

# Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost - The Holy Trinity

Psalm 150

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## Praise the Triune God

Just for a moment think back to your knowledge of the Hebrew language. Think back to all the Hebrew words you know. How many did you come up with? Shalom? Maybe you have heard Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement? Do you realize that you have already sung 36 Hebrew words this morning? Thirty-six different Hebrew words—you didn't even know you were singing in tongues this morning, did you? Thirty-six times you have sung Hebrew words that we brought straight into English—combined two words into one—but the first two and the last two words of Psalm 150 are words that you sang this morning. Those two words are Hallelu and Yah—praise the Lord.

Yah—Yahweh—the God of the covenant, the God of Grace—we bring it straight into English and sing Halleluiah or Alleluia. We combine it into one word, but in reality it is just the Hebrew words brought straight together.

The book of Psalms ends with this crescendo of encouragement to praise the Lord. As we gather together on Trinity Sunday, I am not going to stand here and try to explain to you how God can be three persons and yet one God, because I can't explain it. It is what Scripture says—that's it. I believe it even though I can't explain it. God is so far beyond us our feeble human minds aren't going to be able to grasp all the truths of God. But what we can understand about our God and what Scripture points us to again and again about our God leads us to simply say Hallelu Yah—praise the Lord, praise our Triune God. Why? Because of his mighty and gracious works. That should never cease to amaze us that he uses his power with his grace.

Secondly, we see that we are to praise him with our entire lives. Praise him in our worship but praise him also in our daily lives. That is what Psalm 150 reminds us of. Psalm 150 is kind of interesting. It is the last Psalm of the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms can be divided and even divides itself into five different books. At the end of each book, there is a song of praise—a doxology. But at the end of the entire book, there is an entire Psalm devoted simply to praising God. That is the Psalm that is before us today. This Psalm that is before us today answers a lot of questions.

**Where to praise him**—in a sanctuary in his mighty heavens. **Why to praise him**—for his acts of power and his surpassing greatness. **How to praise him**—with eight different instruments that he mentions and then in the middle of all that, he has dancing—praise him with dancing. **Who is to praise him**—everything that has breath—praise the Lord.

To begin with, I want you to focus especially on why we are to praise him. We praise him in his sanctuary. We praise him in his mighty heavens, but why? Praise him for his acts of power. Then his acts of power are tied together with his surpassing greatness. His acts of power aren't hard to see. We just spent a little bit of time this morning reading about some incredible acts of power of our Triune God. The God who said "*Let there be light,*" and there was light. That's power isn't it? You parents that are here this morning, have you ever tried, "let your room be clean"? Did it ever work with your child? Think of how powerless we are in so many things. Let my sniffing and sneezing be gone—it doesn't work.

Look at the power of God. "*Let the water teem with living creatures,*" and they did. "Let the land all come together and let the waters be in one place," and they did. "Let there be the sun and the moon and the stars," and there was. Talk about power! There is no denying our God's power unless, of course, you are going to deny his Word and say that didn't really happen. But if you take the Bible as God's inspired inherent Word, there is no denying the power of God. We see it every day around us in creation.

Praise him not just for his acts of power but for his surpassing greatness. God has revealed his power in other ways also, hasn't he? At one point in time he got to the point where he said every inclination of man's heart is evil since birth and so his power was poured out on the world. The power that came in the flood which destroyed every living creature except for the eight that he spared out of his love that were in the ark and also all of the animals that he had put in the ark. Think of that power! That disrupted and completely changed the whole climate and the whole way that this world now exists. The waters above it that extended out into even a vapor canopy into space come crashing down. The waters from beneath come up. Continents explode into different areas from where they had been gathered to one place as it said earlier. God's power was displayed as he judged sin. If you are on the wrong end of God's power, there is no denying it. But it is terrifying.

