psalm.

VERSE 1

1. The first question is, *“Where should we praise the Lord?”* And the answer is really very simple. We are to praise Him in **“His sanctuary”** and **“in His mighty firmament.”** What does that mean? It means we are to praise the Lord wherever we go, on earth and in heaven! That means there is no place that is off limits to worship God. And think about it, wherever we go we should let praise flow from our lips.

VERSE 2

1. The second question is, *“What shall we praise the Lord for?”* And there are many answers to this but the Psalmist puts all those answers into two thoughts that cover everything. We are to praise the Lord for **“His mighty acts”** and **“according to His excellent greatness!”** In other words we are to praise Him for what He has done in our lives and also for who He is, His excellent greatness! That covers everything doesn’t it? You bet it does!

VERSES 3-5

1. The third question regarding this subject of praise is, *“How shall we praise the Lord?”* That is a great question and there are many, many, many ideas out there. And as you read through all of this you see that we are to praise the Lord with all kinds of instruments, even the **“clashing cymbals!”**

First of all there are those churches that believe any instrument used in the worship of God is wrong, it is evil, it is of the Devil! As one writer put it, “Many acapella churches believe that because God made the voice, it is the most perfect instrument. Other instruments, such as the organs and pianos one finds in a traditional service or the guitars and drums used in contemporary worship, are all flawed because they are man-made. Since God himself made our voice, acapella churches believe using the voice alone is the best way to praise Him.” Well, that goes against what we just read here. Look at the instruments that are to be used in the worship of God. Now singing acapella is not wrong unless you make it a law to be right with God you must sing acapella. Also, using instruments to worship God by is not wrong unless you say that is the only way to worship God. And many even speak of certain instruments that can and can’t be used in the worship of God and that is wrong.

And we have seen these things creep into the church today, this idea that God only accepts a certain style of worship. Some feel that the organ is the only music God will accept. Others go to the piano or even acapella as I have said. They feel that drums, guitars, keyboards, which contemporary Christian music use, is of the devil. Those instruments should not be used in the worship of God. That it is a compromise to follow after the ways of the world. That is very interesting to me because Philip Brooks states that the instruments spoken of here were brought in from pagan nations and incorporated into the worship of God. That tells me God can use anything for His glory for whatever is used to praise Him is an instrument of God.

Now I realize that many would disagree with me on that thought and you may even be offended that God can take something that is pagan and use it for His glory. But think about it like this. Before you were saved you were an instrument of Satan, and God has changed you into an instrument to praise Him. If that were not true then I guess God cannot use any of us because we all were instruments of Satan before we got saved. But God can redeem us and has redeemed us just as He can take various styles of music and redeem it, in a sense, for His glory.

Now, if you don't like a certain style of music, don't say it is of the devil, just say you don't like it. God is so good that He has not limited us to just one style of worship, but various styles so that we may all come and worship Him. The focus of course must be upon the Lord in the songs we sing, that truly is the key for me.

VERSE 6

1. The last question regarding this subject of praise is this, "*Who is to worship the Lord?*" And the answer is very obvious; it is what we have been talking about this evening, "**Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!**" That includes every one of us because as far as I can tell, you all are breathing!

2. Now think about it like this for a minute. The very breath that God gives us should be used to praise Him. As long as we live we should praise our Creator. Psalm 146:1-2 put it like this, **“Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.”** You see, by His breath He has created all things and by our breath we should praise Him! Thus, as Psalm 66:1 says, **“Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!”** I may not have a key to sing in but I can make a joyful shout unto the Lord, the God of all the earth and so can you!

3. We have come to the conclusion of the book of Psalms and as I close this evening let me leave you with this to think about. When we began in Psalm 1:1 we saw God was blessing the righteous and now, as we conclude here tonight in Psalm 150:6 we see all of creation blessing and praising the Lord. And as I do close, what did all of God’s creation sing out? You know, **“Praise the LORD!”** May we never stop!