God's power could be rightly used to condemn each and every one of us here this morning to hell. There is no way around it. That is what you and I deserve. We have seen God's surpassing greatness day after day and yet at times we become numb to it. We become immune to it. We see creation around us and say, "That's nice, but I wish it would rain more." We see how God does things around us and say, "Why doesn't he do this different? Why doesn't he do that better? Why does he allow sickness? Why does he allow death?" We seem to forget that it is our sins that brought those things into the world—not our God. Our God didn't create the world that way. Yet we want to at times, because we are human beings with feeble minds, attribute bad and evil back to God because we simply can't say that it is our fault.

God could rightly destroy each and every one of us. His power could be poured out on us in such a way that we would cease to exist in an instant if he would simply remove his guiding hand that watches over all things. This is why we praise him for his surpassing greatness. His surpassing greatness is that he uses his power in grace and in love and in mercy for sinners like you and I—even though we take him for granted, even though we turn our back on him, even though we chase after other things as though they are more important than him, his love for us remains a constant. He uses

his Word to call us to repentance. Then he takes us by the hand and shows us in the Word where our sins are taken away. Not because we try hard, not because we come and sit in a pew and sing his praises—they are taken away because in his power he made God and man come together as one. The God-man, Jesus Christ, was born in Bethlehem, lived a perfect life under the law because you and I can't do it. But God still demands that we be holy—*"Aim for perfection"* brothers is what Paul said to us this morning. God still demands that of you and I, but because you and I can't do it, Jesus did it in our place. He takes that perfection and he credits it to us. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we become the righteousness or perfection of God.

Then he sends the Holy Spirit to lead us to believe that what he did for the whole world he did for us individually through water, through the Word, through the wafer and the wine. He strengthens that faith that he creates in us to keep us in that one true faith. He restores us. He renews us. His surpassing greatness is revealed to us in the Gospel where he shows us his love and that we are forgiven for all those times we have wandered and that we have strayed. That is why we want to say with all that we are worth, with our thoughts and our words and our actions and our whole mind, uniting together to sing God's praises—Hallelu and Yah—because his surpassing greatness is used in love and mercy to forgive and to restore.

That is why we praise God. Our God also reminds us today where he wants us to praise him—in a sanctuary, in the place where he calls us together to worship, but in the whole heavens—everywhere we go. He talks about praising him with all these different instruments. Notice that he lists four—trumpet, harp, lyre, tambourine—then dancing, then four more—strings and flute, cymbals, resounding cymbals. All these were ways that they praised the Lord at the time that this Psalm was written. Some of these instruments were instruments that were used in public worship—that the Levites would use in the temple worship. Some of these instruments were also the type of instruments that Jewish families would have in their home—that they would use in their private praise of God in their own homes. Praise God wherever you are, whether you are worshipping with fellow Christians at a worship service like this or whether in your homes. Also, the instruments that he mentions, the strings, the winds, the percussions, would have been the whole orchestra so to speak, that would have been used. Praise him with the whole orchestra of your life—your thoughts, your words, your actions—devote them to God. Why? To thank him that he has given you heaven. Let every thought, every word that you speak, not be a word that makes you feel better about yourself by finding someone else that has some flaw or some imperfection so you call them a name so that you can feel better about yourself. God didn't give you a voice to praise yourself by picking on others. God gave you a voice to praise him. God gave you your abilities to praise him that he has taken away your sins through the life and death of Jesus Christ. Therefore, praise him, wherever you are, wherever you go, whatever you do, let every thought, word and action be captive to giving praise to God. *Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.* That is your goal. But you know what? You and I aren't going to do it. We are going to fall short. We are going to do stupid things and say hurtful things because we are sinners.

When that truth hits you, what are you going to do? Are you going to shrug your shoulders and say that everyone does it or that they did something worse to you so that is no big deal? I hope not, because then you are not praising the Lord, you are crucifying him all over again. When you are confronted for the times that you have failed to praise God with every thought, word and action, simply say, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner,” and trust that in Christ he has. Then the Spirit will lead you to want to praise him evermore—to cry out with all that you are, HALLELU YAH—PRAISE GOD, because he has loved someone like you and me.